



Safeguarding and Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

Maybe Southwest Charity Number: 1172904

Aim of the Policy:

Maybe Southwest aims to improve the quality of life for those struggling with mental health issues, by supporting access to private psychotherapy when statutory services are unable to provide appropriate care.

As such, Maybe Southwest supports both vulnerable adults and children with mental health difficulties and as an organisation we believe that all who work within or for Maybe have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and adults in our care, to keep them safe and practise in a way that protects them.

As an anti-discriminatory organisation, Maybe Southwest is committed to making sure all recipients have the same protection regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. This also includes the additional needs of minority groups, such as those from ethnic origins and those with disabilities, especially around communication.

We ensure this by:

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- **Listening to and respecting service users**
 - **Having an appointed Safeguarding Lead (Dr Sarah Pitt) and Deputy Safeguarding Lead (Dr Marie-Claire Fitzpatrick)**
 - **Having safeguarding and child protection procedures and making sure all those working with/for Maybe adhere to these guidelines**
 - **Having an expectation that all therapists providing services to Maybe adhere to the safeguarding and child protection guidelines given by their professional body**
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This policy applies to all those working for or on behalf of Maybe Southwest, to ensure that the charity undertakes its responsibilities with regard to the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

By safeguarding those using our services, Maybe Southwest recognises its contribution to reducing the risk of maltreatment or abuse to service users. We do this by enabling abuse to stop and preventing potential abuse.

Types of Abuse and Indicators

Whilst working with any child, young person or vulnerable adult it is important to be aware of all possible outside influences that may cause potential harm and to act upon these concerns should it be necessary.

(The following information is based upon guidance from the NSPCC.)

Abuse can include any form of intentional harm or lack of love, care or attention to another; either as a one-off event or over a prolonged period of time.

Forms of abuse include:

Physical

Neglect; including physical, emotional, educational or medical

Sexual

Bullying

Emotional/Psychological

Female Genital Mutilation

Sexual Exploitation

Trafficking	Forced marriage
Grooming	Domestic violence
	Online abuse

Possible signs of Abuse:

It can be difficult to identify when a child or vulnerable adult is being abused. Here are some possible warning signs to look out for:

Physical signs:

- **Include, bruising, scars, burns, broken bones, etc.**
- **Always keeping their body covered, for instance, not wanting to roll up sleeves to wash hands, not wearing appropriate clothing in hot weather**

Changes in behaviour/character including:

- **Becoming more withdrawn**
- **Increased anxiety**
- **Withdrawing from friendships**
- **Increased aggression**
- **Going missing**

Inappropriate knowledge of adult behaviours and sexualised behaviour

Poor relationships with parents and/or other family members

It does NOT necessarily mean that, if a child or vulnerable adult presents with any of these signs that they are being abused. There may be other reasons why they are looking or behaving differently.

Policy Guidelines

1. If therapists (or any other member of the organisation) have a concern about the safety or wellbeing of a child or vulnerable adult, **they are responsible for taking appropriate action according to the guidelines of the professional body they are affiliated to.** In brief, these actions should include:
 - Evaluating the level of risk involved for the person of concern
 - Involving others, such as their Supervisor, the Director of Maybe Southwest, their Training Lead or another professional therapist in that evaluation
 - Informing an appropriate person or organisation that will be able to manage that risk
 - Taking any necessary appropriate action to ensure the safety of the individual in question (even if that requires the breaking of confidentiality, as outlined in the Therapeutic Client Contract).

The same process of evaluation, followed by action, should be taken regardless of who the potential perpetrator/agent of risk may be, e.g. if it were a member of Maybe Southwest, a parent, another young person/vulnerable adult or a Therapist, for instance.

Appropriate record keeping of the situation is essential.



Should a disclosure of abuse be made by a young person or vulnerable adult, Maybe Southwest will support that person through continued support, advice and counselling as appropriate; including when necessary, the disclosure of information to the appropriate authorities.

For all safe-guarding concerns a **Risk Update Form** should be completed and returned immediately to the Director. Where a referral to other agencies is required, use the Referral Guidelines below.

2. All therapists working with children/young people or vulnerable adults must have:
 - Appropriate training or be on a suitable accredited training course
 - A supervisor who is also appropriately trained for this type of therapy
 - An up-to-date enhanced DBS check.

3. When a child or young person is receiving therapy, the therapist will ensure that either a parent/guardian or another appropriate adult is on the premises at all times. If children or young people are attending a group activity there must be a minimum of 1 adult per 8 children present.

4. It is expected that anyone working with Maybe Southwest follows the policies of the organisation, in particular, those relating to anti-discrimination, code of behaviour, diversity and equality.

