



**South Liverpool
Domestic Abuse
Services**

SLDAS Safeguarding Children Policy

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| Aim of policy | The purpose of the policy is to ensure SLDAS take all reasonable steps to safeguard children and young people who access our services either directly or indirectly – children of a woman SLDAS are supporting |
| Approved by | Board of Trustees |
| Date approved | 01/11/2023 |
| Review Cycle | Every 2 years |
| Review Date | November 2025 |
| Designated Safeguarding officer | Rebecca Radcliffe, Director |

Child Protection Policy Statement:

‘The issue of children living with Domestic Abuse is recognised as a matter for concern by both Government and children’s services’ (Liverpool Safeguarding Board 2009) SLDAS aims to ensure that all children are protected from harm while they visit our premises, participate in our activities, or come into contact with our organisation through a third person.

We will do this by:

Ensuring careful selection of staff and volunteers, enhancing safe recruitment by using enhanced DBS checks for all staff, volunteers, and board of trustees.

Providing appropriate training for trustees, staff, and volunteers in Safeguarding children.

All staff and volunteers must complete at least Level 1 Safeguarding training from the local Safeguarding Board.

Taking all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of any child who comes into any form of contact with the organisation.

Taking all reasonable steps to prevent anyone involved in the organisation or any persons working for us or member of the public from putting any child in a situation in which there is an unreasonable risk to their health and safety.

Taking all reasonable steps to prevent all members of the organisation or members of the public accessing our services from physically, emotionally, or sexually abusing any child.

Reporting to a Designated Officer (DSO) The Designated Safeguarding Officer – Rebecca Radcliffe, Director.

Any evidence or reasonable suspicion that a child has been physically, emotionally/psychologically/neglected, or sexually abused must be reported to DSO.

Implementing this policy within the guidelines and direction of the Local Authorities Safeguarding Children Board.

Clearly inform all beneficiaries on initial assessment of child protection and safeguarding responsibilities, laws, and obligations.

Supporting the non-abusive parent to protect their child/ren and promote health and well-being of the child/ren through 1-1 and group support.

Advocate and support the non-abusive parent at meetings and appointments e.g., child protection conferences.

Implementation and provision of appropriate SLDAS policies and staff guidance in relation to children.

Definitions of Abuse:

Neglect: Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.'

(As defined in HM Government Working together to Safeguard Children, 2018)

Physical abuse:

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Sexual abuse:

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Emotional abuse:

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Children and Welfare Guidelines

These guidelines apply to:

Any situation involving children and young people up to the age of 18 regardless of whether or not they are directly supported by SLDAS services.

All members of SLDAS working, volunteering, or gaining support from the organisation

General Duties of all members in regard to the safety and welfare of children:

To take all reasonable steps to protect children from the effects of domestic abuse.

To report any incident or suspicion of violence or abuse to Designated Safeguarding Officer:

(Rebecca Radcliffe, Director)

Tel:01514942222/ 07931292449

Email: manager@sldas.co.uk

To empower the mother to protect herself and her child/ren

To support the mother to refer herself and child/ren to external support agencies e.g. children's services.

To advocate for the mother when attending safeguarding meetings, such as child protection conferences

To hold the abusive partner accountable for his violence and offer signposting to provide opportunities for him to change.

To strictly observe the code of behaviour outlined in this policy.

To take appropriate action if an accident occurs

Recruitment:

All staff, volunteers, counsellors, and student social workers on placement are subjected to 3 yearly enhanced DBS checks. The Senior Manager is responsible for ensuring that regular DBS checks are carried out.

Training:

All staff complete an induction into the organisation which includes a session re: safeguarding children. All volunteers complete Level 1 and Level 2 for all Volunteer Support Workers Open Awards qualification which includes a session focusing on "The impact of domestic abuse on children and young people".

All staff, volunteers, and counsellors at SLDAS are expected to participate in at least Level 1 safeguarding training. Refresher training should be completed every 2 years as a minimum; however, it is best practice to have a refresher annually. The Liverpool Safeguarding Children Board generally provide a free programme for this.

The Volunteer Co-ordinators are responsible for ensuring all volunteers training is up to date and report back to the Director if there are any outstanding training needs.

All staff and volunteers must agree to follow alert procedures when/if Safeguarding concerns are identified.

