



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

At The Awareness Centre (TAC) we understand and define safeguarding as an important part of the organisation to support clients' welfare and wellbeing, including children and vulnerable adults.

This policy seeks to ensure that we undertake our responsibilities for the protection of children and/or vulnerable adults and respond to concerns appropriately. The policy establishes a framework to support paid and unpaid staff, contractors, students and trainees in their practices – and clarifies our expectations as an organisation.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff (paid and unpaid), contractors, students and trainees at TAC have a duty to report safeguarding concerns, but not to investigate them or approach the alleged perpetrator(s) of the abuse. It will be investigated by social services or the relevant safeguarding team.

TAC's safeguarding policy recognises and follows the six safeguarding principles below, as outlined in the Care Act 2014, which underpin all safeguarding work.

1. Empowerment: Personalisation and presumption of person-led decisions and informed consent.
2. Prevention: It is better to take action before harm occurs.
3. Proportionality: Proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
4. Protection: Support and representation for those in greatest need.
5. Partnership: Local solutions through services working with their communities.
6. Accountability: Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

Other Relevant Legislation:

The principal pieces of legislation governing this policy are:

- Adoption and Children Act 2002.
- Care Standards Act 2000.
- Children Act 1989.
- Children Act 2004.
- Mental Capacity Act 2005.
- Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019.
- Mental Health Act 1983.
- Mental Health Act 2007.
- NHS and Community Care Act 1990.
- Police Act 1997.
- The PREVENT Strategy.
- The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

TAC has a responsibility to the safety of both clients and therapists:

- Measures are in place to support safe and responsible lone working.
- All clients are assessed before entering our counselling services.
- All TAC therapists are covered by TAC's Certificate of Professional Liability insurance, are enhanced DBS registered and a verified member of a counselling professional body.
- Private therapists hold professional indemnity insurance.

Confidentiality

TAC offers confidential counselling services to its clients in accordance with the BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions. Clients may disclose personal information with a therapist and feel confident to do this if they are reassured their personal information will be discussed and recorded in confidence. However, TAC believes the need to protect vulnerable adults and keep children safe from abuse takes precedence over the usual commitment to confidentiality. This should always be stated clearly at the start of any therapy.

Definition of Abuse and Forms of Abuse:

Abuse is carried out where there is an imbalance of power by someone in a position of authority who seeks to exploit, manipulate, harm or oppress another person. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture.

Abuse can take a number of forms, including the following:

- Physical abuse.
- Sexual abuse.
- Emotional abuse.
- Bullying.
- Neglect.
- Financial (or material) abuse.
- Radicalisation.
- Female genital mutilation.
- Forced marriage.
- 'Honour' based violence.
- Elder abuse.
- Child sexual exploitation, including prostitution and the possession of and viewing child pornography.
- Modern slavery and human trafficking.

Definition of a Child

A child is under the age of 18 (as defined in the United Nations convention on the Rights of a Child).

Definition of Vulnerable Adults

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. This may include a person who:

- Is elderly and frail.
- Has a mental illness including dementia.
- Has a physical or sensory disability.
- Has a learning disability.
- Has a severe physical illness.
- Is a substance misuser.
- Is homeless.

Record Keeping

All records pertaining to employed staff, consultants, supervisors, private therapists, placement counsellors, facilitators, tutors, contractors, students, and clients are securely stored electronically and maintained in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

Raising a Concern

TAC employed staff, contractors and therapists are expected to be aware of the need for safeguarding and how it applies to their work with TAC. They are required to take all reasonable measures to ensure the risks of harm to vulnerable adults and children are minimised.

If a member of the public has a safeguarding concern, they should inform a member of the TAC management team.

Where a therapist is concerned there may be a safeguarding issue:

- Discuss your concern with your Clinical Supervisor.
- Following discussion with your Clinical Supervisor, record your concerns within the client record.
- The Clinical Supervisor will raise their concern and discuss possible actions with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the Clinical Lead.
- The Clinical Supervisor and DSL will consider actions required to ensure the child or vulnerable adult is currently safe, and to put in place any immediate actions required. The DSL will offer support with making a safeguarding referral where agreed, or with undertaking any other appropriate steps.

In the absence of the DSL contact a Clinical Manager.

Where a TAC Training School student is concerned there may be a safeguarding issue:

- Discuss your concern with your Tutor or Programme Manager.

Where the victim of the abuse is a client, staff member, student or trainee, the DSL should discuss what has happened with them and seek permission to make a referral if safe and appropriate.

Where a client may be the cause of a safeguarding concern relating to a child, or a perpetrator of abuse, the referral should not be discussed with them until the local authority safeguarding board has been contacted.

Training and Induction of Staff

Safeguarding training, including best practice guidelines for potential dangerous and violent situations, is provided by TAC to all staff.

Induction includes:

- Discussion of the Safeguarding Policy (and signed confirmation of understanding).
- Discussion of other relevant policies.
- Ensuring familiarity with reporting processes, the roles of line manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead (and who acts in their absence).
- Initial training on safeguarding, including: safe working practices, safe recruitment, understanding child protection and adult safeguarding.

The competence of new staff in applying safe practices is assessed as part of the probation period.

Ethical Practice

TAC abides by the BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions, and all TAC therapists are clinically supervised.

Clients and members of the public should be confident that TAC and all our employed staff, contractors and therapists meet the appropriate BACP professional standards, and will always endeavour to provide a safe, confidential, knowledgeable and accountable service in accordance with safeguarding legislation.