

# SAFEGUARDING VICTIM/SURVIVOR- CENTRED PROTOCOL



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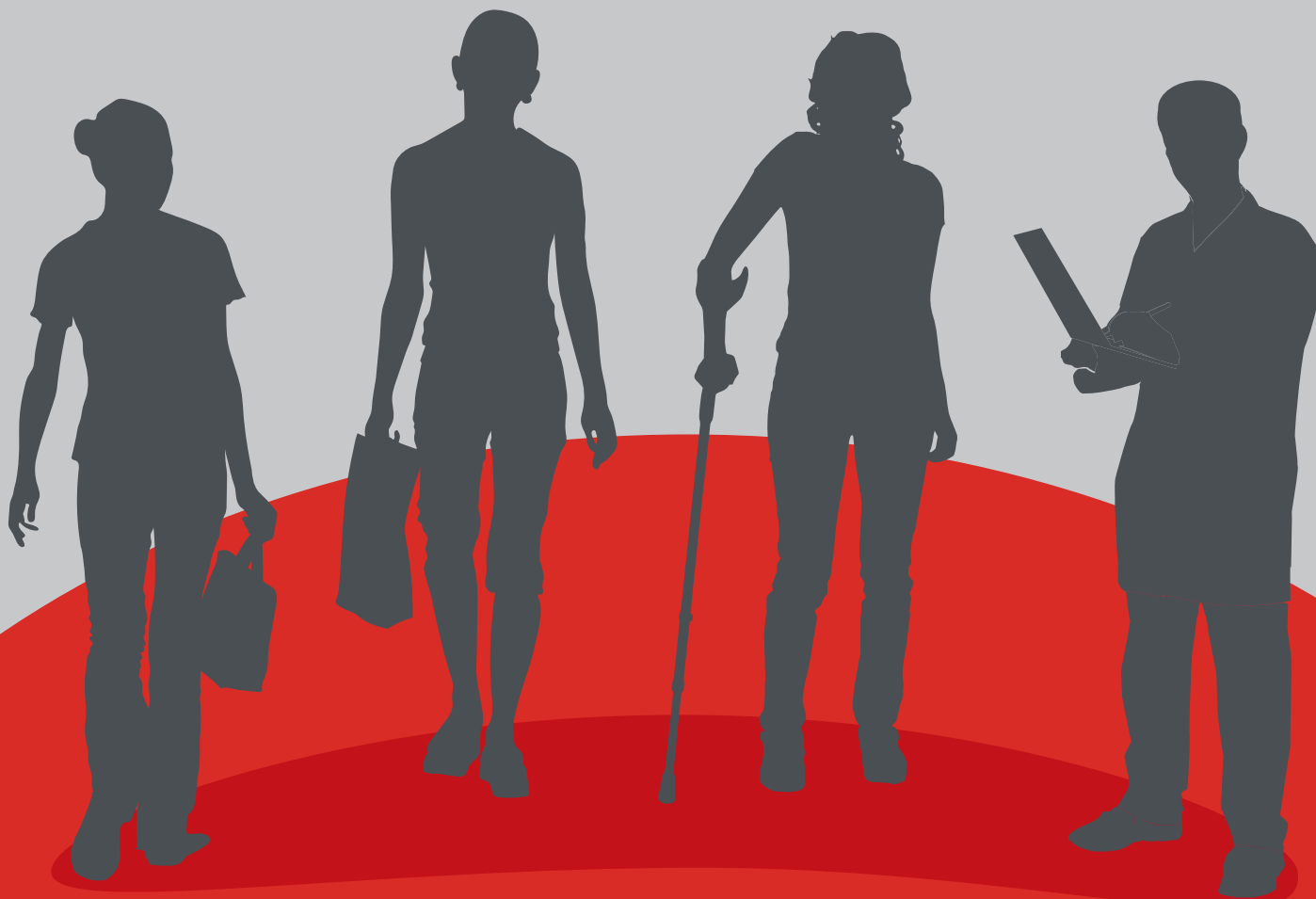


**Save the  
Children**

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# THIS PROTOCOL APPLIES TO:



- ✓ Employees on UK contracts
- ✓ Employees on international contracts
- ✓ Agency Workers
- ✓ Consultants
- ✓ Volunteers
- ✓ Donors
- ✓ Trustees
- ✓ Contractors
- ✓ Partners
- ✓ Suppliers
- ✓ Visitors to SCUK premises
- ✓ Service Users / People with whom we work

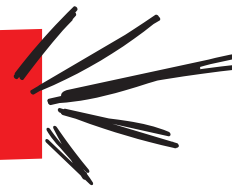
## 1. MISSION STATEMENT

“ Save the Children Fund (‘SCUK’) aims to be a safe organisation for all. SCUK does all that it can to prevent, report, and respond to issues of abuse, exploitation, and harm. All staff, representatives and partner staff will, always, demonstrate the highest standards of behaviour as outlined in this Safeguarding Victim/Survivor-Centred Protocol (‘this Protocol’). ”



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## 2. COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARDING



