



NEW ROMNEY COUNSELLING SERVICES

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Children, Young People and Adults

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Safeguarding Lead	Rosalind Russell	Last reviewed	August 2026
Next review	August 2027	Version	2026.1
Organisation	New Romney Counselling Services	Status	Approved policy

1. Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all clients accessing services provided by New Romney Counselling Services (NRCS), including children, young people and adults.

It also applies to all directors, trustees, staff, counsellors, volunteers, students and anyone working for, or on behalf of, NRCS.

NRCS recognises its responsibility to promote the welfare and safety of everyone who accesses our services and to respond appropriately where there are concerns about abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm.

This policy applies to safeguarding concerns that arise within NRCS services as well as concerns relating to a person's circumstances outside the counselling environment that become known to NRCS.

2. Purpose of this Policy

- To protect children, young people and adults who access services provided by NRCS.
- To provide staff, counsellors, volunteers and students with clear principles and procedures for recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns.
- To ensure safeguarding concerns are taken seriously and responded to promptly and appropriately.
- To promote a culture in which the safety, dignity, rights and wellbeing of everyone using our services are respected.
- To ensure everyone working on behalf of NRCS understands their individual safeguarding responsibilities.

3. Policy Statement

NRCS believes that everyone has the right to live free from abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm.

We recognise our responsibility to provide a safe, respectful and caring environment for children, young people and adults who use our services.

We recognise that some people may be at greater risk because of their age, disability, care and support needs, health, personal circumstances, level of dependency, communication needs or previous experiences.

NRCS is committed to working appropriately with individuals, parents, carers and relevant statutory or voluntary agencies where safeguarding concerns arise.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Concerns about the safety or welfare of a child, young person or adult must never be ignored.

4. Safeguarding Principles

- The welfare and safety of children and young people is paramount.
- Adults should be supported to make their own decisions wherever they have the capacity to do so.
- Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Everyone has the right to equal protection from abuse and harm.
- Safeguarding practice should be inclusive and should not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, sex, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, identity or other protected characteristics.
- Safeguarding adults should, wherever possible, be person-centred and take account of the individual's views, wishes, feelings and desired outcomes.
- Information should be shared appropriately and proportionately where there is a safeguarding concern.
- Safeguarding concerns must be recorded and acted upon appropriately.

5. Understanding Abuse and Neglect

Abuse can occur in many different circumstances and may be carried out by someone known to the person, a family member, partner, friend, professional, carer, another service user or a stranger.

Abuse may be a single incident or a pattern of behaviour and may take place in person, within the home or community, in an organisation or online.

Abuse and Harm Affecting Children and Young People

Physical abuse: Deliberately causing physical harm to a child or young person.

Emotional abuse: Persistent behaviour that adversely affects a child's emotional development or wellbeing, including intimidation, humiliation, rejection, threats or controlling behaviour.

Sexual abuse: Forcing or encouraging a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they understand what is happening. This can include contact and non-contact activity, including online abuse.

Neglect: Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, which may result in serious impairment of their health or development.

Safeguarding concerns may also involve domestic abuse, exploitation, grooming, coercive or controlling behaviour, online abuse and other forms of harm.

Abuse and Neglect Affecting Adults

Physical abuse: Including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication or inappropriate physical restraint.

Sexual abuse: Including sexual activity without consent, sexual harassment, inappropriate touching or sexual exploitation.

Psychological or emotional abuse: Including threats, humiliation, intimidation, coercion, controlling behaviour, isolation or verbal abuse.

Financial or material abuse: Including theft, fraud, scams, coercion relating to money or property, misuse of benefits or inappropriate control of someone's finances.

Domestic abuse: Including physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, controlling, coercive, threatening or economic abuse within intimate or family relationships.

Neglect and acts of omission: Including deliberately or unintentionally failing to provide appropriate care, support, medication, nutrition or access to necessary services.

Discriminatory abuse: Abuse or harassment based upon a person's protected characteristics or other aspects of their identity.

Organisational abuse: Poor or abusive practice within an organisation, care setting or service.

Modern slavery and exploitation: Including human trafficking, forced labour, domestic servitude and other forms of exploitation.

Self-neglect: Where an adult's behaviour or circumstances result in a serious risk to their health, safety or wellbeing.

The presence of one or more of these circumstances does not automatically establish that abuse has occurred. Concerns should nevertheless be taken seriously and considered in accordance with this policy.

6. Children and Young People

When NRCS provides counselling to a child or young person:

- Appropriate consent or permission will be obtained from a parent or guardian where required.
- Confidentiality and its limitations will be explained to the child or young person and, where appropriate, their parent or guardian before counselling begins.
- Where required by NRCS procedures, a responsible adult will remain available while a child is attending a one-to-one counselling session.
- The counsellor will remain alert to indications that the child or young person may be experiencing abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm.

The child's welfare and safety will be the primary consideration when responding to safeguarding concerns.

7. Safeguarding Adults

NRCS recognises that adults can experience abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm.

Particular safeguarding duties apply where an adult:

- Has needs for care and support, whether or not those needs are currently being met by a local authority.
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect.
- As a result of those care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from the risk or experience of abuse or neglect.

NRCS will nevertheless take concerns about the safety and welfare of any adult seriously and consider what action may be appropriate.

When responding to adult safeguarding concerns, NRCS will seek to work in a person-centred way and take account of the individual's wishes, feelings and desired outcomes wherever possible.

