



Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

Policy owner	Liz Thorns
Legislation and regulation	
Formally endorsed by	Board of Trustees
Last update	May 2024
Next review	May 2026

Introduction

This is the Safeguarding policy for Sussex Green Living. Sussex Green Living understands that it may come into contact with children and/ or adults at risk as part of its activities.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Sussex Green Living, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

1. Definitions

In this policy, and the supporting procedures, the following definitions will apply:

- A **child or young** person is defined by the Children Act 2004 as "a person who has not yet reached their 18th birthday" The terms 'child' and 'young person' are interchangeable.
- An **adult at risk** is defined by the Care Act 2014 as someone over the age of 18 who "has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect nor the risk of it".

2. Policy Statement

Safeguarding is defined as protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It applies to but is not limited to physical, emotional, sexual, financial and material abuse as well as neglect. It is always unacceptable for a child or adult to experience abuse of any kind and Sussex Green Living recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and adults at risk, in relevant circumstances, by a commitment to practices which protect them.

Sussex Green Living (SGL) endeavours to encourage vigilance and awareness of the issues surrounding the protection and safety of children, young people, and adults at risk, within which suspicions or allegations can be made in good faith without fear of reprisal.

We are committed to the welfare and safety of children, young people and adults at risk and we will regularly review this policy considering emerging legislation and evolving best practice. Appropriate risk management processes will be applied to contact with children, young people and adults at risk.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

- to protect children, young people and adults at risk who receive Sussex Green Living's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.



- to provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to Safeguarding.

4. Legal Framework:

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and adults at risk.

5. Supporting Documents

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents such as:

- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers (appendix 2)
- Safer recruitment
- Online safety
- Managing complaints
- Whistleblowing
- Health and safety

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Within SGL the overall management responsibility for safeguarding is retained within the Chief Executive's remit. Safeguarding work is overseen by the senior management team and the Chief Executive will report to the Trustees regularly on implementing the safeguarding policy and the operation of the safeguarding procedures.

The Trustees are responsible for approving the safeguarding policy and receiving reports on safeguarding. It is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers, and Trustees to ensure that when working with children, young people and adults at risk, a healthy, positive and safe environment is maintained.

Any volunteer, staff member or Trustee is also encompassed by the term 'Sussex Green Living Representative'.

7. Responding to abuse and disclosures

If:

- a child, young person or adult describes abuse being suffered by themselves or another individual (disclosure);
- a member of staff, volunteer or Trustee sees or hears something that concerns them about the possibility of abuse;
- a third party tells us something about suspected abuse;

We as individuals have a duty to ensure that all concerns and disclosures are followed up.

In the case of a disclosure do:

- Take it seriously
- Listen and reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling someone
- Write down what they have said as soon as possible, and use their exact words – do not try and correct anything
- Ask only open questions - "when did this happen?"
- Get support for the child and yourself
- Report suspicion of abuse/neglect (for relevant authorities see Section 8. Reporting)



- Let them know you will have to tell someone else in order to keep them safe

Positive things to say:

- I am glad you told me
- I am sorry this has happened
- It is not your fault
- We are going to do something about this together

Do not:

- Assume someone else will act or already knows
- Promise to keep it a secret as the disclosure must be acted upon.
- Interrupt or ask leading questions (e.g. "did your dad do that to you?")
- Express disbelief in what you are being told
- Seem to tell them off ("why didn't you tell me before?")
- Discuss the incident with other staff or volunteers not directly involved in the incident, except those responsible for safeguarding

There is a remote possibility that a child / adult may suddenly announce that they do not want to go home because they are frightened of abuse. We cannot legally prevent a child / adult from going home with his or her responsible parent / carer / guardian. However, you can insist on calling the police and staying with the child, if you suspect that an offence may be about to be committed (for example, if the parent is drunk).