- 2.1** This Protocol forms part of SCUK's commitment to preventing and addressing all forms of abuse, exploitation, and harm committed by staff, volunteers, representatives, or partners involved in the delivery of our work, as well as within our workplaces. This includes harm done in the past, generally referred to as historical or non-recent Safeguarding cases. All SCUK's policies, including our Safeguarding Policy are interlinked and underpinned by SCUK's Code of Conduct.
- 2.2** This Protocol is jointly owned by the Director of People and the Director of Safeguarding, recognising that the HR department are responsible for managing sexual exploitation, abuse & harassment ('SEAH') concerns with staff or volunteer survivors, and the Safeguarding team are responsible for managing SEAH concerns with child or adult survivors from the communities in which we work. A coordinated and joined-up approach to safeguarding children, community members, staff and volunteers is essential.
- 2.3** SCUK has zero-tolerance of inaction in response to any suspicion or form of abuse, exploitation, and harm and is committed to taking a victim/survivor-centred approach to safeguarding and all sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment ('SEAH') concerns, whether handled by the Safeguarding team (where the victim/survivor is a child or adult in the communities in which we work), or the HR team (where the victim/survivor is a staff member or volunteer). This means putting the victim/survivors' ('survivors')<sup>1</sup> needs at the centre of our thinking and actions. We will collectively work to ensure any individual feels able to speak up and challenge abuse, exploitation, and harm, including harm perpetrated in the past.
- 2.4** SCUK commits to ensuring that action is taken to support, safeguard, and protect children and adults where concerns arise regarding their possible abuse, exploitation, and harm.



<sup>1</sup> SCUK recognises the terms 'victim' and 'survivor' can be used interchangeably. 'Victim' is a term often used in the legal and medical sectors. 'Survivor' is the term generally preferred in the psychological and social support sectors because it implies resiliency. For ease, this Protocol refers to 'survivors' as shorthand for 'victim/survivor'.

# 3. PROTOCOL STATEMENTS



## 3.1 This Protocol should be read alongside:

Case Management Standard Operating Procedure ('SOP')

Code of Conduct

Safeguarding Policy

Volunteering Policy

Respect at Save the Children Policy

Data Protection Policy

SCUK is committed to ensuring the confidentiality of case-related information, including the identity of the survivor. However, confidentiality cannot always be maintained in cases where the subject of the concern is assessed to be an immediate risk to someone else, or where the survivor is a child or vulnerable adult or where there may be a legal obligation to disclose information. There may also be occasions where survivors pose a high risk to themselves and confidential information will have to be referred and risk assessed by the necessary emergency service. In all cases, case-related information will be handled in accordance with applicable data protection laws and taking the safety and wellbeing of the survivor into account.

### SCUK ensures that survivors:

- Understand how their case will be handled, under which Policy and procedures, and any mandatory reporting requirements.
- Are kept updated throughout the case management process.
- Know that they have the right to withdraw from the investigation at any time; but that the investigation will still take place.
- Are never asked to sign non-disclosure agreements.
- Understand the investigative findings and rationale (redacted as necessary to protect the identity of anyone who has contributed to the investigation).

## 3.2 SCUK adheres to the following statements:

### Safe and accessible reporting:

Every affected child and adult survivor, including staff and volunteers, have access to safe pathways to report abuse, exploitation, and harm. We are accountable to those with whom we work and proactively ensure transparency as far as possible. We strive to ensure that those who are affected by our work have the opportunity to input and influence our activities, understand the expected behaviours of our staff and representatives, and know how to share any concerns and feedback.

### Quality survivor assistance:

Every child and adult survivor of abuse, exploitation, and harm is offered immediate and high-quality assistance, appropriate and applicable to their experience. This includes supporting survivors of historical child abuse (also known as non-recent abuse), where Save the Children UK is implicated in the harm.

### Accountability, investigation, and sharing information:

Every disclosure and safeguarding incident is reported and investigated by SCUK in a prompt, safe, and survivor centred approach – whether led by Safeguarding or the HR team.

### External reporting:

Where we are required to report a safeguarding concern to a statutory body, the process (including who the report is made to and why) will be explained to the victim/survivor. Examples include where a report to the police is legally required, where there is a risk to the immediate health and safety of a survivor and intervention is needed or reporting to the Charity Commission.

Internal investigations will not impede statutory and regulatory investigations. SCUK may make initial enquiries and determine if external reporting is needed and may then need to seek clearance

from statutory authorities to proceed with internal processes.

**Safety, security, medical, psychological, immediate, ongoing and legal needs:**

Every child and adult survivor will be offered support to address their individual needs, including supporting access to formal justice mechanisms, if this is the wish of the survivor.

Our Safeguarding team will work on a case-by-case basis, with the participation and input of the survivor, to assess their safety needs. This could include:

- Development of a safety plan.
- Relocation.
- Physical security measures such as alarm systems or access to a mobile phone.
- Removal of the subject of concern from the survivor's workplace.
- Reporting to the Police, where safe to do so and with consent from the survivor (except in exceptional circumstances where the subject of concern is assessed to be an immediate risk to someone else, or where the survivor is a child or vulnerable adult).

**3.3** Abuse, exploitation, and harm is never the fault of the survivor.

**3.4** We acknowledge that abuse, exploitation, and harm are often rooted in an imbalance of power and gender inequalities.

**3.5** Where immediate needs of the survivor are identified (for example, safe shelter, food, support to attend health or legal appointments, wellbeing/counselling support) these will be supported by SCUK as far as is reasonable. This support can be offered before the conclusion of an investigation and offered without any requirement of participation in an investigation.

For historical (or non-recent) abuse cases, survivors may also need access to historical records of our work, which SCUK will endeavour to provide, and survivors may also request a formal apology from Save the Children.

**3.6** We foster an open and aware workplace of inclusion, respect, and accountability, where abuse, exploitation, and harm are not tolerated, and survivors' needs are prioritised. Our inclusive approach promotes a culture of continuous learning and improvement, recognising the importance of reflecting on our experiences and ensuring we have the skills and experience to support this.



