



## **Policies and Procedures of the Chester Sexual Violence Support Service (CSVSS)**

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Signature

Chair of the Board of Trustees

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## **Part 1 BUSINESS**

### **1.1 OBJECTIVE OF CSVSS**

To preserve and protect the health and wellbeing and relieve the distress and trauma of any woman aged 18 years or over; who has experienced or who is experiencing any form of sexual abuse or sexual violence through the provision of support, information and counselling.

### **1.2 STATEMENT OF AIMS**

- 1** To offer confidential telephone support and information, face-to-face counselling, and/or referral to any women aged 18 years and over who has experienced or is experiencing any form of rape, sexual abuse or sexual violence”.
- 2** To provide appropriate and on-going training for all CSVSS workers
- 3** To publicise Chester Sexual Violence Support Service (CSVSS) and raise awareness of rape, sexual abuse and sexual violence against women
- 4** To liaise with and support the wide range of statutory agencies and voluntary organisations working on issues relating to rape, sexual abuse and sexual violence; so fostering effective multi-agency working relationships
- 5** To offer appropriate information and referral to men and children who contact the service.
- 6** To collect information on referrals and monitor service provision in line with the Data Protection Act
- 7** To raise vital funds for the continuation and expansion of CSVSS.
- 8** To work within the value of our Equal Opportunities Policy to ensure parity of service provision and work in line with all other CSVSS policies and procedures and required legislation
- 9** To operate within the membership criteria and to the national standards of Rape Crisis England & Wales
- 10** To offer confidential telephone support and information, face-to-face counselling, and/or referral to any women aged 18 years and over who has experienced or is experiencing any form of rape, sexual abuse or sexual violence”.
- 11** To provide appropriate and on-going training for all CSVSS workers
- 12** To publicise Chester Sexual Violence Support Service (CSVSS) and raise awareness of rape, sexual abuse and sexual violence against women
- 13** To liaise with and support the wide range of statutory agencies and voluntary organisations working on issues relating to rape, sexual abuse and sexual violence; so fostering effective multi-agency working relationships
- 14** To offer appropriate information and referral to men and children who contact the service.
- 15** To collect information on referrals and monitor service provision in line with the Data Protection Act
- 16** To raise vital funds for the continuation and expansion of CSVSS.
- 17** To work within the value of our Equal Opportunities Policy to ensure parity of service provision and work in line with all other CSVSS policies and procedures and required legislation

- 18 To operate within the membership criteria and to the national standards of Rape Crisis England & Wales

## 1.3 CONSTITUTION

CSVSS is managed by a Board of Trustees and operates to a formal constitution. The constitution sets out the aims and objectives of the organisation, the duties and responsibilities of the Board in the furtherance of these aims and objectives.



<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chester Sexual Violence Support Service</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONSTITUTION</b></p>
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This constitution is an amendment of the former CSVSS constitution and was formerly adopted as of the AGM in April 2011.

### Clause 1 NAME

The name of the organisation is Chester Sexual Violence Support Service (herein called “the Organisation” or “the Charity”).

### Clause 2 OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the organisation is:

*“To preserve and protect the health and wellbeing and relieve the distress and trauma of any woman aged 18 years or over; who has experienced or who is experiencing any form of sexual abuse or sexual violence through the provision of support, information and/or counselling”*

### Clause 3 FURTHERANCE OF THE OBJECTIVE

In furtherance of the above objective, but not further or otherwise, the Organisation shall have the power:

- 1 To purchase, take on lease, or in exchange hire or otherwise, acquire any property and any rights and privileges necessary for the promotion of the said objects and construct, maintain and alter any building or erections necessary for the work of the Organisation;
- 2 To raise funds and invite and/or receive contributions from any person or persons whatsoever by way of subscriptions, donations or otherwise provided that the organisation shall not undertake any permanent trading activities in raising funds for its charitable objects;
3. To maintain links with public and local statutory authorities, and local voluntary and charitable organisations, and to liaise and co-operate with such bodies;

4. To procure to be written and print, publish issue and circulate gratuitously or otherwise any reports or periodicals, books, pamphlets, leaflets or other documents;
5. To arrange and provide for or participate in arranging and providing of the holding of exhibitions, meetings, workshops, lectures and classes;
6. To promote, encourage or undertake organised research and experimental work, and disseminate the results of such work;
7. To support and facilitate the development of the Rape Crisis movement and support and facilitate the development of regional and national Rape Crisis agencies;
8. To do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the attainment of the said objects.
9. The Organisation shall be non-party in politics and non-sectarian in religion. The Organisation will promote equal opportunities.

#### **Clause 4 MEMBERSHIP**

1. There are two types of membership to the Organisation:

- (a) Members:

The Members of the Organisation (hereinafter called “the Members”) are the volunteers of the Organisation, both operational and strategic. To become a Member, one must apply in writing to the Board of Trustees and successfully gain a place as a volunteer. When a Member leaves the Organisation for any reason, their membership also ceases.

It is expected that Members attend the AGM and vote Trustees into the positions of Honorary Chair, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer. It is also expected that Members will attend meetings or events as deemed necessary by the Board of Trustees.

- (b) Trustees:

The Trustees of the Organisation (hereinafter called “the Trustees”, “the Board of Trustees” or “the Board”) are the members that are registered as Trustees of the Organisation with the Charity Commission. To become a Trustee, one must apply in writing to the Board of Trustees and successfully gain the position of Trustee. When a Trustee leaves the Organisation for any reason, their position as Trustee also ceases.

It is expected that Trustees will attend all Board of Trustee Meetings and play a role in the governance of the Organisation.

2. A Register of Members will be kept. This will comprise of a record of all Members and Trustees for the financial year. This will be set up at each AGM and kept current throughout the year.

## **Clause 5 SUBSCRIPTIONS**

All members shall pay such subscriptions as the Board may from time to time determine.

## **Clause 6 BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

1. The Organisation shall be managed by a Board of Trustees (hereinafter call “the Board”, “the Board of Trustees” or “the Trustees”) which shall be the charity trustees of the Organisation within the meaning of the Charities Act 1960, 1992, 1993 and 2006.
2. The members of the Board shall be the persons who have been successful in their application to the Board to become a Trustee.
3. From the Trustees, persons shall be elected to the Management posts of Honorary Chair, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer, as mentioned in Clause 12. Such persons named shall hold office from the end of the Annual General Meeting at which they were voted in to the next Annual General Meeting which will be no longer than 15 months.
4. At each Annual General Meeting at least three persons shall be elected to serve in the Management posts of the Board.
5. In the event of any application for representation on the Board being received from any organisation, the Board may, by a resolution passed by a majority of not less than two-thirds of all members of the Board, and for so long as the Board shall determine, allow such organisations to appoint a representative or an additional representative, to service on the Board.
6. Any organisation having representation of the Board may appoint a deputy, without power to vote to replace a representative who is unable to attend a particular meeting of the Board.
8. The Board may from time to time co-opt persons having special knowledge or experience of its work to serve on the Board, provided that the members shall not exceed one-fourth of the total membership of the Board. Such members shall have power to vote at all meetings.
9. No member of the Board shall receive remuneration from the Organisation or the Board (proper expenses excepted) or be interested in the supply of works or goods at the cost of the Organisation or the Board. However, if deemed appropriate, a Trustee may secure paid work through partner organisations to assist in furthering the objectives of the Organisation.
10. Every member of the Board in a Management post shall hold office until the end of the Annual General Meeting next following the date of their election or appointment.
11. The Board may invite any person to attend any of its meetings as an observer without power to vote.

12. A Trustee who has ceased or will cease to hold a Management post within the Board shall be eligible to re-election or re-appointment.

## **Clause 7 RESIGNATIONS, VACANCIES ETC**

1. Any person may resign from membership of the Organisation or the Board by giving the Chair or Secretary at least one month's notice in writing of their intention to do so, stating in such notice the date from which their resignation is to take effect.
2. The Board shall have the power to declare a vacancy in the office of any Trustee or Member who:
  - a. Becomes bankrupt or insolvent
  - b. Is absent from the United Kingdom for a continuous period of twelve months
  - c. Removes their residence to a distance of more than fifty miles from the Organisation
  - d. Is absent, in the case of a Trustee, from the meetings of the Board, for a period of six months or, in the case of a Member, is not in contact with the Organisation for six months.
  - e. Suffers permanent incapacity which would, in the opinion of the Board, restrict the taking part in the Organisation's work
3. If a vacancy arises in the Management posts of the Board before the next AGM, a casual vacancy in the office of said Management post in the Board may be filled by the remaining members of the Board. A casual vacancy in the office of a representative member may be filled by the organisation which they represented.

## **Clause 8 MEETINGS OF THE BOARD**

1. The Board shall hold at least four ordinary meetings in each year and may hold other such ordinary meetings as required.
2. A special meeting of the Board may be summoned at any time by a Chair or by any two members upon seven clear days notice in writing being given to the other members of the matters to be discussed.

## **Clause 9 RULES OF PROCEDURES OF ALL MEETINGS**

1. Voting – Subject to the provision of Clause 16 all questions arising at any meetings shall be decided by a majority of those present and entitled to vote thereat.
2. Quorum – One third of the Board shall form a quorum at Board Meetings. One third of the members shall form a quorum at Annual General Meetings of the Organisation.

3. Minutes – Minutes shall be kept by the Organisation and the Secretary shall enter herein a record of all proceedings and resolutions. Minutes will be kept and filed in electronic format but could be supplied in hard copy if needed.

#### **Clause 10 STANDING ORDERS**

The Board shall have the power to adopt and issue Standing Orders and/or Rules. Such Standing Orders and Rules shall come into operation immediately provided always that they are agreed at an Annual General Meeting or a specially called meeting of the Organisation and are not inconsistent with the provisions of this Constitution.

#### **Clause 11 SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Board may from time to time appoint such sub-committees as may be deemed as necessary, and may determine their terms of reference, powers, duration and composition provided that no sub-committee may be given power to co-opt more than one-fourth of its total membership. It shall be a condition that such sub-committees report back fully all their acts and proceedings to the Board in order to keep the Board fully informed of their actions.

#### **Clause 12 CHAIR**

1. The Organisation, at its first meeting in each year (generally at the Annual General Meeting), shall elect from its Trustees an Honorary Chair, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer. If necessary, two people can be elected to share a position, as Co-Chairs, Co-Secretaries or Co-Treasurers. These are the Management posts within the Board and Trustees elected to these posts shall continue in office until their successors are respectively elected. If the Chair is absent from any meeting the Board present shall, before any business is transacted, choose one of their number to preside at the meeting.
2. If a Member wishes to apply for a Management post within the Board, they must first become a Trustee. This must be done through written application to the Board of Trustees.
3. It shall be a condition that the Chair may not remain in office for more than three consecutive years, and the Secretary and Treasurer may not remain in office for more than five consecutive years, after which time they shall not be eligible for re-election to that office for one year. However, Officers may remain in post for extended periods in exceptional circumstances and with the permission of Organisation Members.