Remember it is not your job to investigate, but to pass on concerns if you think the child or vulnerable adult needs support or protection

8. Reporting

In the case of having concerns about possible abuse contact one of the safeguarding leads immediately and complete a Record of concern form as soon as possible.

The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for submitting a Safeguarding referral to the relevant authority:

East Sussex: Referrals to East Sussex County Council

Children: All Safeguarding referrals go to the Single point of contact team via the the [Children's Portal](#). If a child is at risk of immediate harm, or has sustained an injury, a to the SPOA should be made on **01323 464222** before completing a referral.

Adults: All safeguarding referrals are to be submitted [online](#).

West Sussex: Referrals to West Sussex County Council

Children: All Safeguarding Referrals are submitted online into the Integrated Front Door (IFD):

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/keeping-children-safe/raise-a-concern-about-a-child/>

They can also be contacted on 01403 229900 (out of hours 033 022 26664).

Adults: An online referral should be submitted into the Adult Safeguarding Hub:

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/social-care-support/adults/raise-a-concern-about-an-adult/>

The Safeguarding Hub can be contacted for further advice/ clarification on 033 022 28400.

Surrey: Referrals to Surrey County Council



Children: All Safeguarding referrals are to be submitted to Children's Services 'Single Point of Access':
9am to 5pm on Monday to Friday.

- Phone: 0300 470 9100
- Email: cspa@surreycc.gov.uk

During evenings, weekends and bank holidays, the [Emergency Duty Team](#) is available:

- Phone: 01483 517898
- Email: edt.ssd@surreycc.gov.uk

Adults: Safeguarding referrals are to be submitted to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):

- **Availability:** 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday
- **Telephone:** [0300 470 9100](tel:03004709100)
- **Online:** [Adult Safeguarding Referral online form](#). If you would like a Microsoft Word version of this form, please email us using the following address:
- **Email:** ascmash@surreycc.gov.uk

It is important to note that if someone is in immediate danger and/ or a crime has taken place you must contact the police on 999.

Copies and information on all safeguarding referrals will be saved in a secure location.

9. Allegation's procedure

If an allegation of abuse is received from (or on behalf of) a child or vulnerable adult that has occurred at a SGL activity, their complaint must be passed to the Safeguarding Lead officers.

If the complaint is about one of those officers, it must be passed to the other Safeguarding Lead officer who should liaise with the Chief Executive Officer, or a Trustee, in their absence.

SGL would seek the guidance, as soon as possible, of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for the appropriate area that the allegation is alleged to have occurred.

Alternatively, SGL may be contacted by a LADO or the police, investigating a member of staff or volunteer.

The Safeguarding Leads will be the main point of contact in any investigation. SGL would follow the advice of the LADO.

SGL disciplinary policies will be followed, as appropriate.

10. Information Sharing

Sussex Green Living supports the principle of sharing information with other agencies and will document information where appropriate to support this process. The organisation is committed to close working with partners in all matters relating to safeguarding. All information sharing will be subject to Data Protection Act 2018. More information on sharing information and consent is outlined in our Privacy Policy.

11. Prevention

11.1 Recruitment and training

Staff and volunteers will be carefully selected and vetted to try and ensure they do not pose a safeguarding risk. Safeguarding procedures are included in the induction process for new starters. We will ensure that staff and volunteers are properly informed, supported, managed and trained.



11.2 DBS checks

All Trustees, staff (whether freelance or directly employed), and volunteers in direct contact with young people (either online or face to face), and/or confidential information about them, will be subject to an enhanced DBS check.

This DBS check will either be carried out by Sussex Green Living and/or, in the case of freelancers, carried out by the freelancer.

A new DBS will be completed/ or online check carried out every three-years.

11.3 Visits, events, workshops and other activities

This applies to all 'in person' and 'online' or digital activities including phone calls and messaging.

