

# Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy

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## 1. Statement of Policy

The activities carried out by Sarcoma UK mean that there are some employees and volunteers who may come into contact with people who are at risk of harm.

The Care Act 2014 states that specific adult safeguarding duties apply, to any adult who:

- Has care and support needs
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect
- Is unable to protect themselves because of their care and support needs.

Sarcoma UK's information and support line provides services to sarcoma patients and their relatives and friends, some of whom may fall within the act's definitions of adults at risk. Because it is possible that contact with adults at risk in other directorates may take place, for example through our online communication platforms or our fundraising activities, there is a requirement for all employees and volunteers across the organisation to be aware of this policy and procedure.

Sarcoma UK is committed to safeguarding the well-being of all service users, employees and volunteers who are involved in or affected by our work. All adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse and the right to be treated with respect and dignity.

All employees and volunteers have a duty to prevent the abuse of adults and report any safeguarding concerns to the relevant person.

This policy sets out our approach to removing, reducing and managing safeguarding vulnerable adults' risks in our work. An example of an adult at risk would be a Sarcoma patient who relies on 24/7 support from health services.

Our approach can be summarised under the two headings of Safeguarding Service Users and Safeguarding our Employees and Volunteers:

### **Safeguarding Service Users:**

Sarcoma UK will:

- Carry out criminal background checks on applicants for eligible employee and volunteer roles. Currently Sarcoma UK does not have any roles for which there is a legal duty to carry out full criminal background checks (Enhanced DBS and Barred List) but Sarcoma UK is entitled to carry out criminal background checks (Enhanced DBS) for some roles (currently Support Line Specialists those moderating or managing the online presence of Sarcoma UK frequently.) Those that are currently employed in these roles

will have DBS checks on them carried out by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

- Treat any disclosure of previous criminal background on a job application fairly and make a decision on whether to appoint to a role based on a transparent set of procedures, with clear accountability and reasons for the decision.
- Ensure that allegations of abuse or concerns about the safety and wellbeing raised by or on behalf of service users are properly investigated and that any action necessary to protect a service user from harm is taken promptly and in-line with established organisational procedures and guidance and any legal requirements.
- Ensure that responsibility for safeguarding is clearly identified in relevant roles and have a robust structure for escalating concerns about safeguarding where required.
- Have a nominated Safeguarding Officer (Director of Finance and Resources) who has organisational responsibility for monitoring safeguarding issues, ensuring compliance with this policy and acts as the main point of contact for external organisations who want to discuss safeguarding.
- Ensure that staff across the organisation receive training in safeguarding which is appropriate to the role they are undertaking, understand the Code of Conduct - Vulnerable People (Appendix A) and are clear about the process to follow if they are concerned about the welfare of a service user.

### **Safeguarding our employees and volunteers:**

Sarcoma UK will:

- Provide staff and volunteers who regularly work or volunteer alone in the community with suitable support and training to minimise the risks associated with these activities.
- Provide a Sarcoma UK contact whenever activities take place, including for those out of office hours, to provide advice and support on safeguarding issues.
- Offer planned and emergency emotional support to those employees and volunteers whose roles involve dealing with sensitive, challenging or difficult issues, for example those employees working on the Sarcoma UK Support Line.
- Use risk assessments to ensure that where potential risk to an individual is identified, appropriate measures are put in place to mitigate such risk.

## **2. Accountability and Responsibility for this Policy**

Accountability for this policy rests with the Director of Finance and Resources but all employees and volunteers have a duty to know what action to take if they are concerned that a service user or colleague is at risk.

Failure to follow this policy is a serious matter and may be dealt with under the disciplinary policy (for employees) and the resolving problems (for volunteers).

All policies are kept up to date with changes in legislation/best practice and will be reviewed annually by the Director of Finance and Resources.

### 3. Safeguarding Service Users

#### Criminal Background Checks

##### Understanding the law

The law in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland makes it clear that criminal background checks can be used as part of recruiting paid staff and volunteers under certain circumstances:

- Sarcoma has a legal duty to carry out full criminal background checks (Enhanced DBS and Barred List check) for roles that are involved with carrying out very specific tasks that are called regulated activity or regulated work. (Currently no roles at Sarcoma include regulated activity).
- Sarcoma is entitled to carry out full criminal background checks for some roles – these are roles that involve substantial, unsupervised contact with vulnerable adults but do not involve carrying out tasks that constitute regulated activity or regulated work. (Currently Support Line Specialists and those moderating online forums).
- Sarcoma is not eligible to ask for full criminal background checks for any other roles.
- Sarcoma is entitled to ask for details of any unspent convictions for any role.