#### **Clause 13 STAFF**

The Board shall have the power to appoint or dismiss such employees (who may be salaried staff) of the Organisation's as it may from time to time determine.

#### **Clause 14 FINANCE**

1. The Honorary Treasurer shall keep proper accounts of the finances of the Organisation and shall pay all monies not immediately required into an account in the name of the Organisation at any such bank as determined by the Board.
2. All monies raised by or on behalf of the Organisation shall be applied to further the objectives of the Organisation and for no other purpose.
3. The account shall be audited at least once a year by a qualified auditor or auditors who shall be appointed at the Annual General Meeting.

#### **Clause 15 HERITABLE PROPERTY**

The title to all and any heritable property which may be acquitted by or for the purpose of the Organisation shall be taken and shall thereafter be vested in Trustees appointed by the Board.

#### **Clause 16 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

1. Annual General Meeting shall be convened by the Board and shall be held at such a place they may determine.
2. The first Annual General Meeting after the adoption of this Constitution shall be held in the month of April. Subsequent Annual General Meetings shall be held at intervals not exceeding fifteen months.
3. All Members and Trustees shall be invited to the Annual General Meeting.
4. A Register of Members will be created at each Annual General Meeting.

#### **Clause 17 DISSOLUTION**

1. If the members resolve to dissolve the Charity the Trustees will remain in office as Charity Trustees and be responsible for winding up the affairs of the Charity in accordance with this clause.
2. The Trustees must collect in all the assets of the Charity and must pay or make provision for all the liabilities of the Charity.
3. The Trustees must apply any remaining property or money:
  - (a) directly for the Objects;
  - (b) by transfer to any Charity or charities for purposes the same as or similar to the Charity;
  - (c) in such other manner as the Charity Commission for England and Wales ("the Commission") may approve in writing in advance.
4. The members may pass a resolution before or at the same time as the resolution to dissolve the Charity specifying the manner in which the Trustees are to apply the remaining property or assets of the Charity and the Trustees must comply with the resolution if it is consistent with paragraphs (a)-(c) inclusive in sub-clause 3 above.

5. In no circumstances shall the net assets of the Charity be paid to or distributed among the members of the Charity (except to a member that is itself a Charity).
6. The Trustees must notify the Commission promptly that the Charity has been dissolved. If the Trustees are obliged to send the Charity's accounts to the Commission for the accounting period which ended before its dissolution, they must send the Commission the Charity's final accounts.

#### **Clause 18 POWER OF AMENDMENT**

1. The Charity may amend any provision contained in this Constitution provided that:
  - (a) no amendment may be made that would have the effect of making the Charity cease to be a Charity at law;
  - (b) no amendment may be made to alter the Objects if the change would not be within the reasonable contemplation of the members of or donors to the Charity;
  - (c) any resolution to amend a provision of this constitution is passed by not less than two thirds of the Trustees.
2. A copy of any resolution amending this constitution shall be sent to the Commission within twenty one days of it being passed.

This constitution was agreed at a Meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011 by the persons named below in their capacity as the Board of Trustees for 2010/11 (Management posts elected on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2010) and by a unanimous vote by all members attending.

Helen Black – Honorary Chairperson and Trustee  
Karen Brownhill – Honorary Co-Secretary and Trustee  
Lillian Vernon – Honorary Co-Secretary and Trustee  
Michelle Barrington – Honorary Treasurer and Trustee  
Dinah Dunkerley – Trustee  
Kelly Littler – Trustee  
Su Sisung - Trustee

The statement of aims (section 1.2) is an amendment of the former CSVSS statement of aims. The new statement was adopted on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2010.

This policy and procedures document was presented for consultation at the annual general meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2011. It was amended and approved by the Board of Trustees on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2011.

## **1.4 SERVICES**

CSVSS provides a free, confidential and non-judgemental service, run by women for women, who have experienced any form of rape or sexual abuse at any time.

Our service user group consists of both direct and indirect service users, i.e. those who have experienced rape and/or sexual abuse directly and those who have been indirectly affected by rape and/or sexual abuse such as family members and supporters of survivors; both of whom can either self-refer or be referred by other professionals.

Once referred, service users can access a number of services including:

- Telephone support and information via a support line that operates on Monday and Wednesday evenings between 6.00pm and 8.00pm, Saturday between 10.00am and 1.00pm. There is an answer machine at all other times.
- Individual face to face counselling sessions for survivors
- Telephone support for family and friends of the survivor

CSVSS also signposts to other agencies and organisations where we are unable to provide support, or feel that more appropriate support could be accessed from a different agency.

## **1.5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Monthly statistics are compiled based on the number of referrals and support line calls, therefore service provision is logged. At no time is any personal data included in this compilation of statistics. The volume of service users/calls to the helpline, along with the socio demographic factors of service users, where known, are gathered for funding purposes and to provide information to stakeholders.

## **1.6 PROMOTION AND PUBLICITY**

CSVSS promotes and publicises its services in a number of ways including education and training and through the publication of informative and educational material.

## **1.7 MEDIA POLICY**

- The Chair of the Board of Trustees will be the first point of contact.
- If unavailable, journalists should be directed to another Board Member.
- Personal telephone numbers must not be given to journalists.
- Volunteers should not handle media enquires related to CSVSS
- Volunteers have a duty to protect service user confidentiality
- Information that will lead to the identification of a service user or their use of CSVSS services will not be divulged without their absolute informed consent.
- CSVSS is happy to obtain media coverage for a CSVSS fundraising or awareness raising event.

## **1.8 WEBSITE POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

### **1.8.1 Purpose**

The CSVSS World Wide Web site supports the mission and purposes of the charity by promoting CSVSS and providing on-line access to information resources in support of those affected by sexual violence and abuse. The website can be used by anyone as this is publicly usable and accessible.

The website should appear uncluttered, unobtrusive and simple to comprehend in regards to navigation and site usage. Warm complimentary colours schemes should be employed to present a welcoming and enticing user experience. The homepage will contain relevant information regarding the usage of the site and provide links to other pages which have a fixed content.

The purpose of the CSVSS website is to:

- a. Promote itself as a reputable regional charity.
- b. Provide for consistent and accurate information about CSVSS to the general public, the professional community and the survivors.
- c. Promote and highlight the quality of its service
- d. Provide awareness and understanding of sexual violence and abuse, publicising Chester Sexual Violence Support Service
- e. Facilitate Volunteer recruitment.
- f. Facilitate fund raising.
- g. Facilitate Donations

### **1.8.2 Changes**

Any additions or changes to these policies, basic features or content must be approved by a member of the Board of Trustees.

### **1.8.3 Linking**

The website will maintain web links with relevant information and resource websites, and may link specific pages on those sites as needed with permission from the source.

### **1.8.4 Anonymity**

No personal information, including full names, personal telephone numbers, personal postal addresses and personal email addresses shall be featured on this website.

### **1.8.5 Internet Registration**

The website shall be registered with the domain name of [www.csvss.org.uk](http://www.csvss.org.uk),

### **1.8.6 Scope**

The scope of the Board of Trustees responsibilities will be to:

1. Provide oversight by reviewing the website content to ensure it conforms to the approved Website Policy.

2. Advise on the overall design, direction, priorities and content of the website.
3. Select a web team that will do the design, build and day-to-day maintenance of the website. Review and approve designs and updates with the web team as appropriate.
4. Review and evaluate the performance of the website hosting provider, domain registrar and web team, and provide feedback and suggest changes as needed.
6. Periodically review the Website Policies and suggest changes as needed.

### **1.8.7 Procedures**

1. The Board of Trustees will periodically review the website.
2. The Board of Trustees may designate a meeting open to the volunteers to discuss the website. The Chair may approve the invitation of an outside guest to discuss the website.
3. The Board of Trustees, in coordination with the web designer, will respond to questions about the website from the volunteers, and if appropriate, from the public.

## **1.9 STATEMENT OF INSURANCE COVER**

CSVSS is covered by a number of relevant insurance policies, all of which are kept in the office at CSVSS. All insurance policy documents can be accessed by request to the Board of Trustees. The policies include cover for:

- Office Contents
- Public Liability
- Professional Indemnity

## **1.10 STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

CSVSS is a charity and as such the Trustees give permission for workers to raise funds to enable CSVSS to function in line with its Aims and Objectives. It is the responsibility of the Trustees to ensure that any such funds are spent (or earmarked) for the purposes for which they were raised and that the organisation remains viable. Financial viability is about being able to generate sufficient income to meet operating payments, any debt commitments and, where applicable, to allow growth while maintaining service levels.

CSVSS works firmly within the legal boundaries and recommendations for good practice, laid out by the Charity Commission and as such a number of measures are in place to ensure financial viability.

- No CSVSS Trustee has been declared bankrupt, nor has been involved with a business failure (e.g. liquidation, voluntary administration or receivership)
- All Trustees are aware of good fundraising practices, and approve both the fundraising methods and any appeal literature that will be used on their behalf and outline financial viability in the Annual Report

- All Trustees are named in the list of delegated authorities
- CSVSS accounts are annually audited by our qualified accountant
- A business plan is in place and is renewed on a 3 year basis
- A budget is drawn up for each financial year

Financial viability is assessed via audited accounts, the Business Plan with budget and financial projections are used to calculate financial risk.

## **1.11 PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

CSVSS has links with a number of organisations and is constantly seeking to widen its network of contacts in line with the organisation's Business Plan to develop and maintain networks with agencies concerned with sexual violence) and in order to:

- Publicise the services offered by CSVSS
- Provide an effective signposting service
- Facilitate a multi-agency approach to service provision for women in the Cheshire area
- Increase understanding of the issues surrounding rape and sexual abuse
- Share good practice
- Identify funding opportunities
- Access training programmes, talks and conferences

### **CSVSS is affiliated**

- to Rape Crisis England and Wales
- A Member of North West Regional Network of Rape Crisis

## **1.12 POLICY UPDATES**

Policies and procedures adopted by CSVSS will be monitored, reviewed and updated if legislation changes, following an accident/incident or at least every year.