However, there may be circumstances where information needs to be shared without the individual's consent, including where:

- There is an immediate or serious risk of harm.
- A child or young person may be at risk.
- Another adult may be at risk of serious harm.
- A serious crime may have been committed.
- There is a legal or statutory requirement to disclose information.

Decisions to share information without consent should be proportionate, appropriately recorded and limited to information necessary for the safeguarding purpose.

8. Responding to a Safeguarding Disclosure or Concern

If a child, young person or adult discloses abuse, or a member of staff becomes concerned about someone's safety:

- Listen carefully and remain calm.

- Take what the person says seriously.
- Allow them to explain what has happened in their own words.
- Do not promise absolute confidentiality.
- Do not investigate the allegation yourself.
- Do not ask unnecessary or leading questions.
- Explain, where appropriate, that information may need to be shared in order to help keep them or someone else safe.
- Make an accurate written record as soon as possible.
- Record the person's own words wherever possible.
- Record the date, time and circumstances surrounding the disclosure or concern.
- Report the concern promptly to the NRCS Safeguarding Lead.

Where there is an immediate danger or risk of serious harm, emergency services or the appropriate statutory safeguarding service should be contacted without delay.

9. Counsellors, Supervision and Safeguarding

Counsellors must work within their professional responsibilities regarding confidentiality, safeguarding and ethical practice.

Where a safeguarding concern arises during counselling, the counsellor should seek appropriate supervision and follow NRCS safeguarding procedures.

Clinical supervision does not replace the requirement to act promptly where someone may be at immediate or significant risk of harm.

Counsellors should clearly record safeguarding concerns, decisions, advice received and any actions taken.

10. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

NRCS respects the confidentiality and privacy of everyone accessing its services.

However, confidentiality is not absolute.

Information may need to be shared where there is a safeguarding concern involving a child, young person or adult.

Where possible and appropriate, the individual should be informed before their information is shared and their views should be considered.

Information should be shared only where there is a legitimate safeguarding reason and should be limited to what is necessary and proportionate.

Staff should not assume that another person or organisation will share information where they hold information that may be important to someone's safety.

A clear record should be kept of:

- What information was shared.
- Who it was shared with.
- When it was shared.
- The reason for sharing it.
- Whether consent was obtained.
- Where consent was not obtained, the reason information was shared without consent.

11. Concerns or Allegations About Someone Working for NRCS

Any safeguarding concern or allegation involving a director, trustee, member of staff, counsellor, volunteer, student or anyone working on behalf of NRCS will be taken seriously.

The concern must be reported promptly to the NRCS Safeguarding Lead.

The person receiving the concern should not attempt to investigate the allegation themselves.

Where appropriate, NRCS will refer the matter to the relevant statutory authority and cooperate with any subsequent safeguarding investigation.

If the concern relates to the Safeguarding Lead, it must be reported to another appropriate senior member of NRCS and, where necessary, directly to the relevant statutory safeguarding authority.

12. Safeguarding Lead

The person responsible for coordinating safeguarding within NRCS is:

Rosalind Russell

The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- Receiving and responding to safeguarding concerns.
- Ensuring appropriate action is taken.
- Seeking advice from or making referrals to statutory safeguarding agencies where necessary.
- Ensuring appropriate safeguarding records are maintained securely.
- Supporting staff, counsellors, volunteers and students in understanding their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Supporting the regular review of safeguarding policies and procedures.

13. Safer Working Practices

NRCS will seek to safeguard people using its services by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them.
- Maintaining appropriate safeguarding procedures and codes of conduct.
- Ensuring staff, counsellors, volunteers and students understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely and carrying out appropriate checks where required.
- Providing appropriate supervision, support and safeguarding awareness.
- Responding promptly to safeguarding concerns or allegations.
- Sharing safeguarding information appropriately and responsibly.
- Working with statutory and voluntary agencies where necessary.
- Maintaining appropriate confidentiality and safeguarding records.
- Reviewing safeguarding arrangements regularly.

14. Record Keeping

All safeguarding concerns, disclosures, decisions and actions should be recorded clearly, accurately and securely.

Records should include:

- The nature of the concern.
- What was seen, heard or disclosed.
- The individual's own words wherever possible.
- The date and time of the concern or disclosure.

- Who was informed.
- Any advice sought.
- Decisions made and the reasons for those decisions.
- Any referrals made.
- Any further action taken.

Safeguarding records must be handled confidentially and stored securely in accordance with NRCS procedures and applicable data protection requirements.

15. Legal and Professional Framework

NRCS will carry out its safeguarding responsibilities with regard to relevant legislation, statutory guidance and professional standards.

The principal legislation and guidance relevant to this policy includes:

- Children Act 1989.
- Children Act 2004.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, including relevant provisions relating to safeguarding and information sharing.
- Care Act 2014.
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance, particularly the provisions relating to adult safeguarding.
- Mental Capacity Act 2005.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).
- Equality Act 2010.
- Sexual Offences Act 2003.
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

NRCS will also have regard to current government guidance concerning the appropriate sharing of information for safeguarding purposes.

Legislation, statutory guidance and professional standards may change. NRCS will therefore review this policy regularly and update its procedures where required.

16. Review of this Policy

NRCS is committed to reviewing this policy and its safeguarding practices at least annually and sooner where there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance or organisational practice.

This policy was last reviewed: August 2026

Next review due: August 2027