



Safeguarding children and adults at risk Policy and Procedures

Definitions

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and adults at risk and protect them from harm.

A **child** is any person under the age of 18.

An **adult at risk** is any person over the age of 18 who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of disability, age or illness; and is or may be unable to take care of or protect herself/himself against significant harm or exploitation.

Abuse is mistreatment by any other person or persons, and can include sexual abuse, physical abuse, psychological or emotional abuse, financial or material abuse, modern slavery, discriminatory abuse, neglect or acts of omission and self-neglect.

Safeguarding Policy

CARA is committed to promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk and to ensuring that we operate in a way that protects them from harm, including online harm.

This document:

- Outlines how CARA protects children and adults at risk from harm.
- Provides guidance on the appropriate action to be taken if children or adults at risk are identified as being at risk of harm.

Our safeguarding children and adults at risk policy and procedures apply to all staff, sessional workers, volunteers, trustees and anyone else working on behalf of CARA.

Online Safeguarding

As part of our overall commitment to safeguarding, CARA will seek to keep children, young people and adults at risk safe online by:

- Supporting and encouraging children and adults at risk using our service to use the internet, social media and mobile phones in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others.
- Supporting and encouraging parents and carers to do what they can to keep their children safe online.
- Providing support for all CARA workers on dealing with all forms of abuse, including online abuse.

Legal framework

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

- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**
- **General Data Protection Regulation 2018**
- **Sexual Offences Act 2003**
- **Children Act 2004**
- **Protection of Freedoms Act 2012**
- **Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children and adults at risk.**

Safeguarding Procedures

Safe recruitment and selection

- All job applicants (including for volunteer posts) are required to complete a written application form, demonstrating how they meet the person specification for the post they have applied for. For all posts involving direct contact with clients, a demonstrable understanding of safeguarding is considered essential.
- All job applicants (including for volunteer posts) are required to undertake an interview to assess their suitability for the post. Applicants for posts involving direct contact with clients are specifically asked about their understanding and experience of safeguarding children and adults at risk.
- A minimum of two references are requested for all new staff, sessional workers, volunteers and trustees.
- All new appointments of staff, sessional workers, volunteers and trustees are subject to a Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check, at the appropriate level. Further DBS checks are carried out for staff, sessional workers, volunteers and trustees every three years, as a minimum.

Safeguarding induction and training

- All staff, sessional workers, volunteers and trustees undertake an induction programme when they first start work at CARA. This induction programme covers CARA's safeguarding children and adults at risk policy and procedures.
- All staff, sessional workers, volunteers and trustees are required to undertake a Level 1 safeguarding training course – either online or face-to-face.
- All staff, sessional workers and volunteers who have direct contact with children and adults at risk receive in-house safeguarding training to Level 2 once a year. Training includes how to recognise signs of abuse, reminders of CARA's safeguarding procedures, as well as discussion around scenarios in which staff and volunteers might identify abuse. Training is delivered by CARA's Designated Safeguarding Leads, who all have relevant training qualifications.
- Requests to undertake additional safeguarding training will be supported, wherever possible.
- It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that staff, sessional staff and volunteers have received adequate safeguarding training and understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. The Deputy CEO keeps records of all training undertaken.

Safeguarding responsibilities

- All staff, sessional workers, volunteers and trustees have a responsibility to work in accordance with CARA's Safeguarding Children and Adults at risk policy and procedure in order to ensure that children and adults at risk are protected from harm.
- CARA's Designated Safeguarding Leads have responsibility for:

- Supporting staff and volunteers in responding to safeguarding concerns.
- Delivering in-house safeguarding training.
- Contributing to the ongoing development of effective safeguarding procedures.
- CARA's Chief Executive Officer, working closely with the Safeguarding Team (comprising of Designated Safeguarding Leads and Head of Operations) is responsible for ensuring effective safeguarding procedures are in place, and are adhered to.
- CARA's Chief Executive and Trustees are responsible for overseeing and reviewing CARA's safeguarding policy. CARA has a Lead Safeguarding Trustee, whose role involves:
 - Regularly reviewing safeguarding policies, procedures, and culture at CARA to ensure we keep children and adults at risk safe.
 - Proactively ensuring CARA is in line with best practice in safeguarding policy and reacts to any changes in charity commission guidance and legislation.
 - Championing safeguarding throughout the organisation, including at board level.
 - Educating and making recommendations to support the other trustees in their responsibilities to keep children and adults at risk safe.
 - Learning from case reviews locally and nationally, to improve CARA's policies, procedures and practices.
 - Supporting CARA's Designated Safeguarding Leads and Senior Management on specific safeguarding issues, as required.
 - Ensuring CARA's risk register reflects safeguarding risks properly and determines which measures should be taken to mitigate risks.

Reporting safeguarding concerns

- It is central to CARA's ethos that our clients are always respected and believed. Reports of abuse experienced by our clients, or by children and adults at risk known to our clients, will always be taken seriously.
- **Our priority in addressing safeguarding concerns is to protect children and adults at risk from harm.** However, in keeping with CARA's underlying value of empowerment, staff, sessional workers and volunteers should ensure that clients are actively involved in decision-making and should give consent for action taken, wherever possible. All clients are informed of CARA's safeguarding policy and our responsibilities around safeguarding at their first face-to-face meeting.
- All staff, sessional workers and volunteers should be aware of the role of **Essex Safeguarding Children's Board (ESCB)** and **Essex Safeguarding Adults Board (ESAB)**. Contact details are given below and are displayed in the CARA office.
- In situations where a child or adult is identified as being at **immediate** risk, staff, sessional workers and volunteers should contact the emergency services by calling 999.
- If any member of staff, sessional worker or volunteer identifies that a child or vulnerable is at risk of harm, they should contact a Designated Safeguarding Lead who will support the staff member, sessional worker or volunteer in taking the appropriate action.

Recording and monitoring safeguarding concerns

- All safeguarding concerns about children and adults at risk should be recorded, in line with CARA's internal procedures.
- A monthly review of safeguarding concerns is undertaken by CARA's Chief Executive Officer, and a safeguarding report will be provided to the Board of Trustees at all Board meetings.

- The Designated Safeguarding Leads, the Chief Executive Officer and the Deputy CEO will meet at least every three months to:
 - Review whether CARA’s safeguarding procedures are working effectively.
 - Review the safeguarding training needs of staff, sessional workers and volunteers.
 - Share information on safeguarding, including updates in guidance and legislation and examples of good safeguarding practice.

Serious safeguarding incidents

Any incident that has resulted in, or risks, significant harm to CARA’s clients and/or other people who come into contact with CARA through its work, may need to be reported to the Charity Commission. This will be in addition to other actions CARA takes to respond to the concern.

A report to the Charity Commission will usually need to be made if any of the following occur:

- Incidents of abuse or mistreatment of CARA clients which have resulted in or risk significant harm to them and:
 - this happened while they were under CARA’s care.
 - someone connected with CARA, for example a trustee, staff member or volunteer, was responsible for the abuse or mistreatment.
- Other incidents of abuse or mistreatment of people who come into contact with CARA through its work, which have resulted in or risk significant harm to them and are connected to CARA’s activities.
- Breaches of CARA’s procedures or policies which have put people who come into contact with it through its work at significant risk of harm.

Further information about the type of incidents that should be reported to the Charity Commission can be found on the [Charity Commission website](#).

If any CARA worker becomes aware of a serious safeguarding incident, this should be immediately reported to the CEO or Deputy CEO, who will then contact CARA’s Lead Safeguarding Trustee to discuss if the incident should be reported to the Charity Commission. Any report to the Charity Commission will be made as soon as reasonably possible.

Date agreed and adopted: March 2026

Date review due: March 2029

Person/s responsible for review: Chief Executive Officer/Trustees