Prior to any visits, workshops, events or other activities that may include young and/or vulnerable people, all representatives and visitors must have undergone the following screening process:

- Sign a declaration that they have received, read and understood the Safeguarding Policy and are prepared to abide by it.
- Complete Disclosure Barring Scheme (DBS) check via the government

11.4 Communications, media, social media and digital technology

Sussex Green Living makes extensive use of media, social media and digital technology for communicating, educating, meeting, campaigning and informing. The applications and services used for these activities may change from time to time but the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure applies to any and all such activity.

Sussex Green Living takes the following steps to prevent harm through communications, including social media and digital technology (using photographs/videos/audio clips, stories, articles, or any other communication materials):

- a) Material posted on social media or digital technology will not contain the family name, or personal location/address of child.
- b) Material about a child will not be geo-tagged to precise locations if it contains any part of the child's name or other identifying information.
- c) Personal information that is captured, stored or sent through electronic, online or mobile devices is password protected.
- d) Wherever possible, measures are taken to prevent electronic copying of photographs without Sussex Green Living's permission (utilising digital water-marking and right-click disable functions).
- e) All external vendors who will be working with personally identifiable information of children (including photos/videos of them) must have a background check on file with Sussex Green Living.

Sussex Green Living representatives should familiarise themselves with any such technology prior to using it, especially security options, privacy options, data retention and sharing policies the application or service has.

Sussex Green Living has separate guidelines to help Sussex Green Living representatives use digital services, such as video conferencing, safely and effectively.

11.5 Use of images of children and young people

Regarding the use of an image or name of a child and/ young person, Sussex Green Living will seek consent.



Informed consent means the individual has a general understanding of the purpose of the reporting or photography and gives verbal permission. Sussex Green Living Representatives must obtain informed consent from any identifiable individual, and from parents, primary caregiver or guardian where the subject is a child and they are the primary subjects of a story, photo and/or video resource gathering.

Written consent is obtained from the individual or from the parent, primary caregiver or guardian in the following situations:

- a. Where a child could be easily identified, or
- b. Where otherwise required by applicable law – e.g. GDPR.

When written consent is not possible to obtain, the reporter, photographer or videographer must confirm in writing that they explained consent and this was verbally obtained from the individuals involved, using local language, beforehand. It is best practice to film or record this action being taken.

11.6 Equalities Statement

Sussex Green Living is committed to providing a service which embraces diversity and that promotes equality of opportunity. Everyone who accesses our services or works for us in a paid or voluntary capacity should be safe, empowered to play a part in promoting their own welfare and that of others and able to live a life free from abuse. This applies to all, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or belief.

Declaration

I, _____ agree that I have read and understood this SGL Safeguarding Policy and am prepared to abide by it.

Signed:

Date:

Note of changes made	Date changes made	Date policy statement approved by the Trustees
Approved by the Trustees, except the Complaint handling policy statement		5 th July 2022
Complaint handling policy statement		
Approved by the Trustees		
Reviewed without change		15th May 2024

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Appendix 1 – Recognising Abuse

There are four main categories of abuse.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse includes hitting, kicking, punching, burning, shaking and deliberately hurting. You might see bruises, unusual injuries, burn marks, hand or bite marks. These injuries are often in areas of the body where we would not expect to see such injuries e.g. torso, groin, neck, buttocks and other fleshy parts of the body. (See non-accidental injuries diagram). Also consider female genital mutilation.

You might notice certain behaviour such as discomfort, flinching or unusual aggressiveness.

Emotional Abuse

Includes parents or caregivers not showing love or affection, threats, telling the victim they are worthless or unloved.

You might see low self-esteem, tearfulness, poor relationships with other children and/or adults, behavioural problems such as attention seeking or children who are over-eager to please.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child, young person, or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the victim is aware of what is happening. It could include inappropriate touching, making the victim watch pornographic films or direct sexual contact. Includes child sexual exploitation.

You might see disturbed behaviour including self-harming, eating disorders, inappropriate sexual behaviour towards others, depression or loss of self-esteem.