# **Part 2 HUMAN RESOURCES**

## **2.1 VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT POLICY**

### **2.1.1 Policy**

CSVSS uses means to advertise for volunteers locally that take into account the principles of our Equality and Diversity Policy. Volunteers are recruited either by self-referral or via word of mouth from current volunteers. CSVSS will recruit from a range of organisations, including the local higher education institutions. Applicants are required to complete an application form and two references are required. If the applicant is seeking a placement for a Counselling course, an additional college reference will be required. If successful in this stage the applicant will be interviewed by two Trustees.

### **2.1.2 Induction and Training**

All women wishing to join the organisation, regardless of previous experience / training, must undertake the mandatory internal training programme. A nominated Trustee/s will be responsible for the management of the course. On completion of the training there follows an induction prepared and delivered by the nominated Trustee and the new volunteer will receive an induction pack. New volunteers will be given keys to the building and the opportunity to discuss their future commitments.

Volunteers staffing the phone will shadow an experienced volunteer for at least 3 sessions or until they feel comfortable volunteering alone. All volunteers will be given a 6 month probationary period, when their work will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees. All volunteers will sign a Volunteer Agreement and will familiarise themselves with policies and procedures.

### **2.1.3 College Placements**

CSVSS can provide placements for students completing a Counselling Diploma and these are the requirements.

- A Volunteer Application form must be completed
- The CSVSS Training course must be successfully completed in full.
- A third reference in support of the application from the applicant's college tutor.
- All placement/counselling supervision must take place 'in house' in accordance with the CSVSS Confidentiality Policy (this must be agreed with the applicant's college tutor prior to the commencement of the course).
- Normal volunteer responsibilities apply to placements

### **2.1.4 Commitment of Volunteers**

A minimum commitment is required; this will include attendance at induction, training, supervision and support sessions and the AGM. All volunteers will be expected to make a commitment of volunteering for a minimum 2 sessions per month as set out in the volunteer agreement. If there are particular reasons for a volunteer being unable to honour this level of commitment this may be negotiated with the Board of Trustees. If this minimum commitment has not been met for a two-month period, at any time, without prior explanation, they will be contacted by a member of the Board to discuss whether volunteering should continue.

Where a volunteer shows a lack of activity for a period of up to three months then the volunteer will be asked to retrain. If the volunteer remains inactive for a further three months (six months in total), and in the absence of any mitigating circumstances, they will be asked to return their keys and resign from the service. Time out from the service may be taken, however this must be discussed previously to its commencement. Upon return to the service from time out, a Supervision session must be attended to assess whether the volunteer is fit for work, and to provide updates for the volunteer on any information, training etc.

Monitoring of volunteers will be carried out via supervision and the appraisal system.

## **2.2 VOLUNTEER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

In terms of general responsibilities, all volunteers should refer to their Induction Pack. It is CSVSS policy that any volunteer supporting women face to face must be qualified in counselling to a diploma level, or be in the process of obtaining this qualification.

### **2.2.1 All Volunteers**

- Ensure support to each other and the aims and objectives of the service at all times.
- Ensure the safety and security of the centre at all times, including keeping the location of the Centre confidential, making sure they and service users are safe and ensuring the building is properly locked and alarmed when leaving.
- Provide input to major business matters and decision making which would include changes to the constitution, change of premises, policy changes etc.
- Agree to abide by the decisions made by the Board of Trustees. If a member is unhappy about something in particular, she can refer to the Grievance Policy.
- Attend support meetings
- Attend AGM
- Fill in Activity Sheets on a monthly basis to provide essential statistics.

### **2.2.2 Counselling Volunteers**

All volunteers who offer face-to-face counselling with service users must have successfully completed or be in the process of completing a counselling programme certified by the BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy).

- Attend supervision sessions with their Supervisor at a frequency of no less than 1.5 hours per month.
- The Supervisor must be one which has been approved by CSVSS.
- Participate in reviews with the Project Coordinator.
- Complete reviews with their Supervisor.
- Ensure all appointments are logged in the appointment book (and any cancelled appointments are noted as such)
- Maintain good communication with operational volunteers and the Project/Volunteer Coordinators
- Attend at least 50% of the CSVSS support meetings and the AGM.

### **2.2.3 Operational Volunteers**

- Answer the telephone, providing practical and emotional support to callers
- Refer callers on to other organisations
- Ensure telephone log book is kept up-to-date and that all outstanding calls are followed up
- Ensure appointment book is up to date for the shift
- Greet clients (and friends/family members who accompany them) at the door
- Make tea or coffee for clients and counsellors if needed
- Attend at least 50% of the CSVSS support meetings and the AGM
- Have regular supervision meetings with the Volunteer Coordinator at a frequency no less than every other month.

## **2.3 SUPPORT, SUPERVISION AND APPRAISAL**

This is provided by supervision sessions and support meetings. Volunteers must attend Supervision sessions to ensure the wellbeing of both the volunteer and service user. Support meetings are part of the minimum requirement of volunteers. These meetings provide updates, training, support, information and the opportunity to discuss practice, policies and procedures.

### **2.3.1 Appraisals**

The first appraisal for new volunteers is at six months and thereafter on an annual basis. The appraiser is either the Volunteer Coordinator or Project Coordinator.

### **2.3.2 Supervision of Telephone Support Workers**

Supervision meetings will be held with the Volunteer Coordinator at a frequency no less than once every other month. Meetings will be conducted either face to face or over the telephone, whichever is more convenient for the volunteer.

### **2.3.3 Supervision of Volunteer Counsellors**

Chester Sexual Violence Support Service (CSVSS) abides by the BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy (2010) and therefore upholds its aim to maintain competent practice by requiring all of its counsellors to have regular and on-going formal supervision/consultative support. The agency sees the key functions of supervision as being “educative, supportive and managerial” (Hawkins & Shohet, 2000), and a main component of the robust safeguards we have in place for clients. It also values supervision as a learning process, and wishes in it ethos, procedures and practices to support the work undertaken by both internal and external supervisors.

### **Key Principles**

The responsibility for ethical practice remains with the counsellor. All supervision will be independent of managerial relationships. The supervisory relationship will work towards being a collegiate one between two professionals of equal standing. All supervisors (internal and external) must be approved by CSVSS. The limits to confidentiality must be clear, and overtly discussed between the counsellor and supervisor.

A supervisor has the responsibility to promptly inform both the counsellor and the relevant CSVSS line manager if he/she believes that the principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, justice, fidelity and/or self-respect are being violated by the counsellor in her work with CSVSS clients.

### **CSVSS Requirements of Supervisors (Internal and External)**

CSVSS regards the following as essential requirements:

- Be committed to CSVSS and its aims, and to the development of a learning culture within the organisation.
- Agree to abide by the relevant CSVSS policies and procedures.
- Be qualified to at least diploma level in counselling/psychotherapy.
- Have a minimum of three years post-qualification regular, relevant, on-going and current experience as a counsellor or psychotherapist.
- Be BACP Accredited as a counsellor/psychotherapist, OR, be eligible for BACP Accreditation i.e. have a minimum of 450 counselling hours experience, accrued over a minimum of three years post qualification.
- Hold a recognised supervision qualification.
- Be prepared to sign a supervision contract with the organisation, and also have written contracts/agreements in place with each individual supervisee.
- Be able to provide a suitable room in which the supervision can take place.
- Make use of regular supervision/consultancy for supervision work.

- Engage in counselling or therapy for themselves as necessary or appropriate.
- Be willing to attend meetings to support the best interests of the supervisee, agency and therefore, the client.
- Be open to the sharing of information, in an appropriate way, regarding progress where the counsellor is a trainee.
- Be supportive of supervisees' on-going professional development by writing reports as and when required by the agency or counsellor, for example, for BACP Accreditation.
- Be committed to ensuring that counsellors engage in anti-discriminatory practice.
- Be a member of BACP, or another equivalent professional body. If the supervisor is not a member of BACP, CSVSS requires him/her to inform the organisation of the name of the professional body to which he/she belongs, and its contact details.
- Have appropriate Professional Indemnity Insurance for their supervision work.

### **The approval process**

In order to be included on the list of approved supervisors, CSVSS asks practitioners to do the following:

- Submit a current C.V. or career resume to the Project Coordinator, giving the names and contact details of two referees.
- Attend a brief, informal interview at CSVSS premises if asked to do so.
- Provide CSVSS with the name and contact details of the professional body to which he/she belongs, and its contact details (if not a member of BACP).
- Sign one copy of the CSVSS supervision contract and return it to the Project Coordinator; retain the second copy for his/her own records. (See Appendix 1).

CSVSS reserves the right to remove a supervisor from the list of those approved should there be any concerns about his/her practice which cannot be resolved through discussion with the supervisor and Project Coordinator, or in the case of his/her prolonged absence, the Chair of the Trustees.

CSVSS does not allow volunteer counsellors to offer supervision to other counsellors within the organisation; this would be potentially problematic in terms of dual relationships and boundaries.

### **Frequency and duration of supervisions sessions**

Trainee/placement volunteer counsellors are required to receive a minimum of one hour supervision session per fortnight by an external supervisor approved by CSVSS.

Qualified (i.e. to Diploma level or equivalent) volunteer counsellors are required to receive a minimum of one and a half hour's supervision per calendar month by an external supervisor approved by CSVSS.

Paid qualified (i.e. to Diploma level or equivalent) counsellors are required to receive a minimum of one and a half hour's supervision per calendar month by an external supervisor approved by CSVSS.

## **Procedure for arranging supervision**

CSVSS have a number of approved supervisors, however should a volunteer counsellor (trainee, qualified and paid) already have their own supervisor, this will need to be approved by CSVSS before they can begin working with clients. Counsellors will not be permitted to start working with CSVSS clients until they have seen their new supervisor for at least one session after that supervisor has been approved by CSVSS. It is expected that the supervisor will implement a written agreement with each individual supervisee.

If it becomes apparent that either party feels unable to work with the other, the counsellor will be responsible for finding another supervisor, who will need to be approved by CSVSS via the standard procedures.

The Project Coordinator will keep an up to date record of which counsellor is being supervised by which supervisor.

It is expected that a supervisor will work with a supervisee for a period of no longer than three to five years.

## **Client safety**

The interests of the client are paramount.

In addition, as an organisation CSVSS takes its duty of care to its counselling staff (paid and volunteer) seriously. It would therefore wish for all counsellors to experience supervision as a supportive and enriching process. The Project Coordinator will be approachable and will help any counsellors to address difficulties with supervision.

### **If a supervisor has concerns about the competence of a counsellor he/she will:**

- Address the issue directly with the counsellor. If this fails to resolve the situation, the supervisor will;
- Consult with his/her supervisor of supervision practice, and then again;
- Address the issue with the counsellor. If again this fails to resolve the situation, the supervisor will;
- Inform the Project Coordinator at CSVSS and college (if a trainee), supplying written evidence to support his/her concerns.