## 4. IMPLEMENTATION



### A victim/survivor-centred approach

- 4.1 SCUK has adopted a survivor-centred approach to safeguarding from initial reporting, to responding to a potential concern, to management of a concern, including conducting an investigation, follow-up actions, and other case management-related responsibilities.
- 4.2 A survivor-centred approach is one which places the survivor's experiences, considerations, and needs at the centre of our processes and actions, elevates the voice of survivors, and places their wishes, rights, dignity, safety, and wellbeing at the forefront of efforts to prevent and respond. This occurs from the initial concern or report, through to investigating, responding to concerns and potential incidents, follow-up actions, and case management.
- 4.3 A victim/survivor-centred approach aims to ensure the rights of each survivor are upheld, and that each survivor is treated with dignity and respect. By putting the survivor at the centre of the process, such an approach promotes their recovery, reduces the risk of further harm, and reinforces their agency.
- 4.4 Refer to 'Definitions' in Section 2.2 for a list of the terms used throughout this Protocol and their associated definitions.

### Principles of a victim/survivor-centred approach

- 4.5 The principles outlined in this Protocol apply to anyone who is a survivor of abuse, exploitation, and harm within the work of SCUK and are used as a guide to response and management of safeguarding incidents, reports, and concerns.

## COLLABORATION



SCUK collaborates with every survivor to ensure that their safety and needs are prioritised, and their choices are respected. This includes respecting their choice if they decide not to participate in an investigation run by us. Where government institutions are running large-scale investigations into historical, or non-recent, child abuse, relevant to Save the Children, SCUK will endeavour to cooperate with these processes wherever possible.

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND TRUST



Every survivor has the right to choose who they talk to and what information they choose to disclose. Maintaining confidentiality builds trust. It means that information will only be shared internally within SCUK on a need-to-know basis and SCUK will keep the survivor (or their parent/s or guardian) informed about how and why the information they disclose will be used, stored and shared.

SCUK will take all reasonable steps to protect the privacy of the survivor and will only share their name or other identifying details where necessary. Where it is deemed necessary to share identifying information with external third parties, this will only be done after consulting the survivor (or their parent/s or guardian) and assessing any possible impact on their security or wellbeing. In some exceptional circumstances, where a certain threshold of risk of further harm is met, SCUK may need to share information (for example, with the Police) regardless of whether a survivor has been consulted but will inform the survivor of this decision, the reasoning, and the next steps.

If the survivor does not want their details shared with the Subject of Concern ('SoC'), SCUK will respect this decision, and the survivor's name and identifiable information will not be shared with the SoC at any point (i.e., the initial notification of the allegation, during the interview and when notifying them of the findings). However, the SoC may be able to accurately deduce who the survivor/victim is, based on the allegation. This will vary on a case-by-case basis, but it is important for the survivor to understand the limits of confidentiality, and to factor this into any safety planning.

Witnesses and the SoC are requested to maintain confidentiality around the case with SCUK colleagues and professional contacts during an investigation and after case closure. SCUK recognises this can be difficult and will signpost individuals to support. We also ask that survivors maintain confidentiality around the incident within the workplace as far as is reasonable (recognizing, for example, that they may need to speak to friends and family for support).



All information, including evidence gathered as part of an investigation, will be securely stored and access to that information will only be on a strict need-to-know basis or subject to individuals' legal right of access.

## CULTURAL COMPETENCE

We create culturally safe environments, and ensure that our staff, volunteers, and representatives are culturally responsive, reflective, and aware of the needs of children and their families.

## EMPOWERMENT

Survivors are empowered by having their rights, needs, and choices prioritised. If a survivor requests a formal apology from the organisation, we will endeavour to provide this wherever possible.

## NON-DISCRIMINATION

SCUK provides equal, fair, and non-biased treatment to anyone in need of support.

## RESPECT

All actions are guided by respect for the survivor's choices, wishes, rights, and dignity.

## SAFETY

The safety of the survivor is the highest priority.

## TRUST

SCUK builds a relationship of trust with survivors through collaboration, transparent decision-making, maintaining confidentiality, prioritising safety, and respecting survivor's choices.

Practicing a survivor-centred approach means establishing a relationship with the survivor that promotes their emotional and physical safety, builds trust, and helps them to restore some control over their life.

This includes ensuring:

- The safety and security of the survivor, any dependents, witnesses, or whistle-blowers.
- The survivor's wishes (self-determination) and best interests are central to action.
- The survivor is treated with dignity and respect, listened to carefully and taken seriously.
- The survivor's experiences are validated, they are empowered, and their strengths are emphasised.
- A timely response at each stage.
- That survivors have access to appropriate, accessible, and quality services, support and information.
- Where a survivor is a child, the best interests of the child are central to a survivor-centred approach.
- That survivors of historical child abuse are able to access appropriate, relevant records that SCUK holds which may relate to their experience.

This approach:

- Reflects a commitment to providing available support and assistance to survivors and to anyone who experiences abuse, exploitation, and harm by SCUK staff, volunteers, representatives, or partner staff. This may include medical treatment, accessing legal assistance, psychosocial support, and protection services.
- Will offer support through the same channels to representatives and partner staff as far as practicable. Survivors, witnesses, complainants, and those accused of abuse, exploitation, or harm can choose when and if they would like to take up the support options available to them.
- Requires that SCUK talks to and listens to the survivor in ways adapted to each individual and appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the survivor.
- Ensures survivors, advocates, and witnesses are able to report in ways they feel comfortable and safe.
- Ensures feedback is provided to the survivor, SoC, person who made the initial report, wider community, and public. This supports the principles of accountability and being survivor-centred.