This means that we cannot just decide to ask for a full criminal background check because we want to – there has to be a clear legal reason for requesting the check. Requesting a full criminal background check for a role that is not eligible is unlawful. The overwhelming majority of roles within Sarcoma are not subject to any form of criminal background check.

##### National Variation

The Law in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is the same with regards to eligibility for a criminal background check. The law in Scotland is different.

In England and Wales Criminal Background checks are carried out by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), in Northern Ireland by Access NI and in Scotland by Disclosure Scotland.

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland applicants are checked for suitability to carry out a role (a DBS/AccessNI Check). In Scotland applicants join a register of people who are approved to carry out certain roles (PVG scheme membership).

In England and Wales, applicants for DBS checks can also apply to join an update service which allows for instant verification of a DBS form. All applicants for DBS checks will be required to join the update service.

In Scotland existing members of the PVG scheme can apply for a scheme update record, which verifies an existing PVG scheme membership.

There is no update service currently available for Northern Ireland.

All Criminal Background Checks will be renewed or updated as a minimum every three years. Any employee or volunteer can be required by Sarcoma to update or renew their DBS/AccessNI/PVG membership at any point whilst working for Sarcoma.

### **What is regulated activity and regulated work and why is it important?**

Regulated activity (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and Regulated Work (Scotland) are types of work which the Government has specified as having particular responsibilities, being positions of trust and/or offering the opportunity for high levels of unsupervised contact with vulnerable adults or children.

Some people are barred (banned) from carrying out regulated work with adults and/or children due to previous criminal activity. When checking the criminal background of applicants for regulated activity and regulated work a check is also made to see whether the applicant is barred from undertaking such work.

Understanding and defining regulated activity correctly is essential for Sarcoma because:

- It is a criminal offence for Sarcoma to knowingly employ a barred person to do regulated activity or work.
- It is a criminal offence for a barred person to seek to work, or work in, activities from which they are barred.
- Sarcoma has a legal duty to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or Disclosure Scotland when one of our employees or volunteers has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.

### **Regulated activity and regulated work with Adults**

**In England, Wales and Northern Ireland** an adult is deemed to be vulnerable if he or she is over 18 years of age and is receiving a service which is classified as a regulated activity or regulated work. It is the receipt of such a service that makes an adult vulnerable, not any disability or health condition.

Regulated activity constitutes 6 specific types of work:

- providing health care by, or under the direction or supervision of, a health care professional,
- providing relevant personal care – for example physical assistance with

washing, dressing, hair and nail care

- social work provided by a social care worker - for example work in a care home or social services
- providing assistance with general household matters to an adult who is in need of it by reason of age, illness or disability – specifically shopping and paying bills
- any relevant assistance in the conduct of an adult's own affairs – most commonly
- taking power of attorney
- providing transport to people as a result of their age, illness or disability – this only applies to transport to health or social care services, and does not include transport to leisure activities.

Such an activity only has to occur once for it to be regulated.

Within Sarcoma the most common type of regulated activity with adults is currently assistance with shopping and/or paying bills. We do not provide health or social care or personal care under the meaning of the law.

**In Scotland** the term regulated work is used. This is defined more broadly than regulated activity. In order to be carrying out regulated work an individual has to be working with a vulnerable adult (referred to as a protected adult in Scotland) and providing

- a registered care service – for example a care home or adult placement service
- a health service – provided by the NHS or a private health provider
- a community care service – social and mental health services provided by a local authority
- a welfare service - a service which provides support, assistance, advice or counselling to individuals with particular needs

In Scotland an adult is anyone aged 16 or over.

Currently no regulated work takes place within Sarcoma UK.

### **Dealing with positive disclosures of convictions or disclosures**

Possession of a criminal conviction or caution does not automatically make a candidate unsuitable for employment or volunteering at Sarcoma UK. Understanding the nature of the offence(s) and the circumstances surrounding it is essential in making a fair decision about whether to appoint someone.

Sarcoma UK Job applications ask the following:



Do you have any convictions/bind overs/cautions/reprimands or warnings?

If your answer is 'yes', please give details on a separate sheet. You will not necessarily be barred from employment if you have a criminal record; Sarcoma UK will consider the individual circumstances case by case.

Are you, or have you been the subject of any police investigation and/or prosecution in the UK or any other country?

Therefore, whenever an application is returned containing information about criminal background this must be discussed with the applicant. This discussion must take place before any offer of employment or volunteering is made.

The recruiting manager (and additional support if felt necessary) should arrange a time specifically to discuss the offence(s) and be open about the reason for the discussion. The manager should explain that Sarcoma UK's policy is to have a standard process for understanding the nature of any offences that a criminal background check shows.

Applicants should be provided with a copy of this policy prior to the discussion/meeting.

Before the discussion takes place the manager must ensure that they have:

- a quiet, confidential space for the discussion
- enough time to fully discuss and understand the offences
- familiarised themselves with this policy and sought advice from the Director of Finance and Resources as required.

