

**Gloucestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre
Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure**

Reviewed: July 2019

Next Review: July 2020

Safeguarding Children Policy:

Purpose:

This document sets out the Centre's overall approach to safeguarding children. It is supported by detailed procedures which detail *how* this policy is to be carried out by staff, volunteers and Trustees.

Legal Framework

Laws protecting children exist to protect children, namely,

Children Act 1989

United Nations 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

Protecting of Freedoms Act 2012

Children and Families Act 2014

Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) code of practice: 0-25 years –

Statutory Guidance

Local Context

This policy must be read in conjunction with the following external documents:

- NHS England Safeguarding Policy <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/safeguard-policy.pdf>
- Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board (GSCB) Working Protocol <https://www.gscb.org.uk/>
- Gloucestershire Children's Partnership and Gloucestershire Health and Well-Being Partnership: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/gloucestershires-childrens-partnership-gcp/what-is-the-gloucestershires-childrens-partnership/>
- Gloucestershire county council: How to report a child who is at risk <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/children-young-people-and-families/report-a-child-at-risk/>

Safeguarding Children Policy

1. Gloucestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (GRASAC) believes that the protection of children from harm and abuse is of paramount importance and will take all

relevant action in relation to its duty to protect children from harm. The organisation has statutory responsibilities in respect of child protection.

2. Safeguarding is a specific activity that is undertaken to protect children who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm. All agencies that work with children, young people and adults who are carers have a statutory responsibility to safeguard children.
3. Abuse and neglect of children includes;
 - Physical abuse, which can include a carer inducing or fabricating the symptoms of illness in a child
 - Emotional abuse, which can include a child seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
 - Sexual abuse, which can include non-contact activities involving children looking at or producing sexual images
 - Neglect, which is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development
4. GRASAC will;
 - Ensure that all staff, volunteers and Trustees have enhanced DBS checks and are precluded from involvement in particular organisational activities as appropriate (see separate DBS Policy)
 - Ensure that all individuals providing 1:1 support to children as a minimum requirement complete Gloucestershire Safeguarding Inter-Agency Training
 - Provide clear and detailed procedures on decision making, accountability and recording of children's safeguarding situations
 - Provide thorough and effective training to staff and volunteers on safeguarding children policies and procedures
 - Appoint a member of staff to be the Designated Children's Safeguarding Officer
 - Provide regular and consistent supervision and support to volunteers which have as their basis, the safety and welfare of clients (whether adults or children).
 - Provide regular and consistent supervision and support to staff which have as their basis, the safety and welfare of clients and volunteers
 - Provide clear procedures for reporting and recording safeguarding situations
 - Ensure that the organisation is able to learn from specific safeguarding situations and to review policy as a result if necessary
 - Maintain a current knowledge of safeguarding procedures nationally and within Gloucestershire.
 - Report any serious safeguarding incidents to the Charity Commission in line with regulatory requirements for charities in England and Wales <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission> and make contact with LADO for advice and guidance.

5. GRASAC works with children and adults. It is not the policy of the organisation to ask a caller's age on the helpline but if it emerges that they are aged below 18 safeguarding procedures must follow. For those over 18, please refer to the Safeguarding Adults Policy.
6. The organisation operates a confidential service but if it is felt that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, then confidentiality can be breached. In this event, a volunteer/worker is expected to discuss the action they need to take with the child, unless it is their trained assessment that this would place a child at greater risk. Particularly with 'repeat callers' on the helpline information about our confidentiality and safeguarding procedure is given so that preparation can be made in advance of any safeguarding referrals.
7. If it is felt that a child is at risk of significant harm through abuse or neglect and the details of the child are known, the designated agency in Gloucestershire should be contacted following discussion and agreement of any actions with the Designated Children's Safeguarding Officer of Gloucestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre.
8. All discussions about specific safeguarding situations need to be recorded by the volunteer/worker and the Designated Children's Safeguarding Officer, regardless of the eventual action.

Safeguarding Children Procedures

Purpose

This document sets out what action will be taken if it is suspected that a child is at risk of harm through abuse or neglect. It is supported by a Safeguarding Children Policy which sets out the overall approach of GRASAC to safeguarding children.

1. General

The Designated Children's Safeguarding Officer at GRASAC is the Service Manager. If the Service Manager is not available the Service Director needs to be contacted. If neither is available, the trustees who need to be contacted are Sam Hanly and Mary Robinson.