Neglect

This is when basic needs such as food, warmth, medical care, hygiene, stimulation and education are not met. You might notice physical signs, such as the victim not developing normally, looking uncared for, constantly hungry, not properly dressed for the weather or unclean. Children may also have low confidence and self-esteem and show disturbed or unusual behaviour. They may struggle to stick to boundaries or routines. It is quite likely that more than one type of abuse will be inflicted.

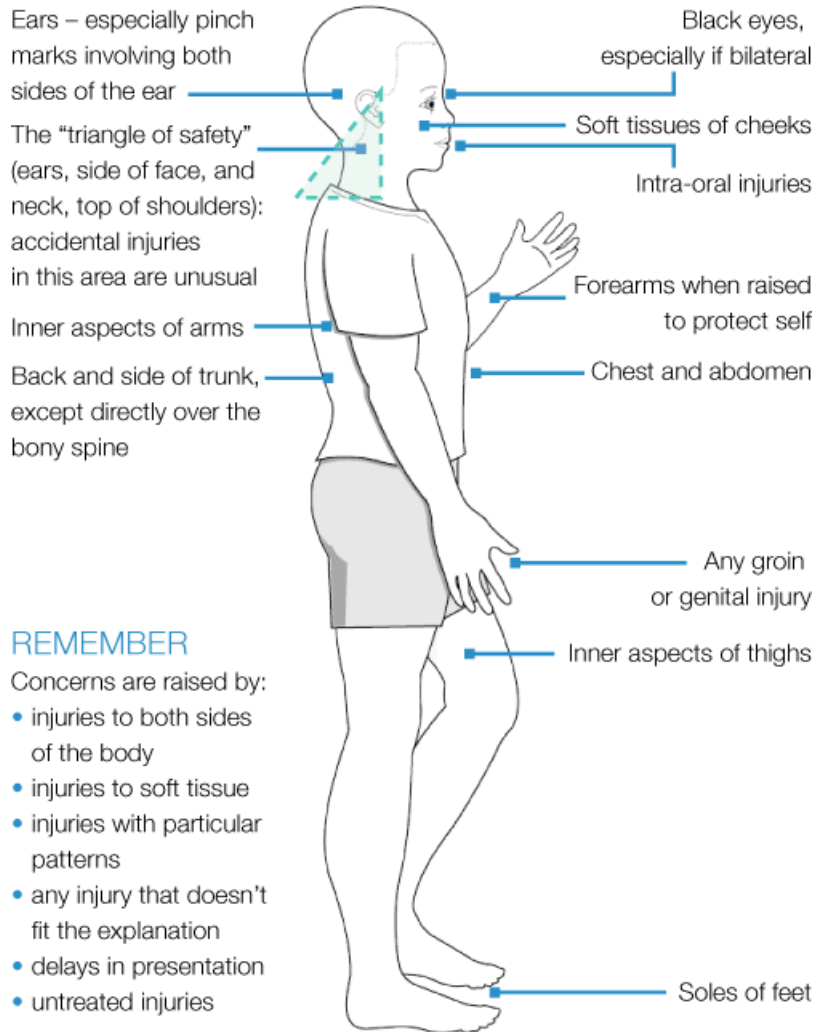
There are risk factors which make some children or adults more vulnerable to abuse:

Disability or special educational needs, looked after children, age (especially very young children)
Parents or caregivers with a learning difficulty or mental health issues, or who those who misuse drink or drugs, a background of domestic violence or previous abuse in the family.

Note that there could be other reasons for the child / vulnerable adult's behaviour, such as moving house, family divorce or bereavement, changing school, bullying etc.

Typical features of non-accidental injuries

The diagram below shows bodily injuries that are typically associated with physical abuse.



