Adults at risk protection guidelines and procedures

What is 'abuse'?
'Abuse' is a term that covers a number of ways in which a person may be deliberately harmed. Abuse is usually carried out by someone who is or who is perceived to be in a position of power, trust or authority.

The harm may be physical, psychological or emotional, or it may exploit vulnerability of an adult at risk in more subtle ways. However, harm can also occur less consciously, through naivety or lack of awareness.

For types of abuse, see the appendix to these guidelines and procedures.

People who might abuse
Abuse may happen anywhere and may be carried out by anyone, e.g.

- Parents
- People you consider good and trusted friends
- Informal carers, family, friends, neighbours
- Members of SGI-UK
- Strangers, visitors or guests at SGI-UK centres or activities

What does it mean to safeguard adults at risk?
'Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's well-being is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.'
(Care Act 2014, Statutory Guidance updated 2019)

All adults should be able to live free from fear and harm. But some may find it hard to get the help and support they need to stop abuse.

An adult may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation due to many reasons, including their mental or physical incapacity, sensory loss or physical or learning disabilities. This could be an adult who is usually able to protect themselves from harm but maybe unable to do so because of an accident, disability, frailty, addiction or illness.

SGI-UK will adhere to the six key principles that underpin adult safeguarding practice that are outlined in the Care Act 2014. They are empowerment, prevention, proportionality, protection, partnership and accountability. Reflecting these principles, we will ensure that

any adult with care and support needs is involved in decision making, and that any safeguarding action agreed is the least intrusive response to the risk. Partners from the community should be involved in any safeguarding work in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.

Protecting ourselves and others

SGI-UK expects staff and volunteers to abide by its code of conduct for members, published on its website.

In addition, to protect the purity of the realm of faith, three guidelines were given to members by second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda (see *The New Human Revolution*, Volume 8, Chapter 3, 'Pure Stream'). These guidelines, which still apply today, encouraged members not to borrow money from or lend money to each other, and not to make financial gain from members or the organisation (for example, taking great care in the case of business partnerships or employing members, and not expressly using the organisation to approach members to sell goods or services). Further, guidance about personal relationships underlined that we cannot build our happiness on the unhappiness of others, and must treat fellow members with great respect, treasuring each other. In addition, also to protect the purity of the realm of faith, SGI-UK asks its members to observe the law of the land, for example on taking or dealing drugs. Leaders and venues for meetings should not be associated with illegal drug-taking. There should not be any drugs present at any activities within our organisation, or at any of our meetings.

Protecting those with psychological disorders

We are aware that those attending our centres and local activities include adults experiencing psychological disorders ranging from mild to severe.

We recognise that as fellow members of SGI-UK, our role **is not** to offer the professional skills to diagnose or help people with psychological disorders.

We are aware the practice of chanting can affect mental health. Alongside seeking professional medical help, we may also need to encourage adults at risk to take some time away from the practice. In these cases, without turning our back on these individuals, we will wait until they have fully recovered and support them in faith when they are ready to practise again.

DBS checks

SGI-UK does not currently hold specific activities for adults at risk. If we do so in the future, we will safely recruit the people supporting this activity, including carrying out any necessary DBS checks.

This would not and does not currently apply to general activities such as our discussion meetings, which adults at risk may happen to attend.

Personal guidance

Personal guidance is an activity in SGI-UK where someone has sought and is given encouragement in their faith. It is a positive conversation and is usually conducted by senior members of the organisation with several years' experience of practising Buddhism. Ordinarily, this conversation would happen within a one-to-one setting. However, if an adult

is at risk of abuse, it is highly recommended that such conversations take place with another adult present. Guidance in faith must not be given as an alternative to professional medical, financial or legal advice. When giving guidance and encouragement, leaders must be mindful that they are in a position of trust and responsibility and are bound by SGI-UK's safeguarding policy and procedures.

What to do if you are concerned, or an adult discloses abuse

If someone is in immediate danger, call the police on 999.