The CSVSS Project Coordinator will:

- Investigate the supervisor's concerns by meeting with the counsellor;
- Meet with the supervisor if either party deems this necessary;
- Decide on the appropriate course of action, which may involve either withdrawing the offer of a counselling placement and inform the relevant training institution (for trainee counsellors) or stopping the counsellor from

seeing CSVSS clients and informing the relevant professional body (for qualified counsellors, paid and volunteer).

- Inform the counsellor and supervisor, in writing, of any decisions made and steps taken.
- Meet with the counsellor (and supervisor if necessary) before the counsellor is permitted to resume work with clients.
- Discuss the situation with the Project Coordinator and/or Chair of Trustees in order to assess whether the organisation's Capability Procedure should be initiated.

#### **If CSVSS has concerns about the competence of a counsellor:**

- The member of staff who has concerns will inform the Project Coordinator, or Chair of Trustees, supplying written evidence to support his/her concerns.
- The Project Coordinator will meet with the counsellor to discuss the concerns, and agree an appropriate course of action. The counsellor will inform his/her supervisor.
- If such a course of action cannot be agreed, the Project Coordinator will contact the counsellor's supervisor, with the counsellor's knowledge, but with or without the counsellor's consent to do so. The Project Coordinator may make initial contact with the supervisor by telephone but will also supply written evidence of his/her concerns.
- CSVSS would then expect the supervisor to address its concerns with the counsellor in person, and inform the Project Coordinator of the outcome of this discussion.
- If necessary, the counsellor, supervisor or Project Coordinator could request a meeting between all parties to discuss the situation and agree a course of action.
- If no resolution is possible the Project Coordinator may decide to withdraw the offer of a placement and inform the relevant college (for a trainee), or stop the counsellor seeing CSVSS clients and inform the relevant professional body (for a qualified counsellor).
- The Project Coordinator will also discuss the situation with the Chair of the Trustees in order to assess whether the organisation's Capability Procedure should be initiated.

#### **If a counsellor has concerns about the competence of a supervisor:**

- The counsellor will address her concerns with the supervisor in the first instance.
- If she feels unable to do this, or, having done it feels dissatisfied with the outcome, she will speak to the Project Coordinator.
- The Project Coordinator will communicate with the supervisor and investigate the counsellor's concerns.
- If it is deemed necessary the supervisor may be removed from CSVSS's list of approved supervisors, either on a temporary or permanent basis. The Project Coordinator may also inform the supervisor's professional body, if this is deemed necessary. CSVSS will inform the supervisor if either of these measures are applied.
- The counsellor will be free to select another supervisor.

## **Supervisee/Supervisor Disagreement**

If for any reason the relationship between the counsellor and supervisor becomes strained, and the two parties are unable to resolve the difficulties, the issues causing concern should be brought to the attention of the project Coordinator. A meeting between the supervisor, supervisee and Project Coordinator may be arranged, with a decision taken as to the best way forward.

Should there be irretrievable breakdown in the relationship between the counsellor and supervisor, there is a responsibility on both parties for the ending to be managed as well as possible. The counsellor should inform the Project Coordinator if/when such a breakdown in relationship occurs, and if a trainee, the counsellor should also inform his/her college tutor. The Project Coordinator will provide the counsellor with a list of approved supervisors or the counsellor can choose their own, which would need to be approved. Should the supervisor have concerns about the counsellor's competence following the breakdown of the relationship he/she should follow the procedure outlined in Client Safety (above).

## **In the case of serious illness or sudden incapacity of a supervisor**

It is imperative that the Project Coordinator is informed in order for the organisation to make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the relevant counsellors.

## **Reports, Reviews and Records**

The supervisor should be prepared to write reports as and when required by the counsellor (e.g. for BACP Accreditation), the agency or college. CSVSS recognises that the process of regular reviews is illustrative of good practice in counselling and supervision. It expects that supervisors will initiate regular reviews with supervisees in order to give consideration to the efficacy of the relationship and to ensure that it remains useful for the counsellor, and therefore supportive of her client work.

The supervisor is responsible for the safety of his/her own written notes, and must ensure that these are inaccessible to others. Notes should be kept for three years after the supervisory relationship has ended, and then destroyed. This is in line with the time limit set by BACP for a professional misconduct hearing against a counsellor. CSVSS suggests that three years is a minimum amount of time for notes to be kept, and is aware that under negligence law a case can be brought against a counsellor for damages up to six years after counselling has ended. For this reason CSVSS suggests that it may be advisable for supervisors to keep notes for a period of six years, once a supervisory relationship has ended.

## **Payment Arrangements**

External supervision

- This will be paid for by CSVSS up to a maximum of an agreed amount (which will be reviewed annually) per calendar month, and for a maximum of one and a half hours per calendar month. Any additional charge should be met by the counsellor, and should be paid directly to the supervisor.

- Payment by CSVSS to supervisors will be made by cheque, on receipt of an invoice which should be sent to the Project Coordinator. Payment will be made within thirty days, in line with business practice.
- External supervisors are not employees of CSVSS and are responsible for disclosing all payments made to the Inland Revenue and other statutory bodies.
- Travel expenses will be paid at the rate of 40p per mile, up to a maximum of a 50 mile round trip. Expenses will be paid on submission of a claim form to the Project Coordinator. For paid members of staff, a maximum of an hour travelling time will be allowed within the designated work time. Any travel time above an hour should be taken in the counsellor's own time.
- Should a counsellor require extra supervision from an external supervisor, CSVSS agree to meet the cost. This is at the discretion of the Project Coordinator, in consultation with the Chair of the Trustees and should be discussed and agreed in advance.

### **Counsellors not working or not practicing**

For a counsellor who is not working or practicing CSVSS will continue to provide external supervision for a period of up to three months. This is to provide the support to the counsellor and to help her to monitor fitness to practice. Any counsellor requiring such support for any length of time over three months should discuss this with the Project Coordinator.

The issue of funding for CSVSS is constantly under review. Should the position change with respect to the organisation's ability to fund the cost of supervision, all counsellors and supervisors will be informed.

## **2.4 ENHANCED CRIMINAL RECORD BUREAU CHECK POLICY**

All potential workers at CSVSS are asked to declare and discuss any previous criminal convictions in writing and at their first interview and must consent to an Enhanced Criminal Record check whereby the potential worker is required to complete a comprehensive Disclosure Application Form which requests personal information to be divulged. Personal information is required to support the application. Volunteers will be required to produce evidence in the form of necessary documentation under CRB framework.

If after the check has been completed, it becomes apparent that the potential worker has not disclosed a previous conviction, the Chair of the Board must re-interview the volunteer to discuss fully why disclosure did not take place. The Chair must also discuss the issue with the Board of Trustees. Non-disclosure will normally result in the potential worker being rejected unless the Chair and Board agree that the potential volunteer's reason for non-disclosure is acceptable and/or the conviction is not applicable.

### **2.4.1 Previous Criminal Convictions**

CSVSS Board has discretion to reject potential workers, based on their evaluation at first interview and during the training course. Where there is any doubt as to how the individual's previous offending will affect her suitability as a worker, the individual

should not be accepted at CSVSS. However it should be stressed that no one should be rejected only on the basis of a previous conviction.

## **2.5 PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES-POLICY AND GOOD PRACTICE**

Volunteers must establish a rapport with service users and provide support that optimises the potential for service users to meet their basic human needs. However volunteers are responsible for ensuring that professional boundaries between themselves and service users are established and maintained. The intention is to achieve a shared understanding of acceptable and unacceptable practice, enabling clear and consistent standards to be applied.

All volunteers are individually responsible for applying and maintaining appropriate professional boundaries in their day-to-day work and for raising any associated issues or training needs with a member of the Board of Trustees.

### **2.5.1 Working with Service Users**

The professional context for working with services users by describing basic values and principles that govern professional practice are outlined as follows:

- Boundaries define the limits of behaviour, which allow a supporter/counsellor and a service user to engage safely in a supportive caring relationship. These boundaries are based upon trust, respect and the appropriate use of power.
- The relationship between volunteers and service users is a therapeutic caring relationship that must focus solely upon meeting the needs of the service user. It is not established to build personal or social contacts for volunteers. Moving the focus of care away from meeting service user's needs towards meeting the volunteer's own needs is an unacceptable abuse of power.
- On occasions a volunteer may develop an attachment towards a particular service user. While this may be natural the volunteer should ensure that this does not lead to a breach of professional boundaries. Volunteers should be encouraged to discuss these kinds of difficulties with a colleague or nominated Trustee.

### **2.5.2 Befriending**

Volunteers must never overstep professional boundaries and confuse befriending with friendship. All workers must be aware of the difference between:

- Befriending a service user – which is a professional relationship, made to meet service user's needs, and
- Becoming a service user's friend – which is a relationship that focuses on the needs of both people. A professional relationship focuses solely on the needs of the service user.

Volunteers are employed by CSVSS to work with service users as part of a contract of commitment and it is potentially an abuse of power to represent the relationship as a friendship.

### **2.5.3 Counselling**

Similarly, volunteers must be aware of the difference between being a counsellor and using counselling skills (such as active listening with a non-judgmental approach) that are appropriate for the delivery of care and support. Counselling is not an appropriate role for volunteers unless you have been taken on specifically to counsel.

Where it is appropriate that a service user may be in need of additional counselling, not related to the services provided by CSVSS, they should be given advice and support on accessing other appropriate agencies (see Referral and Signposting Policy).

#### **2.5.4 Providing Advice**

Advice should normally only be offered to service users when they request it, unless there are good reasons to be more directive. Where more directive advice is offered, for example in a situation where there is a potential for physical harm or danger, this should be done in a non-judgmental manner. When volunteers offer advice to service users they should ensure that they provide sufficient information for service users to make an informed choice.

Volunteers should be aware of the areas in which they are not qualified to give advice and/or feel it is not appropriate to offer advice. In these instances they should inform the service user of this, making every effort to assist them in accessing appropriate and/or qualified advice.

#### **2.5.5 Influence**

Volunteers must be careful not to influence service users with their own beliefs and personal values. Volunteers should also be aware of their potential to influence vulnerable and/or impressionable service users.

Although morality, religion and politics are common areas of conversation and service users may wish to discuss their views with volunteers, volunteers should never promote or impose their own views.

#### **2.5.6 Approachability**

Volunteers should be seen as approachable, open to fair challenge and criticism, and available to engage in meaningful dialogue. They should not be seen as intimidating or inaccessible people. Service users must not be discouraged from accessing support within agreed boundaries or from making complaints.