## Survivor-centred practices when responding to an initial disclosure

While SCUK has multiple reporting channels available (including our online reporting system Clue, the [FocalPoint@savethechildren.org.uk](mailto:FocalPoint@savethechildren.org.uk) email and Integrity hotline), children and adults often choose to disclose harm in person, 1:1, to someone they trust. For this reason, it is important that all staff and volunteers know how to respond to a disclosure of harm, and what to do next.

Remember that if someone has shared a concern or information with you that involves harm (or a risk of harm) towards a child or vulnerable adult in the communities in which we work, you are required to report all relevant information to the Safeguarding team as soon as possible, and always within **24 hours**, even if the survivor does not consent to having their information shared.

If a staff member or a volunteer survivor/victim discloses harm to you, perpetrated by another staff member or adult volunteer, and no children or vulnerable adults are involved, you still need to share it with HR, via Clue or another reporting channel, even if the survivor declines to report the abuse themselves. This supports your obligations under the Code of Conduct, which states that you must report any concerns you may have about the actions or behaviour of anyone working with or on behalf of Save the Children UK. If the survivor does not want their name or identifiable information shared, you must respect this and share your concern without sharing their name or other identifiable information (but only where the survivor is not a child or vulnerable adult).



## 4.6 When interacting with survivors – remember to look, listen, and link:



**Look** at and identify the immediate needs of the survivor; any urgent medical/ psychological or other needs that should be treated first. If a survivor needs medical attention, this will be dealt with before any further support is offered or provided.



**Listen** to the survivor. They can choose what information to share, with whom, and when. They do not have to tell anyone everything about the incident, they can simply outline what support they need or want.



**Link** the survivor to the Safeguarding/ HR team (with their permission, otherwise you should share a report which doesn't name the survivor) and ask the survivor which support networks they already have (for example friends, family) and encourage them to reach out to them for support.

**4.7** Where the survivor is a child or at-risk adult without capacity to consent, SCUK engages with their parent/s or guardian/s and obtains parental/guardian consent (unless the parent/ caregiver is the perpetrator) and the child's assent prior to linking the child to relevant services.

**4.8** This approach helps survivors to:

- feel safe, connected to others, calm, and hopeful.
- have access to social, physical, and emotional support.
- feel able to help themselves, as individuals and communities.

# DOS AND DON'TS AND WHAT TO SAY



## LOOK

### DO

**DO** allow the survivor to approach you. Listen to their needs.

**DO** ask how you can support with any basic urgent needs first. Some survivors may need immediate medical care or clothing.

**DO** ask the survivor if they feel comfortable talking to you in your current location. If a survivor is accompanied by someone, do not assume it is safe to talk to the survivor about their experience in front of that person.

**DO** provide practical support like offering water, a private place to sit, a tissue etc.

**DO**, to the best of your ability, ask the survivor to choose someone they feel comfortable with to translate for and/or support them if needed.

### DONT

**DO NOT** ignore someone who approaches you and shares that they have experienced something bad, something uncomfortable, something wrong, and/or violence.

**DO NOT** force help on people by being intrusive or pushy.

**DO NOT** overreact. Stay calm.

**DO NOT** ask if someone has experienced gender-based violence, has been raped, has been hit etc. (unless you are a member of the investigation team, in which case you can sensitively ask about the incident)

**DO NOT** pressure the survivor into sharing more information beyond what they feel comfortable sharing. The details of what happened and by whom are not important or relevant to your role in listening and providing information on available services.

**DO NOT** make promises that cannot be kept, such as promising not to share information with other relevant parties.

## DOS AND DON'TS AND WHAT TO SAY

### LOOK



## EXAMPLES OF WHAT TO SAY...

*“ You seem to be in a lot of pain right now, would you like to go to the health clinic? ”*

*“ Does this place feel OK for you to talk? Is there another place where you would feel better? Do you feel comfortable having a conversation here? ”*

*“ Would you like some water? Please feel free to have a seat. ”*

*“ What is the most urgent thing you'd like me to help with? ”*

*“ How can I support you? ”*

*“ Do you feel safe in this moment? What would make you feel safe right now? ”*

*“ Is there someone you would like me to contact? ”*

# DOS AND DON'TS AND WHAT TO SAY

## LISTEN



### DO



**DO** be explicit about the boundaries of your confidentiality. Treat any information shared with you sensitively and seek advice about confidentiality. If you need to seek advice on how to best support a survivor or report a safeguarding concern, explain this to the survivor. and seek advice about confidentiality. If you need to seek advice on how to best support a survivor or report a safeguarding concern, explain this to the survivor.

**DO** seek the survivor's permission when doing so, however, be open and transparent where mandatory reporting is required, in particular, where an anonymous report cannot be made.

**DO** manage expectations on your role.

**DO** listen more than you speak.

**DO** say some statements of comfort and support; reinforce that what happened to them was not their fault.

### DONT



**DO NOT** take photos of the survivor, record the conversation on your phone or other device, or share any details with others (except for the Safeguarding, HR and/or investigation team), including the media.

**DO NOT** ask explicit questions about what happened. Instead, listen and ask what you can do to support.

**DO NOT** make comparisons between the person's experience and something that happened to another person. Do not communicate that the situation is "not a big deal" or unimportant. What matters is how the survivor feels about their experience.