If you have any safeguarding concerns please report them using the online reporting form on the SGI-UK members' website at this address https://bit.ly/sgiuksafeguarding or via this QR code

If an adult discloses abuse, it helps to follow these initial steps when listening to them.

- Stay calm and listen patiently.
- Reassure the person they are doing the right thing by telling you.
- Make it clear that you may have to discuss their concerns with others, on a strictly need-to-know basis, if at all possible, with their permission.
- Explain what you are going to do.
- Seek consent from the adult to take action and to report the concern.
- Consider whether the adult may lack capacity to make decisions about their own and other people's safety and well-being. If you decide to act against their wishes or without their consent, you must record your decision and the reasons for this.
- Make a short record of the concern, date and sign it
- Report to the Safeguarding team via Sanda McWilliam and send your report via email, or the online reporting form on the SGI-UK members' website.
- **Do not** make comments or judgements other than to show concern, promise to keep secrets, confront the alleged perpetrator or attempt to investigate a criminal allegation.

What the Safeguarding team will do regarding a concern about an adult at risk
When a concern is reported, the Safeguarding team will help to determine the correct course of action, in consultation, where appropriate, with its advisory board and national leaders and/or with the local authority Safeguarding Partnership in the county where the concern originates.

What the Safeguarding team will do regarding an allegation against a volunteer or staff member
When an allegation is made against a person in a position of trust (PIPOT), the Safeguarding team will help to determine the correct course of action based on an internal investigation, and where appropriate, in conjunction with local authority Safeguarding Partnership in the county where the concern originates.

Referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service
If an allegation against a staff member or volunteer is substantiated the Safeguarding team will discuss with the local authority Safeguarding Partnership in the county where the concern originates whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for consideration of inclusion on the barred lists.

Reporting to the Charity Commission
The Safeguarding team will report serious incidents to the Charity Commission. A serious incident is one which risks significant harm to SGI-UK's beneficiaries, staff, volunteers or those who come into contact with us, or risks harm to SGI-UK's work or reputation. How to report: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity

Secure, confidential record-keeping
SGI-UK understands its responsibility for secure and careful record-keeping. Records are kept in a locked cabinet or safe or in a password-protected electronic file. Access to these records is only for the Safeguarding team. SGI-UK understands that many abuse cases come to light years later, so it will keep its Safeguarding records safe for at least 50 years. This will include relevant documents and related correspondence.

Appendix

Types and signs of abuse
Types of abuse The 2014 Care Act identifies nine types of abuse, all of which have a psychological/emotional aspect.

1. Physical abuse
2. Sexual abuse
3. Neglect and acts of omission
4. Organisational abuse
5. Self-neglect
6. Modern slavery
7. Domestic abuse
8. Discriminatory abuse
9. Financial or material abuse

Types and signs of abuse, in more detail

Physical

- Bodily assaults resulting in injuries e.g. hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.
- Medical/healthcare maltreatment.

Some signs of physical abuse
NB: Ageing processes can cause changes, which are hard to distinguish from some aspects of physical assault e.g. skin bruising can occur due to blood vessels becoming fragile.

- A history of unexplained falls or minor injuries.
- Bruising in well-protected areas, or clustered from repeated striking.
- Finger marks.
- Burns of unusual location or type.
- Injuries found at different states of healing.
- Injury shape similar to an object.
- Injuries to head/face/scalp.
- History of moving from doctor to doctor, or between social care agencies; reluctance to seek help.
- Accounts which vary with time or are inconsistent with physical evidence.
- Weight loss due to malnutrition; or rapid weight gain.
- Ulcers, bed sores and being left in wet clothing.
- Drowsiness due to too much medication; or lack of medication causing recurring crises/hospital admissions bodily impairment e.g. malnutrition, dehydration, failure to thrive.

Sexual

- Rape, incest, acts of indecency, sexual assault.