#### **2.5.7 Privacy**

Volunteers must respect service users' rights to privacy, and be sensitive and responsive to any different personal and cultural needs for privacy that may arise.

#### **2.5.8 Personal Disclosure**

Volunteers must not divulge any personal information about themselves or other CSVSS workers.

#### **2.5.9 Touch – Physical Contact**

CSVSS volunteers should approach touching with great care and caution. Where touching does occur it must take place within the professional boundaries of the service. Some service users may misinterpret physical contact as affection outside the professional relationship. Service users may also see physical contact as expressions of favouritism, for example where a worker hugs one service user and

not another. All volunteers should therefore be aware that physical contact risks being misunderstood and it may result in volunteers being vulnerable to allegations of inappropriate professional behaviour. In all service contexts where touching occurs it must only take place within the context of a professional relationship and with the service user's agreement.

#### **2.5.10 Financial Relationships**

- Volunteers must not enter into any financial transactions with service users including buying, selling, exchanging or bartering goods or services.
- Volunteers must not lend their personal money or possessions to service users.
- Volunteers must not borrow money or possessions from service users.
- Volunteers should not give or accept gifts from service users.
- Volunteers should not accept sizeable monetary charitable donations to the service without the prior agreement of the Board of Trustees.
- Volunteers should not handle money on behalf of service users.
- Volunteers should not agree to become trustees, beneficiaries or executors in relation to the wills of service users.

#### **2.5.11 Relationships and contact with service users within work**

Where volunteers know service users prior to entering the service, the volunteer must inform a Trustee. The volunteer should not be given the role of the key supporter/counsellor. New volunteers starting work may find that they know existing service users. This should be brought to the attention of a Trustee.

#### **2.5.12 Relationships and contact with service users outside work**

- Volunteers must never allow service users to visit their homes.
- Volunteers must not encourage service users to develop relationships with the volunteer's relatives or friends.
- Volunteers must not give service users their personal contact details, for example postal address, telephone number, fax number, email address, etc.
- Volunteers must not give service users the personal contact details of any colleague.
- Volunteers who encounter service users out of hours should be pleasant and civil if approached by the service user, but should generally discourage prolonged social contact. Volunteers should not approach service users in any social setting if the contact is not instigated by the service user especially where the service user's behaviour indicates that they do not want to be recognised or indeed identified as a user of the service.
- Volunteers must not to arrange out of hours contact with service users.

#### **2.5.13 Discussing Others**

- 'Gossip' or hearsay should not feature as an aspect of service culture and should be actively discouraged among both volunteers and service users.
- Volunteers must never share personal details about other volunteers with service users.
- Volunteers must never discuss other volunteers/staff members with service users.
- Volunteers must never discuss service users with other service users and other third parties.
- Where any of the above does occur the incident must be brought to the attention of a Trustee as soon as possible.

## 2.6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

CSVSS aims to provide a service which actively promotes equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination and we make every effort to relate to all people in a respectful and equal manner. The service offers support to women who have suffered any form of sexual abuse. The provision of such a single sex service is lawful under the Equality Act 2010, Schedule 9; Part 1.

CSVSS is committed to a programme of action to make this policy effective and will bring it to the attention of all workers who should familiarise themselves with it. Any worker or service user who wishes to make a complaint about equality should refer to the relevant Grievance Policies.

All trainees, volunteers, and Trustees must uphold and support this Statement of Equality and Diversity. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action and/or ineligibility for membership.

## 2.7 TRANSGENDER POLICY

### 2.7.1 Definition

The term '**transgender**' refers to those individuals whose gender identity differs from their birth sex and includes transvestites and transsexuals. Transsexual people are those who intend to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process of gender reassignment, a process by which a person changes permanently to a sex which is different from the one they were assigned at birth;

This policy covers the individuals who are currently undergoing the necessary medical intervention or have undergone male to female transsexual gender re-assignment and offers a service to transgender people who have been raped or sexually abused.

### 2.7.2 Transsexual Service Users and Volunteers

The 2008 amendment to the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) requires that transsexuals who undertake gender re-assignment must legally be treated as the gender of their choice in all areas of life including access to service provision. This applies from when they first announce their intention to undergo gender re-assignment, a process that takes a minimum of two years. Under the 1999 amendment however, provision was made for an exemption from service provision where individuals have not yet undergone full gender re-assignment and recognition in cases where organisations can show a genuine need for exclusion of such individuals in relation to the type of service and/or the context in which the work is carried out. Under the Gender Recognition Act (2004); once gender re-assignment is complete and individuals are issued with a new birth certificate, they must be treated according to their new acquired gender and given access to appropriate service provision.

CSVSS reserve the right not to offer a service or provide volunteering opportunities to transgender people who have not achieved full gender re-assignment (male to female) due to the fact that it works with vulnerable women, the majority of whom have experienced or who are experiencing sexual violence at the hands of men and who may feel intimidated by the presence of an individual who is still physically

male. The organisation does welcome those who have achieved full gender re-assignment (male to female).

The 2010 Equality Act includes significant changes in that those people who are contemplating gender re-assignment but have not yet taken active steps in the process. In such cases a full risk assessment will be carried out to determine the appropriateness of providing such a service. Referral to other specialist agencies may be the outcome.

### **2.7.3. Personnel Records**

Records maintained in personnel files will not overtly refer to the previous gender of any worker. Information on workers who have undergone gender re-assignment will be on a strictly “need to know” basis.

## **2.8 BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY**

The purpose of this policy is to support a working environment and culture in which bullying and harassment is unacceptable.

This policy applies to all workers within CSVSS. Every worker carries personal responsibility for their own behaviour in relation to this policy and is responsible for ensuring that their conduct is in line with the standards set out in this policy. All volunteers will be informed of the CSVSS policy with regards to bullying and harassment at induction and informed of the procedures in place to deal with it.

It should be noted that bullying, victimisation, harassment or intimidation might well constitute a criminal act for which individuals may face prosecution through the Courts.

### **2.8.1 Definitions**

Bullying is defined by ACAS as “offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour intended to undermine, humiliate denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying is always a pattern of behaviour over time”.

Harassment is unwanted conduct that affects a person’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment. It can relate to sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age or any other personal characteristic. Harassment can be a one off incident, or a pattern of behaviour perpetrated over time.

Bullying and/or harassment may be enacted in a form of words or actions which seek to undermine personal self-confidence in a volunteer or group. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Excessive criticism of performance
- Verbal abuse
- Undue performance monitoring
- Undermining performance by withholding information or resources
- Threats
- Physical attacks
- Ignoring the views of an individual
- Persistent criticism
- Shouting
- Imposition of restrictions which are targeted at an individual
- Exclusion of individuals
- Reduction in duties or responsibility without reason

### **2.8.2 Identification of a Bully**

Bullies often lack confidence in their own ability and use bullying as a screen. Aggression is often used to counter views differing from their own, often perceived as a challenge to their position or opinion. Their insecurity often leads to envy of other people's ability or status and a misconception of other people's popularity or success as a threat to their own position.

Bullies will only succeed where an organisation allows the behaviour to continue with consent, tacit or otherwise. If bullying is allowed it will become engrained within the culture of the organisation, along with all the negative effects that bullying can have. Bullying ultimately undermines not only the individuals involved but also the organisation as a whole.

### **2.8.3 Responsibility**

CSVSS recognises that bullying and harassment are potentially damaging to the health and wellbeing of volunteers. In addition to the personal costs to our staff there are other costs that the Organisation is forced to bear in terms of low productivity, dissatisfied volunteers, poor quality of service and volunteer turnover. In recognition of this, CSVSS is totally committed to the elimination of bullying, harassment, victimisation or discrimination and adopts a zero tolerance attitude to bullying and harassment. All incidents that come to the attention of trustees, will be investigated and remedial action taken.

Trustees are required to take any allegation of bullying seriously. All allegations are to be reported to the Chair of the Board of Trustees immediately and documented as soon as is practicable. Where there is a potential conflict of interest in reporting through the Chair of the Board of Trustees, volunteers are to report the issue directly to a member of the Board of Trustees who will ensure appropriate procedures are initiated.

Where an issue of bullying or potential bullying is raised, the Chair of the Board of Trustees is to initiate an investigation of the circumstances and agree an action plan with all concerned. The investigation is to be independent of the protagonists and, where necessary, external resources will be utilised. The Chair of the Board of Trustees is to ensure that, any worker conducting an investigation will have received appropriate training, information and instruction to allow both a thorough and impartial examination of the facts as they present.

### **2.8.4. Informal Procedures**

Volunteers who consider themselves to be subject to minor incidents of bullying or harassment may make an informal approach to the harasser or a Trustee. This approach may be verbal or written and it may be helpful to explain why a particular behaviour is distressing. It is often the case that an individual may not realise that a particular behaviour is causing distress and will welcome the opportunity to resolve the issue informally.

### **2.8.5 Formal Procedures**

Where informal resolution has failed or the issues are serious, a formal procedure will be invoked. The individual raising the concern should notify the Chair of the Board of Trustees. This may be verbally in the first instance but must be followed with detail in writing. Individuals may wish to seek the advice of a Trustee in preparing the written complaint. The document should detail:

- The name of the alleged bully
- The nature or type of bullying with details of specific incidents
- Dates and times when the bullying occurred
- Names of witnesses to any incidents
- Any action already taken by the complainant to stop the bullying

Where there is conflict of interest, the complaint should be made to a member of the Board of Trustees.

### **2.8.6 Immediate Action**

On receipt of a complaint of bullying and/or harassment, the organisation will, where possible arrange separate working for the parties concerned. The alleged bully may be suspended until the issue is fully resolved. Both parties will have the right to be supported by a CSVSS colleague.

### **Investigation**

The investigation should be initiated as soon as possible after any allegation of bullying. In any case, an interview should be undertaken within three days although this period may be extended where the Trustees agree that this would be in the best interests of the investigation. All parties must be informed of such a decision and given information, without prejudicing the investigation, supporting a delay.

### **Findings**

Except where there is no case to answer, the findings of the investigation are to be detailed in a written report to the Board of Trustees. Necessary actions will then be set out and the plan implemented forthwith.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees is to ensure the investigation proceeds as quickly as is practicable and that all parties are regularly updated with regard to its progress. On completion of the investigation a report will be made to Board of Trustees members and the action plan is to be implemented drawing on available resources as necessary.

### **Discipline**

The investigation will not necessarily result in disciplinary action where alternative solutions are possible such as mediation or the modification of behaviour. The sanctions set out in the disciplinary procedures may be used if appropriate.