Admission Policy:

SLDAS does not provide direct services for children at present, however, should childcare be a barrier for a woman accessing our services, children are welcome to our premises, where the organisation conducts its support sessions/activities, when accompanied by an appropriate adult.

The child's appropriate adult is responsible for the child/ren at all times while accessing services from SLDAS.

SLDAS strive to ensure safety for all members and their children when accessing services at the organisational premises.

Enhanced DBS checks are completed for all staff, volunteers, and counsellors.

There are clear and visible signs at the entrance of our Drop-in Centre and all visitors are advised where to report to reception when they make an appointment by telephone.

All doors are kept locked, and visitors are only let into our premises when they have been identified either as being known to the organisation or by their ID badges.

Risk assessments are updated quarterly involving security arrangements for visitors and contractors, access to buildings, smoking etc. (see Health and Safety Policy, DBS Policy and Risk Assessment procedures).

SLDAS offers services in external buildings e.g. Children's Centres, women's refuges.

It is the responsibility of the individual building manager to ensure that service users and their children are safe when on their premises.

All beneficiaries complete a confidentiality/information-sharing form on initial assessment at SLDAS. This form outlines SLDAS commitment to Safeguarding Children and Adults, and when/why/how SLDAS would breach confidentiality to ensure Safeguarding.

Code of Behaviour for all members:

All members of SLDAS must observe the following requirements where children and young people are concerned:

Uphold the specific provisions of the Statement of Policy and these Guidelines.

Always behave in an approachable manner, whilst ensuring professional boundaries

Avoid situations in which you are alone with children.

If a child is hurt or distressed, try to leave the responsible adult to support the child.

Avoid physical contact or behaviour with children.

Always treat the child's welfare as paramount.

You have a strict duty never to subject a child to any form of harm or abuse. Failure to honour this will be treated as gross misconduct.

Support in exercising your professional judgement:

If you witness or suspect abusive behaviour towards a child, you should use the procedural guidelines that follow.

You should seek support from the Designated Safeguarding Officer who will provide advice and contact Care line if/when required.

Disclosures of violence or abuse towards a child:

SLDAS endeavours to work with women in addressing the issues and concerns in relation to parenting skills and domestic violence. This may include the recommendation of a multi-agency response to the resolution of these concerns and issues. There are occasions when the involvement of children's services is non-negotiable. This is a decision that will be taken by the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

At all times, the safety and welfare of the child/ren will be paramount regardless of the woman's wishes.

What to do if a disclosure or allegation is made to you:

(NSPCC guidelines 2023)

- Listen carefully and sensitively to what they are saying. Try not to express your own views and feelings.
- Remain calm.
- Never promise it will be a secret, explain confidentiality and the reason we may break this if we think someone is at risk of harm.
- Offer reassurance that they have done the right thing talking to someone, and that abuse is never their fault.
- Explain the process and our safeguarding responsibility to share this information with other professionals who should help.
- Record what you have been told as soon as possible and ensure the notes are accurate and precise.
- Explain what will happen and keep them updated throughout the process.
- Report the disclosure to SLDAS Designated Safeguarding Officer

If you become suspicious of someone you work with:

If you suspect a member of SLDAS or receive an allegation of child abuse, it is your duty to report your suspicions to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. It is not your responsibility to investigate your suspicions.

If an allegation of abuse is made against you:

If an allegation is made directly to you, you should advise the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

If we receive an allegation against you, we will inform you throughout the process ensuring confidentiality and safety is taken into consideration.

All allegations of misconduct will be subject to standard disciplinary procedures. You are entitled to moral and practical support if an allegation of misconduct is made against you.

Any allegation will be scrupulously investigated, with due regard for confidentiality. It is part of our duty to protect people working with us from any unfounded allegation. If your behaviour contravenes this policy and guidelines, it will be treated as gross misconduct.

If you have concerns about how an allegation against yourself or anyone else is being dealt with, you should inform the Director or the Chair of Trustees. If anybody discloses violence or abuse towards a child, you should alert the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Officer to assess the situation and judge whether to contact Careline or not.

SLDAS Procedure for an Alerter

In an emergency dial 999 for police or ambulance support

Step 1: If you have a concern that a child is at risk log concerns/information etc.