**DO NOT** doubt or contradict what someone tells you. Remember your role is to listen without judgment and to provide information on available services.

**DO NOT** Use language or behaviour that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually inappropriate, demeaning, or culturally inappropriate.

**DO NOT** Share your personal contact details (email, phone numbers, social media contacts/platforms, address, webcam, Skype, Zoom etc.) with survivors.

# DOS AND DON'TS AND WHAT TO SAY

## LISTEN



### EXAMPLES OF WHAT TO SAY...

**“** *How can I support you?* **”**

**“** *Thank you for sharing with me.* **”**

**“** *What happened to you is not your fault.* **”**

**“** *I will try to support you as much as I can, but I am not a counsellor. I can share any information that I have on support available to you.* **”**



**“** *Please share with me whatever you want to share. You do not need to tell me about your experience in order for me to provide you with information on support available to you.* **”**

**“** *I'm sorry this happened to you.* **”**

# DOS AND DON'TS AND WHAT TO SAY

## LINK



DO 	DONT 
<p><b>DO</b> respect the rights of the survivor to make their own decisions.</p>	<p><b>DO NOT</b> exaggerate your skills, make false promises, or provide false information.</p>
<p><b>DO</b> share information on all services that may be available.</p>	<p><b>DO NOT</b> offer your own advice or opinion on the best course of action or what to do next.</p>
<p><b>DO</b> tell the survivor that they do not have to make any decisions now, they can change their mind, and access these services in the future.</p>	<p><b>DO NOT</b> assume you know what someone wants or needs. Some actions may put someone at further risk of stigma, retaliation, or harm.</p>
<p><b>DO</b> ask if there is someone, a friend, family member, caregiver, or anyone else who the survivor trusts to go to for support.</p>	<p><b>DO NOT</b> make assumptions about someone or their experiences, and do not discriminate for any reason including age, marital status, disability, religion, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, identity of the SoC/s etc.</p>
<p><b>DO</b> offer your work phone number or email address, if you feel safe doing so, to the survivor to contact someone they trust.</p>	<p><b>DO NOT</b> try to make peace, reconcile, or resolve the situation between the survivor and anyone else (such as the SoC, or any third person such as a family member, community committee member, community leader etc.)</p>
<p><b>DO</b> ask for permission from the survivor before taking any action to link them with support and services.</p>	<p><b>DO NOT</b> promise to keep secrets. You will need to share information about what you have heard with the Safeguarding or HR team. If the survivor is not a child or vulnerable adult, you can anonymise the report; which means removing the survivor's name and identifiable information, if the survivor requests this.</p>
<p><b>DO</b> end the conversation supportively and agree any follow up actions.</p>	<p><b>DO NOT</b> contact the survivor after you end the conversation unless you have a support plan and follow up actions. The survivor may not want further follow-up, which should be allowed and their decision respected.</p>
<p><b>DO</b> tell the survivor if you are making a report, what you are reporting, and to whom it will be made.</p>	<p><b>DO NOT</b> use language that blames the survivor. For example, you can speak about how the SoC should not have behaved the way they did, but do not state that the behaviour of the survivor may have caused an incident to occur.</p>



### EXAMPLES OF WHAT TO SAY...

**“** *I am not a counsellor; however, I can provide you with the information that I have. There are some people/organisations that may be able to provide some support to you and/or your family. Would you like to know about them?* **”**

**“** *Is there anyone that you trust that you can go to for support, maybe a family member or a friend? Would you like to use my phone to call anyone that you need at this moment?* **”**

**“** *When it comes to next steps, what you want and feel comfortable with is the most important consideration.* **”**

**“** *It sounds like you have a plan for how you would like to go from here. That is a positive step.* **”**

**“** *Thank you for sharing this with me. I will need to share some of this information with the HR/Safeguarding team, but if you prefer, I can ensure that your name isn't mentioned [if survivor isn't child or vulnerable adult]. What do you want to do?* **”**



## Risk assessment process within SCUK when receiving a concern or report

**4.9** When establishing a process for prioritising reports of safeguarding concerns, the following is considered and addressed by the Safeguarding or HR team:

- The needs of the survivor and whether they are at risk of repeated harm. Particular attention will be given to survivors where the risk is high, for example: child survivors, adult survivors with a disability or a staff member in close and regular contact with the SoC.
- When the incident occurred (i.e., within the past 24 hours).
- What form of harm the incident involves.
- Whether there are immediate safety risks for the SoC, other members of the community, or staff.



**IMPORTANTLY** – Hard evidence of a safeguarding incident is not needed for a report to be officially logged, investigated, and responded to. Suspicions and rumours are also recorded and, if required, investigated.



**4.10** Risk assessments, action plans and safety plans can be developed in consultation with the survivor for aspects relating to survivor support.

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

Safety and security of survivor, those making the report, witnesses, advocates, and the SoC.

**4.11** Staff members who are survivors of harm may have specific protection needs given they are more likely to know and have regular contact with the SoC. Actions may therefore differ for cases involving a staff member as a survivor. The following is considered and addressed:

1. The risks present for the survivor, advocates, reporters, subjects of the concern, or witnesses following the report of a concern or incident.
2. An action plan to address what actions SCUK will take to protect survivor from retaliation and further harm.
3. How ongoing confidentiality can be maintained. Whether there are risks that confidentiality may be breached and identifying the circumstances in which this may occur.
4. What services are locally available for ensuring safety and security for everyone, in particular for groups most at risk – women’s shelters, shelters for those who identify as LGBTIQ, safe care for children etc.
5. How the outcomes of an investigation will be disseminated in a trauma-informed way.