Where possible, remedial action is to be taken to prevent recurrence of bullying, this may involve but is not limited to the disciplinary procedures.

### **Support for the 'victim'**

Internal/external counselling will be available to victims of bullying to aid in recovery.

### **2.8.7. Confidentiality**

All volunteers are actively encouraged to report instances of bullying whether directed toward them or a colleague. It is important to remember that a victim of bullying is likely to suffer from undermining of their self-confidence and may not feel able to report issues.

Allegations raised regarding bullying and harassment will be taken seriously and treated confidentially.

The fact that a complaint of bullying has been made will not be entered onto an individual's record.

CSVSS expects the support of all volunteers, in delivering a workplace free from bullying and intimidation. The Chair of the Board of Trustees will consult with volunteers wherever practicable to further develop procedures to deal with bullying.

## **2.9 WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY**

CSVSS is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. An important aspect of accountability and openness is a mechanism to enable all volunteers and service users to voice concerns in a responsible and effective manner. CSVSS is clear about the importance and scope of confidentiality within the organisation. Nevertheless, where an individual discovers information, which they believe, shows that serious malpractice or wrongdoing within CSVSS then this information should be disclosed internally without fear of reprisal. There should be arrangements for this to be done independently of either the Chair of the Board of Trustees or Board of Trustees should one of these parties be the subject of the concern.

### **2.9.1 What is whistle blowing?**

Whistle blowing has been defined as:

The disclosure of confidential information which relates to some danger, fraud, or other illegal or unethical conduct connected with the workplace, be it of the Trustees or volunteers. Any allegation should be made in 'good faith', in the reasonable belief that it is substantially true, and has not been made for personal gain.

This definition is intended not only to provide guidance and protection to those making disclosures, but to ensure that disclosures are made with good reason and not for trivial, vexatious or malicious reasons.

This policy is intended to cover concerns which are in the public interest and may at least initially be investigated separately but might then lead to the invocation of other procedures e.g. disciplinary. These concerns could include:

- Financial malpractice or impropriety;
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation; or with those of the CSVSS Constitution
- Dangers to Health & Safety or the environment;
- Criminal activity;
- Improper conduct or unethical behaviour including issues of child and vulnerable adult protection;
- Sexual or racial harassment or work place bullying
- Abuse or misuse of CSVSS property
- Attempts to conceal any of these.

This policy is intended to assist individuals who believe they have discovered malpractice or impropriety. It is not designed to question financial, business or strategic decisions taken by CSVSS nor should it be used to reconsider any matters which have already been addressed under harassment, complaint, disciplinary or other procedures.

CSVSS is committed to investigating disclosures **fully, fairly, quickly, and confidentially**, and to protect those making allegations from victimisation. In the latter connection, CSVSS will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the identity of those raising allegations, and of those against whom such allegations are made, will be treated confidentially insofar as disclosure is judged necessary for the purpose of carrying out a full and fair investigation (or for taking appropriate action against anyone found to have acted improperly)

### **2.9.2. Anonymous Allegations**

Individuals are encouraged to put their name to any disclosures. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less credible, but they may be considered at the discretion of CSVSS.

In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account will include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised;
- The credibility of the concern;
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

### **2.9.3. Untrue Allegations**

If an individual makes an allegation in good faith, which is not confirmed by subsequent investigation, no action will be taken against that individual. In making a disclosure the individual should exercise due care to ensure the accuracy of the information. If, however, an individual makes malicious or vexatious allegations, and, in particular, persists with making them, disciplinary action may be taken against that individual.

### **2.9.4 Raising concerns**

In general, members of the organisation wishing to 'blow the whistle' on suspected malpractice or impropriety should contact a member of the Board of Trustees, though they may if they wish contact the Chair directly or a single member of the Board of Trustees. Whistle blowers are asked to put their concerns in writing.

#### **What action will be taken at this stage?**

An official, written record will be kept of each stage of the procedure and a timescale given to the whistle blower. Prior to the release of any information, CSVSS will undertake a risk assessment.

The Management Committee will first meet the whistle blower and establish the basis of their concern, and then undertake such other enquiries as they consider necessary to determine whether or not there are *prima facie* grounds for considering that the concern is well-founded. If the conclusion is reached that there are such *prima facie* grounds, the Management Committee may:

- refer the matter to an external authority, for example the Police;
- Initiate an internal investigation.

#### **Procedures for internal investigation**

In the case of a complaint, which is any way connected with but not against the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the Chair will nominate a member of the Board of Trustees to act as the alternative investigating officer. Complaints against the Chair should be passed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees who will nominate an appropriate investigating officer from the Board of Trustees.

If there is evidence of criminal activity then the investigating officer should inform the Chair and the matter will be referred to the police. CSVSS will ensure that any internal investigation does not hinder a formal police investigation.

### **Timescales**

As such complaints, may involve internal investigators and/or the police, it is not possible to lay down precise timescales for such investigations. The investigating officer should ensure that the investigations are undertaken as quickly as possible without affecting the quality and depth of those investigations.

The investigating officer should as soon as practically possible, send a written acknowledgement of the concern to the complainant and thereafter report back to them in writing the outcome of the investigation and the action that is proposed. If the investigation is a prolonged one, the investigating officer should keep the complainant informed, in writing, as to the progress of the investigation and as to when it is likely to be concluded. Any responses and reports will be agreed with the Chair prior to sharing with the complainant.

All responses to the complainant should be in writing and sent to their home address.

### **Investigating Procedure**

The investigating officer should follow these steps:

- Full details and clarifications of the complaint should be obtained.
- The investigating officer should inform the volunteer against whom the complaint is made as soon as is practically possible. The volunteer will be informed of their right to be accompanied by a representative at any future interview or hearing held under the provision of these procedures.
- The investigating officer should consider the involvement of the Police at this stage and should consult with the Board of Trustees.
- The allegations should be fully investigated by the investigating officer with the assistance where appropriate, of other individuals / bodies.
- A judgment concerning the complaint and validity of the complaint will be made by the investigating officer. This judgment will be detailed in a written report containing the findings of the investigations and reasons for the judgment. The report will be passed to the Board of Trustees or Chair as appropriate.
- The Board of Trustees/Chair will decide what action to take. If the complaint is shown to be justified, then they will invoke the disciplinary or other appropriate CSVSS procedures.
- The complainant should be kept informed of the progress of the investigations and, if appropriate, of the final outcome.

If the complainant is not satisfied that their concern is being properly dealt with by the investigating officer, they have the right to raise it in confidence with the Chair or a member of the Board of Trustees.

If the investigation finds the allegations unsubstantiated and all internal procedures have been exhausted, but the complainant is not satisfied with the outcomes of the investigation, CSVSS recognises the lawful rights of volunteers to make disclosures to prescribed persons such as the Charity Commissioners.

## **2.10 EXPENSES POLICY**

All reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the work of CSVSS, will be reimbursed, including expenses for travel. In order to claim expenses, an expenses form must be completed and given to the treasurer along with any receipts or proof of purchase. Counsellors may claim expenses for professional supervision within the organisational guidelines. Expenses relating to training must be agreed prior to commencement.

## **2.11 GIFTS AND GRATUITIES POLICY**

CSVSS appreciate that some service users like to offer gifts to workers in appreciation of their support. The fundamental intention of this policy is to safeguard the interests of the service user, the volunteer and the organisation in relation to the giving and receiving of such gifts.

### **It is CSVSS policy that Board of Trustees Members and Volunteers;**

- will not solicit gifts or hospitality;
  - if a gift is received that exceeds the nominal value of £10 the gift should be returned to the sender or the gift should be donated to the organisation directly or to another charitable organisation;
- gifts and hospitality intended to influence organisational decision making should NEVER be accepted.
- will not offer, give, exchange or receive any personal gift from the service user;
- will not enter into any cash transaction with the service user;
- will ensure any donation is directed to the Treasurer;

## **2.12 CONSULTANCY POLICY FOR VOLUNTEERS**

Consultancy is defined by CSVSS as; the deployment of existing knowledge to meet the specific requirements of a service user either in the private or public sector, in an area of expertise relevant to the work and service provision carried out by CSVSS. Consultancy does not include contributions to press, TV, and other media; or service on committees of public sector organisations, government agencies and charitable bodies.

All consultancies carried out by or on behalf of CSVSS are solely for the benefit of CSVSS; any income or payments as a result of any consultancies should be paid directly to CSVSS.

CSVSS consultancy is the provision by CSVSS volunteers of expert advice (including acting as an expert witness) or professional services relating to their

CSVSS appointment. It is provided to external service users that can include both public and private sector organisations and the voluntary/charitable sectors.

### **2.12.1 Responsibilities**

Consultancy will be managed on behalf of the volunteer member through the CSVSS office. The Chair of the Board of Trustees will;

- Provide advice and guidance to individual volunteers undertaking consultancy work.
- Provide all necessary administrative and finance forms.
- Determine pricing, payment and other commercial terms; determine the appropriate payment terms and take responsibility for invoicing.
- Negotiate with the service user in consultation with the volunteer where necessary.
- Provide and execute contracts to adequately protect the consultant and CSVSS.

Collection of monies due from paying bodies against valid invoices will be the responsibility of CSVSS

Approval to consult in all cases is subject to the consent and guidance of the Chair of the Board of Trustees. If a proposed consultancy will have an adverse impact on normal workload, the volunteer and Chair of the Board of Trustees will consider options on how the project may be accommodated.

Any travel and other personal expenses incurred whilst carrying out the consultancy work will be treated as direct cost and reimbursed to the volunteer via the normal expenses system and in accordance with CSVSS policy. Where the paying body reimburses expenses at a higher rate than the CSVSS, the surplus is added to the income from the particular consultancy.

### **2.12.2 Private Consultancy**

Should a volunteer wish to undertake private consultancy of a nature comparable to the work carried out by CSVSS then, in order to ensure that no liability for CSVSS can arise; the volunteer must, in each case, adhere to the following:

- A volunteer shall not use CSVSS facilities to negotiate or deliver private consultancy, unless this is the subject of a separate agreement between CSVSS and the volunteer, such agreement only to be authorised by the Chair of the Board of Trustees in consultation with the Board of Trustees.
- No indication, implied or specific, should be given that the work is undertaken in anything but a private capacity and CSVSS email addresses and stationary bearing CSVSS's name, address or identity must not be used in any connection with the work.
- The volunteer alone is responsible for fulfilling their personal taxation, VAT, national insurance liabilities and indemnity cover.

Failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action.

## **2.13 VOLUNTEER DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

### **2.13.1 Disciplinary procedure**

A series of warnings will be given before discipline or dismissal. Statutory dismissal and grievance procedures will apply.