The recruiting manager should take notes during the discussion – if this is taking place by phone the manager should ensure that the applicant knows that notes are being taken.

The recruiting manager should discuss any offence listed on the application form, which gives cause for concern, separately with the applicant. They should seek to understand:

- the nature of the offence
- the circumstances surrounding the offence including any mitigating factors
- what action the applicant has taken to change their behaviour since the offence
- the views of the applicant on the offence, including how they would deal with similar circumstances now.

The recruiting manager should ask for documentation to substantiate the answers given by the candidate to these questions.

The recruiting manager should send notes of the interview to the Director of Finance and Resources marked confidential. Only authorised and relevant personnel will have access to this information.

All staff involved in recruitment decisions involving such disclosures must remember that an individual has the right to see any data we hold on them so ensure that any observations are objective.

A decision on whether to appoint will be made by the Director of Finance and Resources in conjunction with the recruiting manager. In reaching a decision the Director of Finance and Resources will consider:

- the seriousness of the offence and its relevance to the safety of Sarcoma UK employees, clients, customers and property
- the age of the applicant when the offence occurred
- the length of time since the offence occurred
- any relevant information offered by the applicant about the circumstances which led to the offence being committed, for example the influence of domestic difficulties
- whether the offence was a one-off or part of a history of offending
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offence was committed, making re-offending less likely
- whether the offence has since been decriminalised by Parliament
- the degree of remorse, or otherwise, expressed by the applicant and their motivation to change
- the level of risk posed to Sarcoma UK's reputation

If a decision is made not to appoint due to criminal background the Director of Finance and Resources will write to the applicant to explain the rationale for the decision.

## **Dealing with Allegations of Abuse or Suspected Abuse**

There are a variety of behaviours, activities and circumstances that may put a service user or other person at risk of harm. Some of these will be deliberate acts that are intended to cause harm, others may be well-intentioned acts that are harmful whilst others may be acts of omission (not doing something).

For the purposes of this policy, all acts that put the safety and welfare of someone at risk are referred to as abuse. See Appendix E for further guidance.

### **The key principles if abuse is disclosed or suspected are:**

- an employee, intern or volunteer's primary responsibility is to protect themselves and the vulnerable adult if they are at risk
- every employee, intern or volunteer has a duty to take action
- employees, interns or volunteers should not have to cope alone
- all suspicions or evidence of abuse or risk to safety must be reported

## **Recording and Reporting Concerns**

It is essential that employees, interns and volunteers report concerns about the welfare of people they come into contact with. These may be about people affected by cancer (including the relatives of people we are supporting), or may relate to the behaviour of other staff, volunteers or interns, or working practices in place. As representatives of Sarcoma UK, employees, interns and volunteers have a duty of care to people affected by cancer and a responsibility to take action and report any concerns about their safety.

In some cases, employees, interns and volunteers may directly witness abuse or someone may report that they have been harmed or are worried about their safety. For example, a service user may tell a volunteer, intern or employee that a carer is stealing money from them, or that a family member has hurt them, or that they have not eaten for several days.

In other cases, employees, interns and volunteers may have suspicions (but no evidence) of abuse or abuse may be alleged by a third party.

In all circumstances employees, interns and volunteers should take the following action:

- ensure their own safety – leave the situation if they are at risk of harm
- where there is clear evidence of harm or an imminent danger call the emergency services immediately
- treat all allegations of abuse seriously
- where abuse is witnessed or directly reported by a service user, and it is safe

to do so, offer support to the service user and attempt to understand what action they wish to take

- report concerns to your line manager as soon as possible
- make a record of the date, time and details on a Safeguarding Reporting Form (Appendix B) and send this to the Director of Finance and Resources and your line manager.

Any safeguarding concerns that the Director of Finance and Resources, or any individual, believes should be escalated to the Board of Trustees, should be addressed to the nominated trustee (currently the Chair of the Nominations and HR Committee).

Individual employees, interns and volunteers must never investigate an allegation of abuse unless appointed to do so by the Director of Finance and Resources.

### **Self-Harm or Threats of Suicide**

Some service users may express thoughts of self-harm, self-injury or even suicide. If this happens, or if an employee, intern or volunteer believes that someone is considering serious self-harm, serious self-injury or suicide, then the actions set out above must still be followed.

There is further guidance relating to suicidal service users in Appendix C.

### **Online communications**

Some may express thoughts or views on Sarcoma UK's online platforms (whether publicly or directly messaging (DM) Sarcoma) which indicates that they or someone else may be an adult at risk. If this happens, then the actions set out above must still be followed.

There is further guidance relating to online communications in Appendix D.

