Purpose and Aim of the Policy Statement

Safeguarding is ‘everyone’s responsibility.  This policy sets out Community Counselling’s responsibilities under the Children Act 2004 to ensure children, young people and adults at risk, are kept safe from harm.  This includes harm arising from:

* The conduct of counsellors associated with .
* The design and implementation of Community Counselling counselling programmes

We have an overarching commitment to keep children and at risk adults safe at all times whilst under our care and supervision.

The Policy

The policy lays out the commitments made by Community Counselling and informs counsellors of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

This policy does not cover:

* Safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by Community Counselling or associated counsellors

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What is Safeguarding?

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

We understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our counsellors or counselling programmes.

Further definitions relating to safeguarding are provided in the glossary below.

Scope

* All staff contracted by, or associated with Community Counselling in any way, shape or form.

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Policy Statement

Community Counselling believes that every client we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all our clients, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them and their interests.

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This policy will address the following areas of safeguarding:  child safeguarding and adult safeguarding.  These areas of safeguarding may have different policies and procedures associated with them (see Associated Policies).

Community Counselling commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

Prevention

**Community Counselling Responsibilities**

Community Counselling will:

* Ensure all counsellors have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy
* Design and undertake all its counselling programmes in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with Community Counselling.  This includes the way in which information about clients is gathered, communicated and stored
* Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying counsellors - all of our counsellors have to have the appropriate DBS checks in place
* Ensure counsellors receive refresher training on safeguarding at regular intervals or whenever widespread changes to legislation have been made
* Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process

**Counsellor Responsibilities**

Child Safeguarding

Community Counselling counsellors must not:

* Subject a child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect

Adult safeguarding

Community Counselling staff and associated personnel must not:

* Subject an at risk adult to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect

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Additionally, Community Counselling counsellors are obliged to:

* Always ensure the welfare of clients, and their wishes and feelings are afforded consideration when developing and carrying out counselling
* Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy
* Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations using the appropriate channels

All staff and volunteers have a professional role to identify and respond to the needs of children and report any concerns immediately

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Reporting

Community Counselling will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to counsellors and the communities we work with.

Community Counselling will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

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Response

Community Counselling will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure, and legal and statutory obligations (see Procedures for reporting and response to safeguarding concerns in Associated Policies).

Community Counselling will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff found in breach of policy.

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Community Counselling will offer support to survivors of harm caused by counsellors, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation).  Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.

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Confidentiality

It is essential that confidentiality in maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns.  Safeguarding information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.  Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need to know basis only, and should be kept secure at all times.

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Dates

This Policy Statement comes into force with effect from 1 June 2021 and will be reviewed annually, with the next review taking place on 1 June 2022.

Contact Details

In the first instance, please contact [communitycounsellinginfo@gmail.com](mailto:info@dynamiccounselling.co.uk) for any further support and advice relating to the above.

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Other organisations you might find helpful to contact include:

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NSPCC

T: 0808 800 5000

[help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

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Glossary of Terms

**Beneficiary of Assistance**

Someone who directly receives goods or services from Community Counselling programme.  Note that misuse of power can also apply to the wider community that Community Counselling serves, and also can include exploitation by giving the perception of being in a position of power.

**Child**

A person below the age of 18

**Harm**

Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual’s rights

**Psychological harm**

Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation

**Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**

The term used by the humanitarian and development community to refer to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of affected populations by staff or associated personnel.  The term derives from the United Nations Secretary General’s Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13)

**Safeguarding**

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff or programmes.  One donor definition is as follows:

Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.

This definition draws from our values and principles and shapes our culture. It pays specific attention to preventing and responding to harm from any potential, actual or attempted abuse of power, trust, or vulnerability, especially for sexual purposes.

Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across our programmes, partners and staff. It requires proactively identifying, preventing and guarding against all risks of harm, exploitation and abuse and having mature, accountable and transparent systems for response, reporting and learning when risks materialise. Those systems must be survivor-centred and also protect those accused until proven guilty.

Safeguarding puts beneficiaries and affected persons at the centre of all we do.

​**Sexual abuse**

The term ‘sexual abuse’ means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

​**Sexual exploitation**

The term ‘sexual exploitation’ means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.  This definition includes human trafficking and modern slavery.

​**Survivor**

The person who has been abused or exploited. The term ‘survivor’ is often used in preference to ‘victim’ as it implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive, however it is the individual’s choice how they wish to identify themselves.

**At risk adult**

Sometimes also referred to as vulnerable adult.  A person who is or may be in need of care by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.