## MEDICAL SUPPORT SERVICES

**4.12** Survivors may need urgent, medium, and long-term medical support. Service providers are mapped out to enable SCUK to support access to services, based on the survivor’s wishes (see also sections on Safety and security, Mental health and psychosocial and Legal support).

The following is considered and addressed:

1. Whether the survivor wants medical support.
2. How safeguarding referrals to medical support services will link with wider referral pathways (including services that provide medium and long-term medical support) for survivors of abuse, exploitation, and harm, or child protection protocols.
3. Whether the survivor needs a medical certificate from police to access medical care. If so, knowing which service provider they need to see first is important.
4. Whether there are risks to the survivor, witnesses, or the SoC in accessing medical support in the location or because they are a member of staff.

## PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

- 4.13** Survivors will be offered access to, and supported to engage with, rapid and ongoing psychosocial or mental health support, in line with their wishes. It is always the survivor's decision whether to engage with wellbeing support, and the support is offered with no requirement for the survivor to participate in the investigation and can be offered before the conclusion of the investigation (and is not dependent on the outcome).

Mental health support (and other forms of wellbeing support) should also be offered to survivors of historical child abuse, recognising that the impact of childhood abuse can continue long-term.

SCUK's Wellbeing Team can work with the survivor to identify which services are most suitable in the UK. Outside of the UK, the following is considered and addressed:

1. Which services are available locally
2. Whether there is a risk to the survivor, witnesses, or the SoC in accessing medical support in the location, or because they are a member of staff, and the only mental and psychosocial support services are delivered by the organisation implicated or a partner organisation.

3. Whether there are sociocultural norms that make it taboo to speak about mental health issues. Consideration is given to whether there are ways to describe this support that may be more acceptable and/or safer.

## EXTERNAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- 4.14** SCUK has reporting obligations within the UK, internally and externally, to ensure incidents are reported as required and addressed in a robust and timely way.

Examples of when external reporting is required:

- a. police reporting when there are concerns that someone is at immediate risk of significant harm
- b. reporting to the local Children's Services Department when an incident involves a child
- c. consulting with the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer where the survivor is a child
- d. reporting to the local Adult Services Department
- e. serious incident reporting to the Charity Commission
- f. Sharing information with a statutory body running an inquiry into historical cases of child abuse
- g. Reporting to SCI or a different Save the Children member, if the incident involves their funded programmes, their staff member as SoC, or could significantly impact their reputation





**IMPORTANTLY** – the survivor’s immediate wellbeing will be prioritised over and above other actions such as internal reporting requirements, protecting SCUK’s reputation, completing an investigation, [or immediately reporting a concern or incident to legal authorities save where SCUK is under a legal obligation to do so, or other people may be at risk]. For example, SCUK will not delay treatment or support for a survivor whilst waiting for the internal investigation process to commence, or whilst media statements are prepared, or because more information is needed for any investigation.

### Roles and responsibilities

- 4.15** SCUK Safeguarding or HR (depending on whether the survivor is a child or adult in the communities in which we work, or a staff member/volunteer) will determine whether to progress the concern under the Safeguarding Policy and the Safeguarding Case Management SOP, or the Managing Conduct Policy (never to be used for concerns relating to sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment). They will also decide whether to conduct an initial fact-finding exercise, or a full investigation. If an investigation is not conducted, this information will be shared with the survivor, along with the rationale and options to dispute the decision, and an offer of further support.
- 4.16** If the safeguarding concern is investigated, the investigator and case management team will ensure that a survivor-centred approach is central during and following the investigation.
- 4.17** Where the safeguarding concern involves another Save the Children member, for example Save the Children International (‘SCI’), SCUK Safeguarding will work with SCI to ensure that a victim/survivor-centred approach is adopted throughout the investigation, no matter who has responsibility for conducting the investigation.

- 4.18** Where the safeguarding concern is historical (or non-recent) it is handled in a similar way to a current safeguarding concern, unless it has been referred by a government-led institutional.

### Safeguarding survivors during an investigation

- 4.19** During an investigation, SCUK is committed to ensuring that the survivor is appropriately supported in the following ways:

- The survivor will be provided with a continuous contact point in the HR or Safeguarding team to provide support throughout and following the investigation. This contact point will not be connected to the investigation.
- The investigator will ensure that the survivor is informed of the investigation process, including expected timelines, any delays, and the outcome of the investigation.

As per the Safeguarding Case Management SOP, in line with investigation principles, the identities of witnesses to an investigation are not provided to either the survivor or the SoC.

- **When scheduling the survivor’s interview:**
  - Where the survivor is a child, parental/guardian consent is obtained prior to conducting the interview. Once parental/guardian consent has been obtained, the investigator will then seek the child’s assent to participate. If a child does not want to participate in an investigation, their choice is respected.
  - Where the survivor is an adult, their consent to participate is obtained prior to conducting the interview. If a survivor does not want to participate in an investigation, their choice is respected.



**IMPORTANTLY** – a survivor’s decision about whether to engage with an investigation will not affect the provision of wider wellbeing support.