Minor cases of misconduct and most cases of poor performance may be dealt with by informal advice and/ or training. An informal verbal warning may be given, which does not count as part of the formal (or statutory) disciplinary procedure. No formal record of this type of warning will be kept.

If there is no improvement or the matter is serious enough, the individual will be invited to a disciplinary meeting at which the matter can be properly discussed. They will be allowed to bring a CSVSS colleague to the meeting. The outcome of the meeting will be communicated to the individual. There are a number of possible outcomes:

#### **Verbal warning**

In the case of minor infringements a formal oral warning may be given. A note of the oral warning will be kept on file but will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 12 months. Individuals have the right to appeal against a formal oral warning.

#### **Written warning**

If the infringement is more serious or there is no improvement in conduct after a formal oral warning a formal written warning giving details of the complaint will be given, including the improvement or change in behaviour required, the timescale allowed for this, the right of appeal and the fact that a final written warning may be given if there is no sustained satisfactory improvement or change. A copy of the written warning will be kept on file but will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 18 months.

#### **Final written warning**

Where there is a failure to improve or change behaviour during the currency of a prior formal written warning, or where the infringement is sufficiently serious, the individual may be given a final written warning. This will give details of the complaint, warn that failure to improve will lead to dismissal and refer to the right of appeal. The final written warning will be kept on file but will normally be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 18 months.

#### **Dismissal**

If conduct or performance still fails to improve the final step will be to contemplate dismissal. If the Board of Trustees is contemplating dismissing the individual they must follow the "Standard Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure" which is a statutory requirement. Failure to do so will usually result in a finding of automatically unfair dismissal.

### **2.13.2 The Standard Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure**

The Standard Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure apply to dismissals for gross misconduct.

### **Step 1: A Nominated Trustee gives volunteer a written statement and calls a hearing**

A nominated Trustee will set out in writing the alleged conduct, characteristics or other circumstances which lead to disciplinary action against an individual. This written statement will inform the individual of the basis on which allegations against them have been made. The volunteer will be invited to a hearing.

### **Step 2: Meeting is held and Volunteer is informed of the outcome**

The meeting will take place before any action, other than temporary suspension, is taken. The meeting will be held without undue delay but only when the individual has had a reasonable opportunity to consider their response to a Trustee's written statement and any further verbal explanation which has been provided. All reasonable steps must be taken to attend the meeting. After the meeting the Trustee will inform the individual of her decision and notify them of their right to appeal against the decision if they are not satisfied with it. An appeal must be made to complete the statutory procedure.

### **Step 3: Appeal against the disciplinary decision if necessary**

If the individual wishes to appeal they must inform the Chair of the Trustee in writing within four weeks. If this is done the Chair will invite the individual to attend a further meeting. All reasonable steps must be taken to attend the meeting. If practicable a member of the Board of Trustees not previously involved in the disciplinary procedure will hear the appeal. The appeal hearing may take place before or after dismissal or disciplinary action has taken effect. After the appeal hearing the Chair will inform the individual of her final decision and will confirm it in writing as soon as practicable.

### **Gross misconduct**

If after investigation it is confirmed that an individual has committed one of the following offences, they will normally be dismissed:

- Theft
- Fraud and deliberate falsification of records
- Physical violence
- Serious bullying or harassment
- Deliberate damage to property
- Serious insubordination
- Misuse of an organisation's property or name
- Bringing the employer into serious disrepute
- Serious incapability whilst on duty brought on by alcohol or illegal drugs
- Serious negligence which causes or might cause unacceptable loss, damage or injury
- Serious infringement of health and safety rules
- Serious breach of confidence (subject to the Public Interest (Disclosure) Act 1998)
- Any other actions/opinions that the organisation deems to be unacceptable

While the alleged gross misconduct is being investigated, the individual may be suspended. Any decision to dismiss will be taken by the Board of Trustees only after a full investigation.

### **Grievance procedure**

Any Volunteer with a grievance has access to a procedure, which can lead to a speedy resolution of the grievance in a fair manner. Most routine complaints and grievances are best resolved informally. Where the grievance cannot be resolved informally it will be dealt with under the following procedure that complies with the statutory standard three-step grievance procedure.

### **Principles Applicable to the Standard and Modified Grievance Procedure**

- Each step in the grievance procedure should be carried out without unreasonable delay.
- Meetings must be conducted in a way that allows both parties to explain their case.
- Records should be kept detailing the nature of the grievance raised, the subject of the claimant's response, any action taken and the reasons for it. These records should be kept confidential.
- The complainant and subject of the complaint has the right to be accompanied to the hearing by another person

### **2.13.3. The Standard Grievance Procedure**

#### **Step 1: Volunteer gives written statement of grievance**

The complainant must put their grievance in a written statement of grievance and send a copy to the Chair.

#### **Step 2: Meeting**

The subject of the complaint is given the opportunity to respond. A meeting is convened and both parties are given the opportunity to outline their case. A decision is made and both parties are informed of the decision.

#### **Step 3: Appeal**

If the complainant wishes to appeal the Board must be informed. If practicable, a member of the Board of Trustees who has not been involved in the grievance procedure so far will deal with the appeal. After the meeting all parties will be informed

### **2.14 Capability Procedure**

CSVSS recognises that there can be reasons for poor job performance other than misconduct. To deal with such problems we have a Capability Procedure. It will usually be adopted in the interests of fairness but is not contractually binding and we can dismiss you without following it.

New employees during their trial period (first six months) will be liable to dismissal at any time during the trial period and the procedure will not usually be applied to them.

## **General Procedure**

The first stage in dealing with poor job performance is to investigate whether the matter is a disciplinary matter or a capability/performance matter.

Incapability/poor performance will arise where you have been set realistic targets and objectives but cannot achieve them through no fault of your own, for example where failure is due to medical conditions.

If targets and objectives are highlighted but you fail to take action of which you are capable it may be treated as misconduct under the disciplinary procedure.

## **Stages of procedure**

### a) Performance Review meeting

The cause of poor performance will be investigated and established. You will be asked for an explanation. Where the reason is lack of required skills, where practicable you will be assisted with training and given a reasonable time to reach the required standard performance. As at a disciplinary meeting you have the right to be accompanied at a Performance Review meeting where your employment is at risk.

### b) Formal Warnings

Where, despite assistance, you cannot reach the required standard the consequence of any failure to meet the required standard will be explained in writing as follows:-

*First Written Warning* – you will be told the precise nature of the poor performance in writing, the level of performance and improvement required and a realistic time limit for achieving that improvement and warned of the consequence of failure to achieve or maintain the improvement.

*Final Written Warning* – if there is no improvement or not sufficient improvement or it is not maintained for the period stated you will be given a final written warning. This will set out the details as in a first written warning but informing you that failure to improve this time may result in your dismissal.

## **Length of Warning**

First written warnings will have a time limit of one month and a final written warning will have a time limit of two months. In each case we will specify the length of the warning but reserve the right to extend the length of it in appropriate circumstances.

## **Dismissal**

If there is still no improvement or not sufficient improvement or it has not been maintained for the period stated above then you may be dismissed with notice.

However there will be another Performance Review meeting prior to which you will be requested to attend in writing and will be entitled to be accompanied before a decision is made to dismiss you.

### **Appeals Procedure**

You have the right to appeal against a decision, arising from the procedure in exactly the same way as you can appeal against a disciplinary decision. In order to appeal an individual must inform the Chair of Trustees in writing within 4 weeks. The Chair will set up a meeting and if practicable a member of the BOT not previously involved in the capability procedure will hear the appeal. After the appeal hearing the chair will inform the individual of her decision and will confirm in writing as soon as practicable.

### **Performance Review and Appraisal generally**

It is a normal managerial function to monitor and evaluate an individual's performance of their job. The role of management necessarily include taking appropriate action to ensure that employees are performing the duties that they are employed to do to the best of their abilities. Every effort will therefore be made to ensure that you have help and support when you need it. You are therefore encouraged to talk to your line manager and ask for help at the earliest opportunity if you feel that you may need it.

## **Part 3 OPERATIONS**

### **3.1 CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

CSVSS offers a non-judgemental, free confidential service. Strict confidentiality about individual service users and workers apply.

The support line has a dedicated number. It is not a 24 hour helpline but operates

- Mondays and Wednesdays 6pm-8pm
- Saturday 10.00am-1.00pm

There is a 24 hour answerphone and callers who leave details are responded to as quickly as is possible. Messages recorded on the answerphone are confidential. Only the staff member listening to the answerphone will hear the message and the message will be wiped off once it has been retrieved. Any personal information left i.e. name, telephone number etc. may be recorded for further use but will be stored under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Caller display equipment is not used to preserve caller confidentiality however, helpline workers may like to stress that the telephone number of the helpline may be shown on their itemised bill. CSVSS do not record active helpline calls even for training purposes.

It is also important to stress that the caller may not have pressed 141 to prevent redial. If this is the case, they should put the phone down and phone back using 141 to prevent any person in their household calling redial or immediately upon completion of the call; dial another number. The helpline does not store incoming phone numbers so volunteers cannot access the caller's number unless they choose to give it directly.

### **Service Users**

The information shared between workers and service users is confidential and should not be shared with any third party outside of CSVSS without written authorisation. It is recognised however, that relevant matters concerning service users will be discussed internally with other workers. Confidentiality is between the service users and the service, not between the service user and the individual worker. **Such discussions should only be conducted on a 'need to know' basis, and service user details and anonymity should be maintained.**

No formal written records of service users will be kept but, brief initial telephone information, correspondence and a contact log will be used and these details will be kept at the centre only for contact purposes, stored in a secure place (see Data Protection Policy). Counsellors are permitted to keep brief service user information in a secure location.

### **Breaching Confidentiality**

Confidentiality can **only** be breached under specific circumstances as follows:

- If a service user discloses information about a terrorist plan, there is a legal requirement to disclose to the Police.
- If a service user informs a volunteer of their decision to kill or seriously injure another person this must be disclosed to the Police.
- If a service user talks of known on-going abuse of a named child she must be encouraged to disclose, if she will not then the volunteer must do so.
- If a service user discloses abuse of a vulnerable adult it may be necessary to pass this information on.
- If a service user discloses that they are involved in the trafficking of drugs
- If CSVSS is subpoenaed as a witness in a court of law.

Any circumstances where confidentiality may be breached **must** be taken to Supervision or a Trustee before any disclosure is made

### **CSVSS Workers**

Disclosures of information on any volunteer to any third party outside of CSVSS can only take place with authorisation from a Trustee. This includes addresses or telephone numbers.

