

SENSORY CONNECTIONS LTD

CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTION POLICY AND POLICY

February 2022

This Policy applies to all staff, including Directors, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, students or anybody working on behalf of Sensory Connections Ltd.

The purpose of this policy:

- To protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who receive Sensory Connections Ltd services.
- To provide staff with overarching principles that guides our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

Sensory Connections Ltd is committed to taking all reasonable steps to ensure that no child or vulnerable adult comes to harm or suffers abuse or neglect of any kind as a result of contact or involvement by the child's family, or by the vulnerable adult or his/her friends and/or family, with Sensory Connections Ltd. She has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. She is committed to practice in a way that protects them.

Legal Framework

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

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0 to 25 years –Statutory Guidance. HM Government 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. HM Government July 2018
- Working Together: transitional guidance: Statutory guidance for Local Safeguarding Children Boards, local authorities, safeguarding partners, child death review partners, and the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. HM Government July 2018
- Information Sharing: Advice to practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers; HM Government 2018
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021
- Domestic Violence Act 2021 (in place in 2022)

This policy should be read alongside our other procedures and policies:

- South West Child Protection Procedures: www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp
- Recording and information sharing
- Complaints
- Quality Assurance
- Health & Safety
- Whistleblowing - www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp
- E- Safety - www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp

Sensory Connections Ltd is committed to the protection of children and vulnerable adults and regards the safeguarding and promoting of the interests and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults as of paramount concern. Where there is any direct conflict between the concerns and wellbeing of individual children and vulnerable adults, the interests of the child will take precedence.

Where there is a conflict between Sensory Connections Ltd and the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedure and other organisational policies and procedures, then the former policy will take precedence unless any reasonable judgment would render such a decision irrational or illogical. In particular, Sensory Connections Ltd.'s duty to maintain confidentiality with the membership and service users may be breached where child or vulnerable adult protection issues come to light (see also Confidentiality Policy and Procedure).

Sensory Connections Ltd will ensure that all those involved with the work of Sensory Connections Ltd are made aware of this policy.

In relation to adults, given the sensitive nature of adoption, and the issues of trauma and loss associated with it, Sensory Connections Ltd recognises that any adoptive parents/carers receiving a service from Sensory Connections Ltd have the potential to be vulnerable, due to the effects of secondary trauma experienced in caring for/parenting traumatised children. Alternatively, adoptive parents/carers may also be at particular risk of physical attack or threatening behaviour from their children, or at risk of false allegations.

While Sensory Connections Ltd.'s primary focus will be to address child and vulnerable adult protection issues under this policy, it will also concern itself with ensuring that adoptive parents/carers are properly supported through any child protection process.

Procedures

Information and case records

Service user information and case records held by Sensory Connections Ltd are subject to the Data Protection Act. Any records (whether manual or electronic) containing highly sensitive material are kept securely either in locked filing cabinets or, in the case of databases and other records that are held electronically, subject to IT restrictions limiting access to the partners and any other authorised individuals.

Sensitive information is restricted to Sensory Connections Ltd who needs access to it to carry out their roles and duties in providing support services to adoptive parents. This policy will be amended if and when Sensory Connections Ltd develops its services to include associate therapists who will be given appropriate access to records.

Criminal records disclosures

Sensory Connections Ltd has an enhanced DBS. No associate will work with clients of Sensory Connections Ltd until these checks have been carried out.

Allegation, disclosures and concerns about the safety of children and vulnerable adults

Where an allegation of child or vulnerable adult abuse or neglect, or a disclosure relating to current or historical abuse or neglect, is made to Sensory Connections Ltd this will, in all circumstances and irrespective of the apparent credibility of the allegation, be referred to the appropriate agency.

Sensory Connections Ltd will write down the nature of the concern, allegation or disclosure, using so far as possible, the words used by the child or adult making the allegation or disclosure, and remembering to date and sign the record. They will ensure that this written information is passed to the appropriate investigating agency as soon as possible. She will act quickly upon any allegation or disclosure, and in a thorough, considered and conscientious manner.

Action upon receipt of report or referral

Where an allegation of child or vulnerable adult abuse, or suspected child or vulnerable adult abuse (whether current or historical), is made to Sensory Connections Ltd this will, in all circumstances and irrespective of the apparent credibility of the allegation, be referred immediately by telephone to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub in Devon or to the appropriate Safeguarding body if the child/vulnerable adult is under the care of another local authority www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp

In the case of an allegation involving a an adult working with children and young people a referral will be made to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in whose area the child, young person or vulnerable adult lives (or to the relevant agency responsible for the welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult). She will telephone the relevant agency and follow this up telephone call with a letter. Under no circumstances would she seek to deal with the abusive situation.