### **Reporting exceptions**

The duty to report and record concerns may be amended in exceptional circumstances, such as where total confidentiality is essential in order to provide the service and to protect employees and volunteers from harm if they are perceived to have broken confidentiality.

### **Support for those who report abuse**

All those making a complaint or allegation or expressing concern, whether they are staff, service users, carers or members of the general public should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously

- Their comments will usually be treated confidentially, but their concerns may be shared if they or others are at significant risk
- If service users, they will be given support and the allegation or concern will be acted on at the earliest possible opportunity
- If staff or volunteers, they will be given support and afforded protection
- We will contact emergency or other support services where we consider it is necessary or appropriate to do so.

## **Investigating Allegations of Abuse**

Formally investigating allegations of abuse can be complex and requires great sensitivity and discretion. Sarcoma UK cannot formally investigate allegations of abuse unless they involve an allegation against a Sarcoma UK employee or volunteer as we have no power to take any action and any investigation would need to be duplicated by other agencies if abuse is discovered.

Where the Director of Finance and Operations decides that the allegations need to be investigated, the issue should be notified to the appropriate Local Authority or Health and Social Care Trust. Sarcoma UK has no control on what happens after the Local Authority is notified. All employees and volunteers are expected to cooperate as required with any external investigation.

### **Allegations of Abuse made against Sarcoma UK Employees and Volunteers**

Where a Sarcoma UK employee or volunteer is alleged to have abused someone this must be investigated by Sarcoma UK.

The employee or volunteer's supervisor must discuss the allegation with the Director of Finance and Resources and, after consulting with the CEO, make a decision about:

1. whether the allegation needs to be reported to the police and if not
2. whether the employee or volunteer is able to continue in their normal duties or whether adjustments should be made to their work to protect them and/or others.

Adjustments may include:

- Changing their role to temporarily remove them from having direct contact with members of the public
- If they work alone in the community, arranging for them to work with someone else rather than alone
- Temporarily suspending them from working

Making an adjustment to a role does not in any way imply guilt. It is purely an action designed to allow an investigation to be carried out as quickly as possible while minimising risk.

All employees and volunteers who are alleged to have abused someone will be offered appropriate support until any investigation is concluded.

All allegations will be investigated, and as a minimum will involve an initial process to establish the facts and decide whether a formal investigation is warranted.

Any formal investigation will be carried out under the disciplinary policy for employees and the problem solving procedure for volunteers.

The Director of Finance and Resources will advise on the investigative process and advise on an appropriate person to carry out any investigation.

### **Confidentiality**

All documentation relating to incidents or allegations of people being harmed, or placed at risk of harm, will be kept and treated confidentially and in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA). This includes information from Safeguarding Reporting Forms and details of all investigations and their outcomes. Only those people who need to know about an incident will be informed.

It is the responsibility of the Director of Finance and Resources to ensure that any information relating to actual or suspected abuse is kept confidential.

### **Complaints**

Any complaint about the way Sarcoma UK has handled a particular safeguarding issue will be logged through our Complaints Procedure and addressed by the relevant team in accordance with the Complaints procedure. If the complaint concerns sensitive or confidential information, or information which is the subject of an ongoing investigation it may be referred to the Director of Finance and Resources who will discuss with the relevant people on a 'need to know basis', and respond to the complaint as appropriate having established the facts and bearing in mind the competing interests that may be at stake.

## 4. Safeguarding Employees and Volunteers

Some employees and volunteers, particularly those who work alone in the community, are at higher risk of harm as a result of their role.

Sarcoma UK is committed, as far as is reasonably practical, to providing a safe working environment for all of its employees and volunteers and to reducing the risk of harm coming to them during their work with us.

### **Risk Assessment**

When completing risk assessments for new activities or events, any risks relating to vulnerable adults will be identified and assessed to ensure appropriate measures are put in place to mitigate any risks.

### **Training**

All employees and volunteers should be aware of what action to take if they are concerned about the welfare of someone they come into contact with or are notified that someone is at risk. All employees and volunteers should complete appropriate guidance and training in safeguarding.

Certain roles will require additional safeguarding training to ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to identify and take appropriate action when someone is at risk.

These roles include, but are not limited to:

- employees working on Sarcoma UK Support Line
- employees who moderate the online community (which includes social media platforms)
- Director of Finance and Resources (Director of Finance and Resources)

Safeguarding Officers will require a higher level training, to enable them to provide the appropriate level of support to employees, volunteers and service users.



## Basic Guidance

Written guidance (included in this policy) covering:

Basic information about safeguarding children and adults

Understanding the need to report concerns

Who to notify if you are concerned about the wellbeing of someone

Suitable for:

Volunteers and supporters carrying out ad-hoc or one-off activities

All employees and volunteers carrying out regular work for Sarcoma UK

## Training

Face to face course covering

Understanding what safeguarding is and your role in safeguarding adults.