Step 2: Tell the woman that you have concerns for her child/rens safety and will work within SLDAS Policy to try to reduce risk (unless the woman is the alleged abuser)

Step 3: If possible/safe offer a plan to reduce the risk e.g. support or safety plan. You may also initiate a multi-agency approach by offering support/services from other agencies.

Step 4: Inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer of your concerns.

Step 5: If the risk cannot be reduced via safety planning etc, the Designated Safeguarding officer will inform the woman that she should speak to Children's Social Care via Careline. If the woman declines to do so, the Designated Safeguarding Officer in SLDAS will offer support to the client to identify steps that enable her to do it. SLDAS must make it clear that the organisation has a duty to report concerns via Children's Careline if she cannot do it herself.

If there is no consent to alert, The Designated Safeguarding officer will complete an Alerter incident logging form and file this within the beneficiary case file.

Step 6: Check within 14 days to see what the outcome of the alert/referral was.

Confidentiality:

SLDAS recognises that it is important for us all to feel that any information about alleged or actual child abuse will only be disclosed where it is in the best interests of the child to do so. Furthermore, we have a responsibility to protect the identity of anyone reporting suspected or actual abuse. No such disclosure will be made without careful consideration.

SLDAS strives to empower survivors of abuse to protect their children.

SLDAS therefore tries to work with women to support their child/ren. SLDAS advises all women on assessment that confidentiality is not guaranteed where issues of child protection arise.

All beneficiaries are asked to sign a sharing information form during their initial assessment at SLDAS. If a beneficiary does not sign the form and issues of child protection arise, the Designated Safeguarding Officer will explain to the beneficiary the legal responsibility and actions of SLDAS in the event of child protection issues or concerns. All beneficiaries who have an initial assessment are asked to complete a risk assessment. Results of the risk assessment may highlight safeguarding concerns. All beneficiaries are informed of the procedures that will be followed if this is the case.

The role of the Designated Officer:

The nominated Designated Safeguarding Officer is the Director of SLDAS:

The role is to:

Serve as a centre for information and guidance on child protection/safeguarding issues.

Support all members in dealing with any suggestion of misconduct or need for expert advice.

The Designated Officer should be aware of Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies and Guidelines, undertaking regular training to keep updated on new developments.

The Designated Officer is the link between all members and should take responsibility for monitoring and reporting to the Board on how the Child Protection Policy impacts on children and the organisation. Also the DSO to alert the Board when issues have arisen within the organisation.

The Designated Officer will have the following functions:

To promote awareness of child protection and the SLDAS Child Protection Policy.

To influence policy within the organisation with the aim of prioritising children's needs.

To be an advisor on best practice, advice on child protection training for members, build a network with relevant personnel in Safeguarding Authorities, agree incident reporting procedures, keep records of incidents and reports, report to Statutory Authorities and ensure appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, under confidential cover.

To ensure that individual case records are updated and maintained about any action taken by the organisation.

The Designated Officer does not have the responsibility of investigating or validating child protection concerns within the organisation.

Disseminating information about this policy:

This policy has been agreed by trustees and is reviewed every two years All new staff members are made aware of this policy at induction. All new volunteers are made aware of this policy during volunteer initial training and induction.

The Child Protection Policy and related documents are in the shared folder on the SLDAS one drive or suggestions regarding the policy should be channelled through the Designated Officer

Useful information

Liverpool Careline child services – Report abuse/concerns

0151 233 3700

<https://liverpool.gov.uk/children-and-families/childrens-social-care/careline-child-services/>

NSPCC

Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Textphone: 0800 056 0566

www.nspcc.org.uk

Parentline

Tel: 0808 800 2222

www.familylives.org.uk

Childline

Tel: 0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

National Domestic Violence Helpline - 24 hour freephone

Tel: 0808 2000 247

www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk

Crime Reduction

www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk

National Domestic abuse 24 hour helpline

Tel: 08082000247

Other Useful Links

If you are worried about domestic violence, discuss it with someone else. If you are displaying abusive behaviour and have children, you can seek help to stop what is happening.

<https://liverpool.gov.uk/communities-and-safety/crime-and-safety/domestic-abuse/>

Liverpool Domestic Abuse Guidance - this document is a good practice guide for all multi-agency staff working with adults and families in Liverpool at risk of or experiencing domestic abuse. It will also be useful for frontline staff dealing with sexual exploitation. [Click here to download the guidance](#)