5. No photos will be taken of applicants/recipients without their informed consent and then only for therapeutic purposes or agreed advertising. Where possible all photos will be deleted/destroyed or returned to the person photographed as soon as possible.

6. As with all client records, any child protection records will be kept in a locked container or password protected on the therapist's computer. Where possible the client's name and identifiable content will not be included in records. If communication including identifiable information is required it must be done securely, eg. by encrypted email or delivered by hand/secure mail, unless there is agreement from the client to do otherwise.



7. If anyone working for or with Maybe Southwest is concerned about the actions or behaviour of another person within the organisation they have a responsibility to raise those concerns with the Director (Dr Sarah Pitt). If those concerns are about the Director then the matter should be referred to the Chair of Trustees (Mr Stuart Scorgie).

All members of the organisation are expected to be good role models to each other and the people we serve in the community, through good practice.

8. All therapists working with Maybe Southwest are expected to adhere to the safeguarding policies and working practice outlined by their professional body. For further guidance and information you can contact:

BPS - www.bps.org.uk/psychologists/standards-and-guidelines

BACP - <https://www.bacp.co.uk>

HCPC - <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/standards-of-conduct-performance-and-ethics>

Referral Guidelines

Reporting Procedure

If a child or vulnerable adult discloses that they (or another child/vulnerable person) are at risk of, are being or have been abused, or at risk of serious harm:

- Gain consent from the child/vulnerable person to inform parent/carer if possible. This should NOT be done if it puts them at further risk, the parent/carer is implicated in the abuse or it will delay making a referral.
- Obtain written permission to share information if possible. Information shared should be the minimum for what is necessary, related to areas of concern, be as factual as possible with no subjective thoughts or opinions.
- Should a break in confidentiality be required (ie. permission to share cannot be gained) any decision by a therapist to do so must be in the best interests of the child or vulnerable adult, or in the public's best interest. This decision should be discussed (with a supervisor and/or the Director) and recorded in the client



notes, preferably prior to a break in confidentiality if it will not cause undue delay in the appropriate action being taken.

- Complete a Risk Update Form and return to the Director.
- If an external referral is required, attempt to gain permission from someone with parental responsibility unless the parent/carer is implicated, it places the child/vulnerable person at further risk or causes undue delay in the referral.
- If there is risk concerning the person's physical or mental health the GP should **also** be informed, i.e. risk of suicide or serious self-harm or psychosis.
- Do NOT on any account investigate any suspicions or allegations yourself.
- Seek any necessary support you may need to support both the child/vulnerable adult and your own needs.
- Always ensure that referrals have been received by the necessary authorities and follow-up within 48 hours.

Responding to a disclosure of abuse

- ✓ If a child or vulnerable adult makes a disclosure of abuse about themselves or another:
 - ✓ Be accepting of what they are telling you, staying calm and trying not to look shocked
 - ✓ Reassure them that telling you was the right thing to do and that you understand it is a difficult thing to do
 - ✓ Listen without interrupting, letting them talk at their own pace. Do not push for information and only ask questions for clarification.
 - ✓ Remind them about the rules of confidentiality, if in a counselling session.
 - ✓ Ask if you can make notes, which should use their own words.
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- ✓ Discuss with them what you need to do next. Ask them what they would wish to happen next and record this.
 - ✓ Remind them that they are not to blame for the abuse.

Who to Contact

Within Maybe Southwest:

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Dr Sarah Pitt

0794 1218072

maybesouthwest@gmail.com

Last reviewed 6th Dec 2021



If the Safeguarding lead is unavailable contact the Deputy Safeguarding Lead:

Dr Marie-Claire Fitzpatrick 07941 460579
marieclaire@mebben.org.uk

For matters requiring an alternative contact:

Mr Stuart Scorgie 07866 733246

Referrals to outside Agencies:

To report a concern about a child or vulnerable adult you can contact the Local Council Safeguarding on the sites below:

Bristol City Council

www.bristol.gov.uk/social-care-health/reporting-concerns-about-a-child-first-response

First Response 0117 9036444

North Somerset Council

<https://www.northsomersetsafeguarding.co.uk>

01275 888 808 Mon-Thurs 9 – 5pm, Fri 9 – 4.30pm

01454 615 165 Out of hours

In an emergency, if you feel you cannot keep a child or vulnerable adult safe through the above procedures, call the Police on 999.

Other agencies:

Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership

For further information about safeguarding and child protection:

<https://bristolsafeguarding.org>

NSPCC

The NSPCC offer support and advice, and also an alternative means of reporting concerns about a child you feel may be at risk.

www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/report/

CAMHS

CAHMS will not take referrals directly from voluntary services, such as Maybe Southwest, therefore, all referrals to mental health services will need to go through GP services.

