

FSW Safeguarding Policy – 20 July 2026

1. Statutory Responsibilities

As FSW work in conjunction with Croydon Council, they share a statutory duty to collaborate and to meet all obligations under relevant legislation to protect children and adults at risk from abuse, neglect, maltreatment or harm. The Care Act 2014 and the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 make clear that safeguarding is a responsibility held by everyone.

2. Purpose of a Safeguarding Policy

A safeguarding policy should ensure that people are supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and give informed consent. It must also recognise that early action is preferable to intervention after harm has occurred, and that responses should be the least intrusive appropriate to the level of risk.

3. Safeguarding Adults

Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities—and those working with them—have a duty to promote individual wellbeing and to safeguard adults with care and support needs who are at risk of, or experiencing, harm, abuse or neglect.

4. Safeguarding Children

The Children Acts 1989 and 2004 similarly set out duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people (defined as anyone under 18) within the organisation's area of activity.

5. Key Policies, Procedures and Guidance Informing FSW Practice

FSW practice will be informed, where appropriate, by the following policies, procedures, codes of practice and local bodies:

- Croydon Safeguarding Adults and Children's Boards and Croydon Safeguarding Partnership Guidance
- Croydon Neglect Strategy 2022–23 and *Neglect Matters*
- Pan-London Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 Code of Practice
- Children Act 1989 / 2004 and Care Act 2014
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2023) and London Safeguarding Children Procedures
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010
- Government guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (Updated 2023)

6. Definition of Safeguarding Adults

The Care Act 2014 defines safeguarding as protecting an adult's right to live safely, free from abuse and neglect, and promoting their wellbeing. Safeguarding applies to adults with care and support needs who may be in vulnerable circumstances and at risk of harm, abuse, neglect or exploitation. Their needs vary, and the individual's circumstances must always be considered by those caring for or working with them.

7. Identifying Incidents of Abuse

Incidents may be isolated or repeated, affecting one or multiple individuals. Professionals and volunteers should look beyond single events or individuals to identify patterns of harm (Care Act Guidance, para. 14.18).

8. Indicators of Adults Who May Be at Risk or Require Early Help

- Has a disability and therefore additional needs
- Has special educational needs
- Is a young carer
- Shows signs of anti-social or criminal behaviour
- Shows early signs of abuse or neglect
- Is vulnerable to exploitation, including criminal or sexual exploitation

9. Further Indicators of Adults at Risk or Requiring Early Help

- Has care and support needs (whether met by the local authority or others)
- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect
- Is unable, due to care and support needs, to protect themselves from abuse or neglect
- Is elderly or frail due to ill health
- Has a physical disability, sensory impairment or long-term condition
- Has mental health needs, including dementia or personality disorder
- Has a learning disability
- Lacks capacity to make certain decisions
- Is dependent on alcohol, illegal drugs or medication
- Is a care leaver
- Is unable to protect themselves against abuse or neglect

10. Person-Led and Outcome-Focused Safeguarding

Safeguarding should be led by the individual and focused on achieving meaningful outcomes. It should involve the person in deciding how best to respond to their situation, enhancing involvement, choice, control and safety.

11. Key Issues to Consider

- **Risk factor:** Some situations involve minimal risk, comparable to the general population. Volunteers must still assess risk carefully, particularly where reduced mental capacity may lead to self-neglect or misunderstanding of potential harm.
- **Incidents of abuse:** Abuse may be isolated or repeated, affecting one or more people. FSW volunteers must remain alert and act appropriately if any colleague mistreats or abuses another person in any form.

- **Care needs:** Volunteers must not overlook medical, emotional or physical care needs, nor allow the withholding of essential items such as medication or adequate shelter, especially in adverse weather.
- **Other safeguarding concerns:** Although extremely unlikely in FSW contexts, volunteers should remain aware of serious issues such as FGM, forced marriage, honour-based violence, hate crime, radicalisation, trafficking, slavery, mate crime and inappropriate restraint. Awareness ensures concerns can be recognised and reported immediately if they arise.

12. Expectations of All Adult Volunteers and Members

All volunteers and members must:

- Report all concerns, allegations or disclosures within 24 hours (or sooner in an emergency) confidentially to the FSW Chair or Secretary.
- Avoid 1-to-1 contact with a child or vulnerable adult if it could lead to a compromising situation
- Never contact a volunteer under 14 without parent/carer permission unless in an emergency. If a volunteer under 14 contacts you and you do not have parent/carer details, copy another volunteer into your reply and request those details
- Avoid physical contact with any young volunteer or visitor. If contact is necessary for safety or to demonstrate a skill, seek consent unless in an emergency, and keep contact impersonal to avoid misinterpretation
- Communicate carefully, avoiding language that could be interpreted as aggressive, suggestive or containing innuendo
- Consider inclusion and accessibility when addressing safeguarding issues

13. FSW Statement

All volunteers will be made aware of their personal responsibilities towards others and, where appropriate, towards team leaders. They must be prepared to respond to any perceived or actual breach of this safeguarding code. Where necessary, further action will be taken in consultation with LBC* if escalation is required or urgent/serious concerns should be reported directly to the Council via 020 8726 6500(re Adults) or 020 8255 2888 (Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm) or email mash@croydon.gov.uk (re Children)

*For more Council information, see –

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/adult-health-and-social-care/report-abuse-adult>

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/children-young-people-and-families/child-protection-and-safeguarding>