Understanding dignity and respect when working with individuals

Be able to recognise an adult in need of safeguarding and take action

Have knowledge of Sarcoma's policy, procedures and legislation that supports safeguarding adults and children

Being able to respond to a safeguarding concern/alert/ report effectively

Suitable for:

All staff who have regular contact with people affected by cancer (e.g. Support Line Specialists, reception staff and those moderating online forums) and their line managers

Staff and volunteers who work with the public (e.g. Fundraisers) and their line managers

## Lone Working

Sarcoma UK has a Lone Working Policy in the Staff Handbook which provides guidance and information about issues relating to lone working.

No employee or volunteer should work or volunteer alone in the community unless there is a Sarcoma UK employee available to provide support in an emergency. This support will be available by telephone, including out of hours.

## **Support for Employees and Volunteers at Risk of Emotional Harm**

In addition to the physical risks associated with some roles, certain roles within Sarcoma UK increase the risk of mental and emotional harm, such as stress related illnesses.

These are roles where employees have to deal with sensitive and challenging situations and issues, for example employees and volunteers working on the Sarcoma UK Support Line.

Managers have a duty to ensure that all employees and volunteers in such roles have access to regular supervision and the opportunity to discuss their emotional well-being. All employees also have access to a counsellor once a month and can request more urgent appointments were required.

## **Sharing Personal Details**

Employees should avoid sharing personal information such as personal mobile numbers, addresses, Facebook or other social media details with service users. This helps to maintain professional boundaries with the service user, whilst providing the support required. Further training or advice can be provided in relation to this.

## Appendix A: Code of Conduct - Vulnerable People

All staff and volunteers working or volunteering with vulnerable people should behave in accordance with the below Code of Conduct.

In order to protect vulnerable people, and protect staff and volunteers from false accusations, staff and volunteers should never:

- spend time alone with vulnerable people out of sight of others unless the service has been established to provide 1:1 support or it has been agreed in advance with the Director of Finance and Resources.
- let suspicion, disclosure or allegations of abuse go unrecorded or unreported
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- make sexually suggestive comments about, or to, a vulnerable person, even in fun
- allow bullying behaviour to go unchallenged
- allow the use of inappropriate language or behaviour to go unchallenged
- stay in contact with vulnerable people after an event (ensure that parents / carers / enablers are your point of contact) unless (in exceptional circumstances) your line manager or Director of Finance and Resources has approved this.

\*All photographs taken must positively reflect the activity, culture and image that Sarcoma UK wants to portray and employees and volunteers should be vigilant about the type of photographs that are being taken. In every case you should ensure that a photo consent form is completed and signed.

## Appendix B: Safeguarding Reporting Form

**Part A – to be completed by the employee or volunteer reporting the safeguarding concern and sent to their Line Manager and Director of Finance and Resources.**

Please complete all sections as fully as possible.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Name of employee or volunteer reporting concern  |  |
| Job/Volunteer role title                         |  |
| Telephone number                                 |  |
| Name of individual suspected of being at risk    |  |
| Home address (if known)                          |  |
| Telephone number (if known)                      |  |
| Name of carer where relevant                     |  |
| Please describe the situation that has occurred? |  |
| Please explain what your concerns are?           |  |
| Date   |  |

**Part B – to be completed by the Line Manager and sent to the Director of Finance and Resources**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Name   |  |
| Job title  |  |
| Date   |  |
| Please give details of any action taken or advice given and explain the reasons why?   |  |
| Have you contacted the employee or volunteer who raised the concern to check they are okay and to give a progress report (where possible)? |  |

## **Appendix C: Suicidal People Guidance**

### **Purpose and Background**

Some people may express feelings of depression or an inability to go on. Some may express thoughts of self-harm, self-injury or even suicide. Some people also have mental health issues or a history of depression.

This guidance covers the expected actions to be taken by staff or volunteers when they are approached by someone expressing suicidal thoughts or someone with a clear plan to attempt suicide- or in the act of a suicide attempt.

### **Scope of the Guidance**

This guidance applies to all employees and volunteers.

All managers have a responsibility to be familiar with this guidance and to comply with it and to ensure that their employees are aware of the policy and understand their own and the organisation's responsibilities in respect of it.

### **Staff Responsibilities in Relation to this Guidance**

All staff and volunteers must have an awareness of the possibility that they may encounter suicidal people. Staff and volunteers will:

- Understand that they have a duty to act on any concerns about a suicidal person
- Know what to do if they have concerns
- Be aware of the guidance and procedure relevant to their work
- Be trained to a standard that equips them to carry out their responsibilities.