Where no allegation of child or vulnerable adult abuse has been made, but where the information received is serious, gives cause for a child protection or vulnerable adult protection concern, and appears to be reasonably well-founded it will be reported immediately to the appropriate agency.

Allegations against Sensory Connections Ltd

Situations may arise where there are child or vulnerable adult protection concerns involving Sensory Connections Ltd. Any such allegations of abuse or misconduct involving children, young people or vulnerable adults made against Sensory Connections Ltd, will be dealt with the relevant Social Care Department, Social Work Department, Health and Social Services Trust, or Police Force.

Supporting the child, young person or vulnerable adult making an allegation or disclosure

Where a child, young person or vulnerable adult discloses that s/he has been abused (either recently or historically), the partner receiving the disclosure will be supportive to the person. She will listen with care and not ask any unnecessary questions or appear to interrogate the person, although clarification should be sought wherever appropriate. She will take what the person is saying seriously, be non-judgmental, not show disbelief and advise him/her that she will have to pass on the information. She will reassure the person that s/he is right to make the disclosure or allegation, and reassure the person that something will be done. She will avoid being judgmental or displaying strong emotions, and should not introduce personal or third party experiences of abuse.

The person is likely to continue to be involved with Sensory Connections Ltd following the reporting of the concerns and links should be maintained with the relevant agencies to ensure that appropriate support is offered to the person and anyone else affected by the concerns.

Sensory Connections Ltd recognises that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- all children regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race religion or belief, sex or sexualorientation
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of the previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

She will review and update this policy annually or when new legislation comes into force.

Contact Details:

- **Senior Lead for Safeguarding:** Sensory Connections Ltd: tel: 07324 633001 Email: chris@sensoryconnections.co.uk
- **South west Child Protection Procedures:** www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp,
<https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/devon/contents.html>
- **CEOP:** www.ceop.police.uk
- **NSPCC Helpline:** 0808 800 5

Links to statutory Guidance

- Acts of Parliament
- Children Act 1989
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Information Sharing: Advice to practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers; HM Government 2018
- Domestic Violence Act 2021 (in place in 2022)

Regulations

- This list of regulations relates to children's social care generally. Separate sections cover regulations in that are specific to adoption and fostering separately.
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 1: Court Orders
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (2010)
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4; Children Act 1989: fostering services
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 5; Children's homes regulations, including quality standards: guide
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- The Children Act 2004 (Joint Area Reviews) Regulations 2015
- Visits to Former Children in Care in Detention (England) Regulations 2010
- The Arrangements for Placement of Children by Voluntary Organisations and Others (England) Regulations 2011
- Visits to Children in Long-Term Residential Care Regulations 2011
- The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 (Relevant Care Functions) (England) Regulations 2014
- The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015
- The Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (Fees and Frequency of Inspections) (Children's Homes etc.) Regulations 2007 (as amended)
- The Social Workers Regulations 2018

Additional guidance

- Keeling Schedules (showing changes which could affect Data Protection after Brexit)

- Guide to the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) – Information Commissioner’s Office
- United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child

Adoption

- Local Authority Social Services Act 1970
- The Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003
- Adoption Information and Intermediary Services (Pre-Commencement Adoptions) Regulations 2005
- Adoption Support Agencies (England) and Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2005
- Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005
- Disclosure of Adoption Information (Post-Commencement Adoptions) Regulations 2005
- Restriction on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005
- The Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005
- The Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2003
- Independent Review of Determinations (Adoption and Fostering) Regulations 2009
- Adoption: National Minimum Standards

Fostering

- Children Act 1989: private fostering
- Family and Friends Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (2011)
- Fostering services: national minimum standards (2011)
- The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations volume 4: fostering services (2011)
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 (as amended)

Regulators Guidance

- Social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) (Inc. Assurance Visits and Additional Guidance)
- Local area SEND inspection: framework
- Area SEND inspection: guidance for inspectors
- Inspecting local authority children's services from 2018
- Joint inspections of arrangements and services for children in need of help and protection
- Joint inspections of local area services
- Inspecting secure training centres: framework
- Carrying out full joint inspections of youth offending work
- Youth offending services inspection
- Ofsted and CQC joint registration guidance: Children’s homes and health care
- Children's social care providers - Registering, inspections, complaints, roles and responsibilities, Ofsted safeguarding policy, complaints
- Ofsted social care research
- Social Work England
- Social Work England Standards
- The Standards for Employers of Social workers in England 2020
- Social work post-qualifying standards: knowledge and skills statements

Chris West