- Sexual harassment or sexual acts to which the person has not consented, or could not consent or to which they were pressured into consenting.
- Sexual abuse might also include exposure to pornographic materials, being made to witness sexual acts; also sexual harassment, with or without physical contact.
- Sections 16 to 19 of the revised Sexual Offences Act 2003 states that it is illegal for an adult in a position of trust to be involved in sexual activity with under 18s even if they are over the age of consent. A 'position of trust' is a legal term that refers to certain roles and settings where an adult has regular and direct contact with children. SGI-UK acknowledges the passing into law of the extension of positions of trust in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 to include religious leaders. This makes it illegal for religious leaders to engage in sexual activity with under 18s in England and Wales, even if they are over the age of consent.

Some signs of sexual abuse

- Disclosure or partial disclosure (use of phrases such as 'It's a secret').
- Medical signs, e.g. genital infections, pregnancy, difficulty walking or sitting.
- Disturbed behaviour e.g. depression, sudden withdrawal from activities, loss of previous skills, sleeplessness or nightmares, self-injury, showing fear or aggression to one particular person, inappropriately seductive behaviour, loss of appetite or difficulty in keeping food down.
- Unusual circumstances, such as, for example, two people found in a toilet/bathroom area, one of them distressed.

Abuse through neglect

- Ignoring medical or physical care needs.
- Failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational service
- The withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Organisational abuse

- Neglect or abuse within an institution (e.g. hospital/care home) or care provided in own home either as a one-off incident or continuing ill-treatment.
- Poor professional practice, policies or structure of an organisation.

Self neglect

- Alcohol abuse
- Hoarding
- Drug abuse

Some signs of neglect

- Poor physical condition
- Clothing in poor condition
- Inadequate diet
- Untreated injuries or medical problems
- Failure to be given prescribed medication
- Poor personal hygiene

Modern slavery
Examples could include: people working as housemaids, in brothels, cannabis farms, nail bars and agriculture against their will and/or unpaid.

Some signs of modern slavery
- Isolation, not being allowed to travel alone; restricted freedom of movement.
- Poor living conditions, few possessions, no ID documents.
- Unusual travel times – being dropped off early morning or late at night.
- Inappropriate clothing.

Modern Slavery Helpline (UK) 0800 0121 700

Domestic abuse
- Physical, psychological, sexual and financial abuse involving intimate partner or family member.
- 'Honour'-based violence or forced marriage.
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).
- 16 year-olds can be defined as suffering domestic abuse.

Some signs and symptoms of domestic abuse
- Visible injuries or unexplained marks, scars or injuries.
- Making 'excuses' for injuries.
- Controlling and/or threatening relationships.

Psychological/emotional abuse
- Threats of harm, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, enforced isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- Humiliation.
- Bullying, shouting or swearing.

Financial or material abuse
- Misuse or theft of money.
- Exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance.
- Unexplained withdrawal of large sums of money.
- Personal possessions going missing from home.

Some signs of financial or material abuse
- Unexplained or sudden inability to pay bills.
- Unexplained or sudden withdrawal of money from accounts.
- Disparity between assets and satisfactory living conditions.
- Unusual level of interest by family members and other people in the vulnerable person's financial assets.

Discriminatory abuse, language or treatment, because of a person's
- Race/ethnicity
- Sex

- Disability
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Religion

Some signs of discrimination

- Lack of respect shown to an individual.
- Substandard service offered to an individual.
- Exclusion from rights afforded to others, such as health, education, criminal justice.

Other signs of abuse

- Controlling relationships.
- Inappropriate use of restraint.
- Sensory deprivation e.g. deprivation of spectacles or hearing aid.
- Denial of visitors or phone calls.
- Failure to ensure privacy or personal dignity.
- Lack of personal clothing or possessions.

Some signs of psychological or emotional vulnerability

- Isolation
- Unkempt, unwashed appearance; smell
- Over-meticulousness
- Inappropriate dress
- Withdrawnness, agitation, anxiety; not wanting to be touched
- Change in appetite
- Insomnia or need for excessive sleep
- Tearfulness
- Unexplained paranoia; excessive fears
- Low self-esteem
- Confusion

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