### **Relevant Definitions and Law**

Definition of suicide:

Suicide is the act of killing yourself intentionally. Attempted suicide or non-fatal suicidal behaviour is self-injury with the desire to end one's life that does not result in death.

Suicide and the law:

Suicide is not against the law. However, it is an offence for any person to "encourage or assist" in a suicide or attempted suicide. That is, you are guilty of a criminal offence if you are seen to be an accomplice to the suicide of another.

It is not against the law to speak with someone who is committing suicide or who is talking about suicidal feelings, providing the discussion cannot be seen to influence the death of that person.

We have a separate approach that governs management of situations where people that contact our services discuss thoughts of serious harm to themselves including those wanting information about euthanasia.

### **Suicidal People and Confidentiality**

Confidentiality means that personal information disclosed by the vulnerable person will not be shared with a third party without the express permission of the caller.

There are some exceptional circumstances where staff may need to break confidentiality without permission of the individual concerned in order to meet the law of the land or their professional codes of conduct.

### **Boundaries of the Guidance**

Staff and volunteers are not expected to make assessments of a person's mental health or capacity. Sarcoma UK Support does not have a specific remit to directly support people experiencing suicidal feelings. There are a number of other UK based services and health professionals that directly help people experiencing suicidal thoughts and feelings and we encourage our staff to signpost visitors with suicidal feelings to those services.

### **Actions where there are concerns about a person causing serious self-harm**

If there are concerns about an adult causing serious harm to themselves, staff or volunteers should do the following:

- Seek support from any staff members or volunteers working alongside them, their line manager or Director of Finance and Resources as soon as they have concerns about a service user. If the concern arises outside of normal working hours, the staff member or volunteer should contact their line manager.
- If the staff member or volunteer is working in isolation, their line manager or Director of Finance and Resources should be contacted for support. If the concern arises outside of normal working hours, the staff member or volunteer should contact their line manager.
- A staff member should document what is said and attempt to ascertain any action the person has taken or might be about to take.
- The staff member or volunteer should encourage anyone that states they have taken action to harm themselves to contact the emergency services themselves. If the person is reluctant or unable to do so, the staff member

should explain we will contact the emergency services on their behalf.

- Where someone expresses suicidal feelings, but have not taken any self-harming actions, staff members should firmly encourage the visitor to seek appropriate support from GP, other health professional (including Sarcoma's support line) or relevant organisation (see list) and inform your own line manager or Director of Finance and Resources.
- You may have to decide, with the support of your line manager or Director of Finance and Resources, to make the decision as to whether the situation warrants breaking confidentiality to contact the emergency services or an identified health professional involved in the visitors care e.g. GP.
- You should report the incident using the Safeguarding Reporting Form. Consent should be gained to record the person's personal details. If consent is not given, an account of the interaction should be recorded anonymously.
- The completed report should be sent to the Director of Finance and Resources at the earliest possible time.
- All staff who have dealt with a suicidal person should be provided with adequate time to debrief immediately after the interaction, this may result in temporarily closing the service if necessary.
- Learning from interactions with people expressing suicidal thoughts, feelings of actions will be anonymised shared.

## Appendix D: Safeguarding Guidance – Digital Team

Guidance is relevant for all employees/workers and volunteers moderating, managing the accounts of, or responding to the public via:

- The Online community
- Social Media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- Those managing email inboxes

### Context

The increase in digital platforms and their usage as ways of communicating with and supporting people affected by cancer means that employees and volunteers who work on these platforms are likely to come across posts and messages that raise safeguarding concerns.

These may take the form of general statements such as “I can’t cope with this anymore, I’ve had enough, I think it would be easier to be dead” or specific threats “Anyone know how many paracetamols you need to take to be sure of killing yourself, I’ve decided that I’m going to stop the pain now”.

It is essential that people are able to express their views and thoughts freely online and that they are able to share frustrations, fears, worries and doubts in order to receive (peer) support. However, it is also essential that Sarcoma UK takes action to prevent or minimise risk where harm or illegal activity is reported or threatened.

Many Community members will be in a distressed and vulnerable state, and we have a duty to ensure they are never exposed to content that could put them in any danger or wrongly influence their choices. This includes any disclosure of actual intent or attempt to harm themselves, commit suicide, or be involved in assisted suicide.

All employees and volunteers must remove any content that condones illegal activity, such as assisted suicide and euthanasia. This is illegal. However, discussing feelings and views, rather than condoning, is acceptable.

### Responsibilities of employees and volunteers

All employees and volunteers who are responsible for managing or moderating online platforms must be familiar with the Safeguarding: Suicidal People Guidance and Framework in Appendix C.

Where there is a specific threat of harm made, urgent assistance must be requested from your Line Manager or Director of Finance and Resources.