- Careful attention will be paid to the wellbeing of the survivor in deciding when to contact them and when to conduct the interview.
- The investigator will contact the survivor to introduce themselves, explain the investigation process in a manner that is age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate, and answer any questions the survivor may have.
- The investigator will agree with the survivor on the date, time, and location of the interview, as per the survivor's wishes.
- Any support needs identified or requested by the survivor (i.e., a support person, translator, particular location for the interview etc.) will be considered and actioned upon.
- **During the survivor's interview:**
  - The investigator will explain the interview process (i.e., how the interview is being recorded and the scope of the questions) and their role.
  - The survivor is offered the opportunity to have a break at any time during the interview.
  - Questions will be appropriate to the survivor's age and developmental stage.
  - The wellbeing of the survivor during the interview is continually assessed and if they are unable to continue with the interview, consideration will be given to whether to have a break or reschedule the interview.
- Following the interview, the survivor is encouraged to reach out to the Wellbeing team and/or a support person. If the investigator identifies any safety concerns during the interview, these will be immediately reported to the Director of Safeguarding or the Director of People for follow-up.
- The survivor will be provided with a copy of their statement as soon as possible after the interview, and given the opportunity review the statement and provide any feedback on it.

## THE BALANCE OF PROBABILITY

It is important to note that internal Safeguarding investigations do not adhere to the same standards as a criminal investigation. Our purpose is to gather evidence in order to decide how to proceed as an organisation. Safeguarding investigations do not require evidence to be 'beyond all reasonable doubt' (as in a criminal trial), but instead the evidence will be assessed on a '**balance of probabilities**' basis (i.e., it is more likely than not that the incident occurred, or particular facts are true). All investigations are thorough and conducted by trained staff with due diligence, and in line with both our internal procedures and applicable law.

### Case closure

- 4.20 At the conclusion of the investigation, the survivor is notified of the outcome, against each allegation (if there are multiple allegations).
- 4.21 Consideration is given to ensuring that the outcome is explained in a way to the survivor that is appropriate to the survivor's age and developmental stage.
- 4.22 Where the finding of an investigation is unsubstantiated, extra consideration is given to explaining the outcome in a way that is trauma-informed. Appropriate supports will be offered to the survivor.
- 4.23 In line with the Case Management SOP, the investigation findings and the rationale will be shared with the survivor.
- 4.24 Records of the safeguarding incident and investigation are kept (confidentially) on file, as the survivor may still have ongoing support needs that should be addressed. Access to the file is on a need-to-know basis.

## Appealing the investigation outcome

- 4.25** The survivor may appeal against the findings of the investigation team if:
- 4.25.1** They are concerned that procedure was not appropriately followed
  - 4.25.2** They have new evidence to share that is directly related to the original concern

Appealing the findings of an investigation requires Save the Children to look again at the concern and the investigation, to check that the appropriate procedures were followed fully, and that the outcome was fair, and has a clear rationale.

- 4.26** The survivor's name and identifiable details can be redacted in subsequent information sharing, but the grounds of the fully grounds of the appeal need to be shared formally by email (within 7 working days after the outcome is shared) to the Director of Safeguarding or Director of People (or to the CEO, if inappropriate to send to the Director of Safeguarding or HR).

- 4.27** Which appeal process is followed will depend on the case and to some extent the survivor's wishes, and will be determined jointly by the Director of Safeguarding and the Director of People:

- A review of the investigation report and process by an unconnected Manager or Director
- A review of the investigation process, evidence and findings by a small internal investigation team that is independent and unconnected to the original investigation. The team will seek to avoid re-interviewing the survivor, witnesses and/or SoC where possible
- A full re-investigation by an external investigation team (only for cases meeting a certain threshold – which are serious – e.g., life-threatening or traumatic and from which recovery can be expected to be difficult)

**The findings of the appeal will be discussed with the survivor, and the SoC, where appropriate.**

## Harmful Sexual or Abusive Behaviours in Children

- 4.28** Harmful sexual behaviour involves a child or young person (under 18) engaging in sexual activity that is either unwanted or where, due to the nature of the situation, the other party is not capable of giving consent (e.g., children who are younger or who have cognitive impairment). In pre-adolescent children, such behaviour is usually referred to as sexually problematic behaviour.
- 4.29** SCUK is committed to ensuring that staff, volunteers, representatives, and partners have access to training and support which prepares them to prevent, and identify harmful sexual or abusive behaviours and respond, protect, and support children impacted by these behaviours
- 4.30** Where a safeguarding concern involving harm by a child against another child is reported, SCUK commits to support and protect any child/ren who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour and those who have been impacted by the behaviour.



## IN CASES OF HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR BETWEEN CHILDREN, **WE WILL:**

1. Ensure that support is offered in a trauma-informed way to all children involved.
2. Report an incident involving a criminal offence to the Police.
3. Refer the incident to the local Children's Services Department.
4. Speak with parents and carers, as long as this does not put either child/ren at risk of further harm. Ensuring they are informed about the investigation process and seek consent where needed.
5. Assess whether there is any risk that the child impacted by the harmful sexual behaviour will be further harmed by the child displaying harmful sexual behaviour and introduce safety plans where required.
6. Take necessary action to protect and support children who have been impacted by harmful sexual behaviours. This may include sanctions for the child who has exhibited harmful behaviour.
7. Assess whether there are any safety risks for the child with harmful sexual behaviour and introduce safety plans where required.
8. Make referrals for any child/ren who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour as well as those who have been impacted by the behaviour as relevant to child support or therapeutic services.
9. Provide support to children or adults who have witnessed the harmful sexual behaviour.
10. Ensure that any child/ren who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour as well as those who have been impacted by the behaviour, along with all sets of parents/carers, are supported throughout the investigation; and that they are also informed about the investigation process and outcome.