REMEMBER

Concerns are raised by:

- injuries to both sides of the body
- injuries to soft tissue
- injuries with particular patterns
- any injury that doesn't fit the explanation
- delays in presentation
- untreated injuries



Appendix 2 – Code of Conduct

The following section identifies the types of behaviour SGL expects staff, volunteers and Trustees to adopt when working with children and vulnerable adults. It is also meant to keep staff, volunteers and Trustees safe by minimising the likelihood of allegations against you. Our core values in this respect are:

1. Treat everyone with dignity and respect
2. Always put the welfare of each person before the outcomes of the activity
3. Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback

Expected Behaviour

The following list is not comprehensive and should be used as the minimum standard expected by Sussex Green Living.

Sussex Green Living Representatives will:

- 1 Accept responsibility for personal behaviour and actions as a representative of Sussex Green Living.
- 2 Create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse of children and adults.
- 3 Minimise the time spent alone with an individual child, young person or vulnerable adult especially in an enclosed, isolated or private space.
- 4 Respect personal boundaries. Avoid initiating physical contact with children or vulnerable adults. However, be aware that it may be necessary to restrain a person who is endangering themselves or others.
- 5 Avoid unacceptable situations within a relationship of trust and remember your intentions may be misinterpreted.
- 6 Be aware of situations which may present risks. Manage, and minimise these risks prior to the implementation of any activity or project.
- 7 Avoid requiring individuals to take part in activities inappropriate to their age or ability. Task leaders should recognise that young volunteers can be less physically strong, less experienced, have a lower awareness of risk and be less inclined to ask questions for fear of looking “stupid”. Leaders should take this into account when supervising the work party.
- 8 Be aware how their language and actions will be perceived by another person. Different environments present different challenges e.g., in person interactions and digital interactions are not the same.
- 9 Report any safeguarding concerns to the CEO immediately where possible and in any event not more than 24 hours later.
- 10 Ensure a culture of openness and accountability within Sussex Green Living to enable all safeguarding issues or concerns to be raised through proper channels, so that poor practice, potentially abusive or harmful behaviour does not go unchallenged.
- 11 Comply with Sussex Green Living Digital Safeguarding protocols in any online image or information sharing about participants in Sussex Green Living activities and be familiar with and responsible in the use of social media in all communications.

Unacceptable Behaviour

Some of the behaviours listed below are crimes and will be dealt with as such. The following list is not necessarily comprehensive.

Sussex Green Living Representatives within and outside their work environments will not:

- a. Develop or seek a sexual relationship with any child. Such relationships are not acceptable and will not be tolerated. This also includes condoning such behaviour and failing to report it.



- b. Sexually exploit or abuse any child; such behaviour constitutes an act of gross misconduct.
- c. Communicate with a child involved in a Sussex Green Living activity via digital platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) via mobile technology (e.g. texting, WhatsApp, Zoom, Face chat) or online without consent and knowledge of his/her legal guardians.
- d. Sussex Green Living Representatives will not communicate on mobile, digital or online platforms with children or adults in ways that are inappropriate or sexual.
- e. Caress, fondle, kiss, hug or touch children in an inappropriate, sexually provocative or culturally insensitive way.
- f. Use language, make suggestions, offer advice or act in ways which are inappropriate, offensive or abusive, that may cause shame, humiliation, belittling or degrading in nature.
- g. Spend excessive or unnecessary time alone, taking a child to a location where they may be alone with that child, away from others, behind closed doors or in a secluded area; this includes meeting virtually.
- h. Provide lifts to children in a vehicle, except with express permission from line managers and the parents/ primary caregivers/guardians of those responsible for children.
- i. Discriminate against or show preferential treatment to a child to the exclusion of others (e.g. providing gifts or favours to a beneficiary or their family to gain trust which is a form of sexual grooming).
- j. Do things of a personal nature for a child which they can do for themselves.
- k. Share personal contact details (home, work, hotel address, contact numbers or any social media identities) with any child.
- l. Stay silent, cover-up or enable any known or suspected safeguarding incident or breach of Safeguarding policy involving a Sussex Green Living representative or affiliate.