

## Roles & Responsibilities of a Circles Volunteer

### WHAT IS CIRCLES SOUTH WEST?

Circles South West is an independent, regional charity established in 2010. Driven by a desire to prevent sexual abuse, we are a competent forward-thinking charity, led by capable and committed people. We are empowered by carefully selected and trained volunteers who support, and hold to account, people who have sexually harmed, contributing to their safe integration into local communities. We do this by providing Circles of Support and Accountability for adults and young people who have sexually harmed living in Dorset, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Avon, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall. We work in close partnership with Police and Probation who have the statutory responsibility for the management of sex offenders in the community, and with relevant young people's services including Youth Offending Teams and Children's Services.

### WHAT IS A CIRCLE OF SUPPORT & ACCOUNTABILITY?

A Circle is made up of 4 or 5 volunteers and a person who has sexually harmed, referred to as the 'Core Member'. They meet on a weekly basis for around 12-18 months, at a suitable community venue.

Circles support the Core Member's reintegration in to the community and hold them to account for their behaviour. This is achieved through talking to them, establishing a rapport, identifying support needs and areas of concern. Volunteers meet together before or after Circles meeting to discuss issues and to offer support to each other. Meeting minutes are provided to the local Circles Coordinator who oversees progress, providing police and probation with regular updates.

### CIRCLES VOLUNTEER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

#### Safeguard

- To promote the welfare of children (under 18) and adults at risk<sup>1</sup> and protect them from harm.
- To promote the welfare of all children and adults at risk and to keep them safe.
- To commit to practice that protects children and adults at risk
- To read, understand and adhere to CSW's safeguarding policies and to undertake safeguarding training relevant to your role

#### Support

- To provide a listening ear
- To reduce emotional loneliness and isolation through the provision of structured support networks

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<sup>1</sup> Before the Care Act 2014, the No Secrets statutory guidance referred to 'a *vulnerable adult*'. The Care Act 2014 has superseded this, and s42 now identifies '*an adult at risk*.' An adult at risk of abuse or neglect is defined as someone who has needs for care and support, who is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect and as a result of their care needs - is unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

- To provide a source of help
- To show empathy but not sympathy
- To encourage independence and discourage dependence
- Maintain a respectful approach and model appropriate relationships and behaviour

### Monitor

- To be able to recognise and manage manipulation and collusion and access appropriate support
- To ensure that the Core Member is engaged in appropriate activity

### Maintain

- To have the ability to assist the Core Member in the development of appropriate support networks
- To keep the Core Member on track with their personal goals identified in treatment
- To be able to achieve a balance between support and accountability
- To be able to work individually and as part of a team
- To be able to maintain confidentiality where appropriate
- To be able to access support when necessary
- To be able to maintain appropriate personal boundaries

### Accountability

- To keep the Core Member accountable to treatment objectives and help support them in leading an offence free lifestyle
- To constructively challenge a Core Member when they display warning signs of entering into high risk behaviour
- To be part of the regular communication system between the Circle and professional agencies who are charged with the risk management of the Core Member
- To keep timely minutes of all Circle meetings and forward to Circle Coordinator within 48 hours of the meeting

Safeguarding is our priority. Therefore, we have in place robust safer recruitment processes, to ensure that we recruit volunteers who are suitable to work with children, young people and adults at risk. We believe that a culture of vigilance and awareness can help our organisation develop and maintain an environment that deters and prevents abuse and challenges inappropriate behavior.