**4.31** An investigation will occur into an incident involving harmful sexual behaviour. The investigation process is similar in terms of the steps taken; however, the critical difference is that an investigation into harmful sexual behaviour focuses on the incident (not the child displaying harmful sexual behaviour) while a safeguarding investigation focuses on the conduct of an SoC and whether they breached SCUK policies or procedures.

## 5. CONFLICT OF INTEREST



- 5.1** If there is a conflict of interest, or risk of retaliation, the best interests of the survivor and the person who made the report are the primary consideration. Examples include where the survivor and SoC are colleagues. Consideration may be given to transferring the SoC to alternate duties such that he/she has no contact with the survivor, or a decision may be taken as to whether to suspend her/him.
- 5.2** All conflicts of interest must be reported to the Safeguarding Department within 24 hours of the conflict of interest being

identified. Conflicts of interest include any member of the Case Investigation team having a close relationship with the survivor or SoC, which influences, or might reasonably be perceived to influence, their impartiality or independence as part of the case investigation team.

- 5.3** Where a conflict of interest arises, either perceived or actual, the decisions taken to manage the conflict form part of the investigation material. They are documented as part of the decision log and securely stored.

## 6. REPORTING TO DONORS AND REGULATORS



- 6.1** As per the Serious Incident Reporting Policy, SCUK reports 'serious incidents' to the Charity Commission for England and Wales. SCUK will not disclose identifying information of the parties to a serious incident, including the survivor except in very rare instances where the identity of the parties is relevant to the impact of the incident on the charity (e.g., it involves a member of SCUK's Board or senior management).

- 6.2** Where SCUK is required to report a safeguarding concern to a donor, only non-identifying information will be given.



**IMPORTANTLY** – The Charity Commission and the police can compel the release of identities. If this occurs, SCUK will inform the survivor and ensure they are supported.

## 7. RESOURCING



- 7.1** SCUK is committed to ensuring the survivor receives timely, appropriate and high-quality support, including survivors of historical (or non-recent) child abuse. This support will be offered after consultation with the survivor, and in line with their wishes.

## 8. REVIEW AND OPERATIONS



- 8.1** This Protocol will be reviewed every three years and survivors will be consulted as part of the review process wherever possible, and where ethical and meaningful participation can be ensured.

# ANNEXES





# 1. ASSOCIATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Type of document	Supporting documentation (available on intranet)
<p><b>Policies</b></p>	<p>Code of Conduct            Communication with Children            Data Protection Policy            Gender Equality Policy            Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery Policy            Imagery Portrayal in Communications Policy            Managing Conduct Policy            Respect at Save the Children Policy            Safeguarding Policy            Serious Incident Reporting Policy            Social Media Policy            Volunteering Policy            Whistleblowing Policy</p>
<p><b>Procedures/ processes</b></p>	<p>Complaints Procedure            Disciplinary Procedure            Grievance Procedure</p>
<p><b>SCI policies, tools, and guidelines</b></p>	<p>Child Safeguarding            Code of Conduct            Data Protection            Guidelines: Dealing with Cases of Suspected Abuse &amp;            Sexual Exploitation            PSEA Policy            Safeguarding Triage Child &amp; Adult Safeguarding Tool            Safety and Security Policy            Whistleblowing Policy</p>
<p><b>Other</b></p>	<p>Raising a Concern            Safeguarding Concerns for the Supporter Care Team at SCUUK            Volunteer Handbook</p>

## 2. DEFINITIONS

### CHILD

Anyone under the age of 18.

### SUBJECT OF CONCERN

The subject of concern is the person/s against who a complaint has been made, or a concern raised.

### VICTIM/SURVIVOR

For the purposes of this Protocol, a victim/survivor is a person who has experienced maltreatment or harm committed by a staff member or associate or as caused by SCUK's operations or programmes. The victim/survivor may be a staff member or a member of the community – child or adult.

“The terms ‘victim’ and ‘survivor’ can be used interchangeably. ‘Victim’ is a term often used in the legal and medical sectors. ‘Survivor’ is the term generally preferred in the psychological and social support sectors because it implies resiliency.”<sup>2</sup>

- In international development and humanitarian work, those working on sexual and gender-based violence or child protection concerns have most often used the term survivor. It is applicable to any individual who has experienced or been targeted by abuse, violence, exploitation, or neglect.
- The term survivor infers the individual has resilience and, with support, will recover from the incident.
- Whilst organisations should have a position on the term they use, the individual themselves must also be able to choose whether they are referred to as a survivor or a victim.

### VICTIM/SURVIVOR-CENTRED APPROACH

An approach that equips and empowers survivors to take a leadership role in their own life and in the larger movement against the form of abuse, exploitation and/or harm they have endured and overcome, ensuring that prevention and response are non-discriminatory and respect and prioritise the rights, and needs and wishes of survivors.

### TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

An approach that recognises the widespread impact of trauma on a person's health and wellbeing.

Trauma informed approaches understand that trauma can have both immediate and long lasting emotional, neurological, psychological, social and biological effects. Approaches also incorporate an understanding that trauma can impact on survivors in many different ways and recognise the need to work alongside survivors during the recovery phase.

At the centre of a trauma informed approach is the commitment to do no harm. The principles underpinning the SCUK Safeguarding Victim survivor Centred Protocol also support a trauma informed approach. SCUK recognises the signs and indicators of trauma (including vicarious trauma) and responds by ensuring its policies, procedures, operations, and organisational culture is trauma-informed and responsive, and actively seeks to prevent re-traumatisation.

<sup>2</sup> Inter-Agency Standing Committee