No individual volunteer or worker will be expected to make a decision regarding the safeguarding of children alone.

No volunteer/worker should make a referral regarding a child who may be at risk, or break confidentiality without prior discussion with, and preferably the agreement, of the Designated Children's Safeguarding Officer.

2. Confidentiality

Confidentiality in this respect refers to the requirement not to share anything about a service user without their consent to anyone outside of GRASAC. It is vital that information is shared within the organisation so that the safest decisions are made.

Maintaining the confidentiality of those who use GRASAC is a vital part of the ethos of the organisation and, generally, this can be assured. However, when a worker or volunteer has a strong suspicion that a child is at risk of harm, the responsibility to safeguard the child overrides that of confidentiality to a service user or colleague. Volunteers and workers MUST break confidentiality if necessary, in these circumstances.

At the start of any work being carried out, it will be clearly explained that confidentiality cannot be maintained where the volunteer/worker believes that there is danger to a client or risk to others by the client.

Whenever there is either evidence or suspicion of abuse the volunteer/worker concerned will discuss these concerns with the child/young person. The volunteer/worker will explain clearly to the child/young person the reasons for having to pass information on to other professionals and the procedures for dealing with Safeguarding.

If confidentiality cannot be maintained, the information will only be shared with relevant people.

3. Consent

Generally, GRASAC works on the basis of consent based on the framework laid out in the Gillick competency and Fraser guidelines. In many situations consent to take action to safeguard a child can be sought and will be given but consent must not be sought if it may place a child at greater risk. If the child is deemed to be at risk of immediate harm, the Designated (or deputy) Children's Safeguarding Officer can decide to make a report without the consent of either the child or child's caregiver.

4. What to do if you think a child is being abused or neglected in any situation

A volunteer/worker may be given direct information about a child who is currently at risk of harm or they may be given information which leads them to a professional judgement that a child is being harmed or is at risk of harm.

The volunteer/worker with immediate concerns about safeguarding should report the matter to the Designated (or deputy) Children's Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours. The Designated (or deputy) Children's Safeguarding Officer discuss the situation with the volunteer/worker, which will be recorded, signed and dated as will subsequent decisions. The Designated Children's Safeguarding Officer (or deputy) will decide whether to report to the Police (if the child is in immediate danger) or Local Children's Safeguarding Board (if risk of harm of not imminent).

If there is consent from the service user to make a safeguarding referral then this can be agreed and made immediately by telephone by the Service Manager and followed up in writing within 24 hours. The contact details are provided at the end of this document.

If gaining consent from a service user may place a child at greater risk of harm then this route is not an option and referrals should only be made by GRASAC.

If there is no consent from the child or adult client to make a safeguarding referral and no identifying details are available regarding the child, then no referral can be made by GRASAC but the child or adult client can be encouraged to make the referral themselves.

Situations where no referral is possible may still leave volunteer/worker with uncomfortable feelings and these should be discussed in person with the Service Manager, Volunteer Co-ordinator and/or at Supervision Meetings.

5. What to do if you suspect a Staff Member, Volunteer or Trustee is abusing a child

If the information you have regarding risk to a child relates to abuse by a member of GRASAC you should immediately inform the Service Director. If the allegation concerns the Director, you should speak directly to one of the Trustee Deputy Children's Safeguarding Officers.

The member of GRASAC will be suspended immediately for the duration of the Police or Social work investigation and any subsequent disciplinary action (as laid out in the relevant GRASAC Handbook) on the authority of the Designated Children's Safeguarding Officer and a member of the Board of Trustees. This is not an assumption of guilt but serves to allow the appropriate investigation to take place and protects the member of staff or volunteer from further allegations.

6. Record Keeping

Records must be made of discussions, decisions and actions taken at all stages of the procedure, clearly indicating who was present.

Records will be kept securely in a confidential place in the GRASAC office.

7. Contact Details in relation to concerns for a child or young person:

GRASAC Office – 01452 305421 in the first instance

Service Manager mobile 07864650087

Director 07760787856

Sam Hanly – 07702815112

Mary Robinson - 07768308825

Children and Families HelpDesk - Office hours 01452 426565

Out of hours 01452 614194

email childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk

If you are concerned about the immediate safety of a child the Police should be contacted on 101 or 999 as appropriate, at any time.