**Urgent assistance and action must always be taken where** one or more of the following conditions are met:

- Someone states that they have already harmed themselves or others (including involvement in assisted suicide)
- Someone posts plans for harming themselves or others – method, place, time
- Someone asks for advice on how to end their life
- Someone starts a conversation about suicide

### **Additional actions**

- Contact your manager immediately if you think you need a second opinion on a comment or to read over any messages that you plan to send.
- If the user explicitly states that they want to commit suicide or harm themselves, ban/block them immediately, and contact them through direct messaging using the same social media platform, signposting to alternative support (see Appendix F), asking your line manager or other SMT member to review this before you send.

Other circumstances may require urgent action – where employees or volunteers are unsure whether there is a specific threat they should seek a second opinion from their manager or Director of Finance and Resources – if a manager is not available they should err on the side of caution and take urgent action.

General (non-specific) threats should be closely monitored and Safeguarding: Suicidal People Guidance and Framework in Appendix C. should be used to provide support.

### **All threats of harm or self-harm (whether specific or general) must be**

1. reported to your line manager and Director of Finance and Resources and
2. recorded using the safeguarding reporting form (Appendix B) and

### **Employees and Volunteers**

All employees and volunteers who moderate or manage the online presence of Sarcoma UK frequently (at least once a week or four times a month) must have an enhanced DBS/AccessNI check in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and PVG registration in Scotland.

All employees and volunteers who moderate or manage the online presence of Sarcoma UK as part of their role must be trained to Level 1 in Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults.

## Appendix E: What is Abuse?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Persons may abuse or neglect another person by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. People are most commonly abused by someone they know, or more rarely, by a stranger.

The following are the broad categories of abuse that vulnerable people may encounter:

**Neglect** and acts of omission is the persistent failure to meet a vulnerable person's basic needs – such as food, warmth and shelter, safety, emotional wellbeing and access to medical attention. We should also be aware of self-neglect.

**Sexual abuse** is when a vulnerable person is used sexually by an adult or young person. Making a vulnerable person look at pornographic magazines or films is also sexual abuse.

**Physical abuse** includes hitting, kicking, punching and other ways of inflicting pain or injury such as poisoning (perhaps with harmful drugs or alcohol), drowning or smothering. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer / enabler fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in, a vulnerable person.

**Emotional abuse** undermines a vulnerable person's confidence and sense of self-worth – for example, by ignoring them, giving degrading punishments, bullying or constantly threatening or humiliating them.

**Financial abuse** may include theft, fraud, exploitation or pressure in connection with wills, property, enduring power of attorney, inheritance or financial transactions. It also includes the inappropriate use, misuse or appropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

**Discriminatory Abuse** includes abuse, bullying or harassment based on the individual's age, sex, disability, religion, race or ethnicity and sexual orientation.

### Responding to Allegations of Abuse

- If you are in the situation where a vulnerable person is disclosing abuse, you should stay calm and use the strategies below to help you to allow them to speak:
- Use open-ended statements, such as "Tell me more" and "Would you like to explain that further?"
- Avoid "leading" questions, such as "It sounds like you've been abused?"
- Listen carefully to what the vulnerable person is saying
- React calmly, even if a vulnerable person is telling you something upsetting
- Reassure the vulnerable person that they are not to blame

- There are 'no secrets', so reassure the vulnerable person that they were right to tell you
- Explain to the vulnerable person what is going to happen next - that you have to pass on the information to those who need to know for their protection
- Reassure the vulnerable person about 'confidentiality' so they understand that information will only be passed on to those who need to know and can help them
- Keep the best interests of the vulnerable person as your prime concern and focus

Remember: You are not conducting an investigation. This will be the responsibility of the Local Authority or Health and Social Care Trust. You are simply listening to the vulnerable person and responding in a responsible way.

## **Possible Signs of Abuse**

The following are possible signs that abuse may be occurring although there may be other explanations for them. Employees and volunteers who work closely with vulnerable people should be aware of the possible signs of abuse, but more importantly, what they should do if they are concerned.

### **Physical abuse**

A history of unexplained falls or minor injuries  
Bruising in well protected areas, or clustered from repeated striking  
Finger marks  
Burns of unusual location or type  
Injuries found at different states of healing  
Injury shape similar to an object  
Injuries to head/face/scalp  
History of GP or agency hopping, or reluctance to seek help  
Accounts which vary with time or are inconsistent with physical evidence  
Weight loss due to malnutrition, or rapid weight gain  
Ulcers, bed sores and being left in wet clothing  
Drowsiness due to too much medication, or lack of medication causing recurring crises/hospital admissions

### **Sexual abuse**

Disclosure or partial disclosure (use of phrases such as 'It's a secret')  
Medical problems, e.g. Genital infections, pregnancy, difficulty walking or sitting  
Disturbed behaviour e.g. depression, sudden withdrawal from activities, loss of previous skills, sleeplessness or nightmares, self-injury, showing fear or aggression to one particular person, repeated or excessive masturbation, inappropriately seductive behaviour, loss of appetite or difficulty in keeping food down.  
Behaviour of others towards the vulnerable adult  
Circumstances – e.g. two service users found in a toilet area, one in a distressed state

### **Emotional abuse**

Isolation  
Over meticulous  
Inappropriately dressed  
Withdrawn, agitated, anxious not wanting to be touched  
Change in appetite  
Insomnia, or need for excessive sleep  
Tearfulness  
Unexplained paranoia, or excessive fears  
Low self esteem  
Confusion

### **Neglect**

Physical condition poor  
Clothing in poor condition

Inadequate diet  
Untreated injuries or medical problems  
Failure to be given prescribed medication  
Poor personal hygiene

**Financial abuse**

Unexplained or sudden inability to pay bills  
Unexplained or sudden withdrawal of money from accounts  
Disparity between assets and satisfactory living conditions  
Extraordinary interest by family members and other people in the vulnerable person's assets

**Discriminatory abuse**

Lack of respect shown to an individual  
Signs of substandard service offered to an individual  
Exclusion from rights afforded to others, such as health, education, criminal justice

**Other possible signs of abuse**

Inappropriate use of restraints  
Sensory deprivation e.g. spectacles or hearing aid  
Denial of visitors or phone calls  
Failure to ensure privacy or personal dignity  
Lack of flexibility of choice e.g. bedtimes, choice of food  
Restricted access to toilet or bathing facilities  
Lack of personal clothing or possessions  
Controlling relationships between care staff and service

## Appendix F: Useful Services and Organisations

The following are a list of services that you can consider referring service users to: **For urgent medical attention or urgent referral to psychological support:**

- Emergency services – 999
- GP or Accident & Emergency department at nearest hospital
- NHS 111 (England and Wales)
- NHS24 (Scotland)

### For Counselling and Psychotherapy

- British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP) [www.babcp.com](http://www.babcp.com) Directory of accredited behavioural and cognitive psychotherapists available online
- British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy [www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk) See website for details of local practitioners
- The British Psychological Society [www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk) For a directory of chartered psychologists
- United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) [www.psychotherapy.org.uk](http://www.psychotherapy.org.uk) Regional lists of psychotherapists available free
- WPF Network [www.wpfnetwork.org.uk](http://www.wpfnetwork.org.uk) The largest provider of general counselling in Britain

### Support Service and Helplines

- Samaritans: <http://www.samaritans.org>  
24-hour telephone helpline offering emotional support
- Breathing Space: [www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk](http://www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk)  
Provide support over a helpline for any individual experiencing low mood or depression, or who is unusually worried. The Breathing Space phone line is available 24 hours at weekends (6pm Friday - 6am Monday) and 6pm - 2am on weekdays (Monday – Thursday)

- MIND: [http://www.mind.org.uk/help/advice\\_lines](http://www.mind.org.uk/help/advice_lines)  
Provide information on types of mental distress, where to get help, drug and alternative treatments and advocacy. Provide details of help and support for people in their own area. Helpline is called MindinfoLine
- Papyrus: <http://www.papyrus-uk.org>  
Advice for young people at risk of suicide – have a helpline called HOPELineUK
- SANE: <http://www.sane.org.uk>  
Provides advice for those in crisis, as well as practical information. Have a helpline called SANELine
- C.A.L.L. (Community Advice & Listening Line) [www.callhelpline.org.uk](http://www.callhelpline.org.uk)  
Emotional support and information on mental health to the people of Wales
- CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably) [www.thecalmzone.net](http://www.thecalmzone.net)  
Advice and support for men
- Depression Alliance [www.depressionalliance.org](http://www.depressionalliance.org)  
Depression Alliance Cymru t: 029 2069 2891 Provides information, support and self-help groups
- Lifeline – Northern Ireland [www.lifelinehelpline.info/page/contacting-lifeline](http://www.lifelinehelpline.info/page/contacting-lifeline)
- London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard [www.llgs.org.uk](http://www.llgs.org.uk)  
Staffed by lesbian and gay volunteers for anyone in the UK
- MDF The Bipolar Organisation [www.mdf.org.uk](http://www.mdf.org.uk)  
Support for people affected by bipolar disorder (manic depression)
- MDF The Bipolar Organisation Cymru [www.mdfwales.org.uk](http://www.mdfwales.org.uk)
- National Self-harm Network [www.nshn.co.uk](http://www.nshn.co.uk)  
Survivor-led organisation supporting those who self-harm
- Rethink [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)  
Call helpline for those with severe mental health problems in crisis