The location and address of the centre will be kept confidential unless a volunteer is arranging a meeting with a service user and the PO Box number **must** be used for all correspondence (PO box number:280; Chester CH1 1FB).

During training all trainees will be asked to sign a declaration which states that they agree to abide by CSVSS confidentiality policy for the duration of the training. On completion of their training all new volunteers will be asked to sign a further declaration which amongst other points states that they will continue to respect and abide by the confidentiality policy.

The information sharing policy includes a statement on information sharing. The electronic mailing list of volunteers must only be used internally. All volunteers need to be aware that when contacting outside Agencies the personal data of other volunteers including phone numbers and electronic addresses must not be shared.

Any volunteer who breaches this policy will be subject to disciplinary proceedings and may be asked to leave the organisation.

## **3.2 COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

This policy applies to internet and email use, telephone communications, fax machines, copiers and scanners. Communications systems are provided by CSVSS for the purposes of the organization only. Failure to adhere to the policy may result in facilities being curtailed or withdrawn and disciplinary action taken. Serious breaches of this policy may lead to dismissal.

### **General Principles**

Workers must use CSVSS information technology and communications facilities professionally, lawfully, and consistently within duties, with respect for colleagues and for CSVSS and in accordance with this policy and other policies and procedures.

All messages sent on email systems or via the internet should demonstrate the same professionalism as that which would be taken when writing a letter or a fax. All information relating to service users, volunteers and business operations is confidential. Care must be taken to avoid infringement of copyright when downloading, copying, processing and distributing material on the internet.

Messages received must not be changed. Another person's email account must not be accessed unless authorised by that person.

Facilities must not be used for personal use or in connection with the operation or management of any business other than that of CSVSS.

### **System Security**

Security of the IT system is of paramount importance. There is a duty to our funders, partner agencies and service users to ensure that all of our business is kept confidential. It is essential that CSVSS is able to demonstrate the integrity of its systems, should this be required in court proceedings.

### **Working Remotely**

This policy and associated procedures refers to the use of laptops and personal computers when working on CSVSS business away from the office.

- Any work which relates to CSVSS business must be password protected
- Equipment should be situated so that the work cannot be observed by any other person.

- Precautions to safeguard the security of equipment should be taken. Any equipment stolen or lost should be reported immediately to the police and the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Work done remotely should be saved on CSVSS's system as soon as possible.

Pocket computers, mobile phones and similar hand-held devices must be password-protected.

### **Personal Blogs and Websites**

Volunteers should not refer to their work with CSVSS when publishing information on the internet (e.g. contributions to blogs, message boards and social networking or content-sharing sites) even if created, updated, modified or contributed to outside of working hours or when using personal IT systems. Contravention is a disciplinary matter.

## **3.3 DATA PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

CSVSS collects and uses information about 'data subjects', including volunteers, service users and others e.g. Staff in other organisations, contractors etc. The information can be factual information, such as name and address, or expressions of opinion about or intentions towards individuals and can be in any form or format.

CSVSS acquires, records, stores, discloses and destroys data in line with the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998, and subsequent legislation.

### **3.3.1 Sensitive Data**

CSVSS collects and processes sensitive personal data when required to do so by law or when needed in connection with operational requirements.

### **Security**

All data held by CSVSS will be kept securely, whether kept by an individual or in the CSVSS offices.

### **3.3.2 Retention of Personnel Information**

Personnel data in relation to volunteers is held indefinitely and is usually released only to identifiable third parties with the consent of the subject e.g. for verification of previous employment / volunteering. Limited data is held on service users.

### **Disposal of Data**

When personal data is no longer to be retained it will be disposed of in such a way that the rights and privacy of the individual concerned are protected, e.g. disposal by shredding, burning, secure electronic deletion.

### **Disclosure**

Data should only be disclosed if the service user has given informed consent, disclosure is necessary to protect the service users "vital interests" or to protect someone else's "vital interests", or for the detection or prevention of crime.

### **3.3.3 Rights of Access to Data**

Under the Data Protection Act, all Individuals have a legal right, upon written request, to be informed whether or not information about them is being kept by CSVSS and have a right to see any such information. They also have the right to be

given the purpose for processing information and to whom it may be disclosed. Such individuals should also be given a copy of the CSVSS Data Protection Policy. CSVSS reserves the right to charge a fee for data subject requests, as permitted by the Data Protection Act 1998 and will do so if to provide the information would cause an inordinate amount of work. The fee is set at £10 in the Data Protection Regulations. Any such request will be normally be complied with within 40 days of receipt of the written request and, where appropriate, the fee. The Data Protection Officer for CSVSS is the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

### **CSVSS commitment to data protection**

CSVSS endorses and adheres to the Data Protection Principles set out above. All volunteers and service users of CSVSS have an individual responsibility to uphold the principles of the Data Protection Act. Breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken and, possibly, to prosecution of the individual concerned. All volunteers will be provided with training on Data protection.

Any sharing of information must not be undertaken without the consent of the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Any concerns should be raised with the Chair directly or at supervision after which the information will be forwarded with the Chair who will ultimately make a decision on sharing the information.

## **3.4 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000**

The Freedom of information provides individuals and organisations with a right of access to information held by public services. Charities that deliver public services are however exempt from the Act and therefore do not have to respond to any request for information under the Freedom of Information Act.

## **3.5 NOTE KEEPING AND DESTRUCTION PROCEDURE**

Any contact logs and correspondence made on one to one basis with service users will be stored in a secure place. Contact details and other correspondence for the service user will be kept securely. Service users have the right to see any contact logs or correspondence relating to them at any time, and can request to do so verbally or in writing. They can view the notes at CSVSS premises at an agreed time with their counsellor or a nominated Trustee.

Unless a service user has specifically requested that their contact logs be kept, contact logs and/or face to face appointments entered in the counselling diaries will be destroyed seven years after CSVSS support has ceased. CSVSS workers are responsible for destroying their own contact logs. The Board of Trustees is responsible for destroying all correspondence and initial contact logs.

### **Issues of Child Protection/Vulnerable Adult Protection**

Any meetings held as a result of suspicion or disclosure of abuse of children/vulnerable adults will be recorded. Dates, times, names of persons present, descriptions of the suspicion or disclosure and actions taken will all be noted and kept securely by the Chair of the Board of Trustees. This will be done with the knowledge of the person making the allegation or disclosure. This information will be kept for a maximum of seven years unless the matter is taken further in which case it will be handed to the relevant authorities.

### **3.6 POLICY ON MALE CALLERS TO THE SUPPORT LINE**

- CSVSS do not see male survivors face to face, and do not provide continued telephone support for male callers.
- Telephone calls from males should be treated courteously and every effort should be made to help and support the caller at this time of crisis.
- Male callers should be referred to services that specifically deal with male survivors. Male partners supporting female survivors and seeking our advice should be given appropriate telephone support.

### **3.7 NEEDS AND RISKS ASSESSMENT OF SERVICE USERS**

CSVSS recognise that all service users are vulnerable due to their experiences of rape and/or sexual abuse. A minority of service users may, though, be especially vulnerable in ways which need to be specifically identified.

#### **Needs & Risk Assessment**

- An assessment of the prospective service user's needs will be undertaken before an agreement is reached to provide a service.
- The assessment will be carried out either by the referring agency or by an initial assessment interview undertaken by CSVSS
- Attempts to reduce the risks associated with any identified hazards should be made.
- An informed decision will then be taken about working with the service user or signposting to more appropriate organisations/agencies.
- Service users retain the right to make decisions about the lifestyles and the risks they choose to take.
- They will not be refused a service based on self-harm, attempted suicide, mental health issues, substance misuse (within the limitations of the Drug and Alcohol Policy) although joint working may take place in some instances.
- Service users will not be allowed to access services where they pose a threat of harm to other service users or volunteers.
- An informed decision will then be taken about working with the service user or signposting to more appropriate organisations/agencies.

#### **Workers**

CSVSS will ensure that all workers having contact with vulnerable service users are adequately trained and appropriately experienced to provide the best possible service. Where a prospective service user presents an area of vulnerability outside the experience of the worker allocated to them, the worker will be given appropriate support and signposting to other CSVSS workers or external agencies when appropriate. This decision will only be made after consultation with the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Workers will be provided with supervision by qualified and experienced senior workers, and will have access at all times to a responsible and competent person for advice and support.

### **3.8 VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or maybe unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

CSVSS will take seriously any allegations or suspicions of abuse and will ensure that when working with vulnerable adults their safety and welfare is of the utmost importance.

### **3.8.1 Definitions of Abuse**

Abuse can take many forms. The abused person and even the abuser may not realise that abuse is being committed. The most widely recognised forms of abuse are physical and sexual. Others forms of abuse include neglect, financial, psychological, discriminatory, domestic and institutional.

**1. Physical Abuse** - Physical abuse is the physical ill treatment such as shaking, pushing, hitting, force-feeding, tying up or locking up.

**2. Sexual Abuse** – Includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not agreed to or was pressurised into agreeing to;

**3. Neglect** – Includes leaving someone alone for inappropriate periods of time, failing to care for them or leaving them in soiled clothes;

**4. Financial Abuse** – Includes holding money back, cheating or stealing money;

**5. Psychological Abuse** – Includes rejection, ignoring, humiliating, or bullying behaviour;

**6. Discriminatory Abuse** – prejudicial treatment/approach based on a person's race, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, age or other belief or characteristic;

**7. Domestic** – is the use of coercive forms of control and dominance in domestic relationships and includes any of the above examples

**8. Institutional Abuse** – takes place in any form of institution, for example, hospitals, residential and nursing homes, day centres and includes any of the above and poor and unsatisfactory professional conduct, or pervasive ill treatment or gross misconduct.

Although the above list is comprehensive it is not exhaustive.

### **3.8.2 Responsibilities of Board of Trustees of CSVSS**

- To ensure volunteers are aware of the adult protection policy and are adequately trained;
- To notify the correct agencies if abuse is identified or suspected
- To support and where possible secure the safety of individuals and ensure that all referrals to services have full information in relation to identified risk and vulnerability;
- To carry out Enhanced CRB checks for volunteers who have access to or work with Vulnerable Adults.

- Action must still be taken if the vulnerable adult withdraws the allegation or if the person disclosing is not the “victim” of the alleged abuse where there is a significant risk to their life, the lives of others or the welfare of a child

### **3.8.3 Responsibilities of CSVSS volunteers**

- To be familiar with the adult protection policy and procedures;
- Any suspicions of adult protection issues should always be raised with a member of the Board as soon as possible
- Accurate record should be made, and as soon as possible, including all detail of disclosure / suspicion and any subsequent action taken and discussions held.
- Volunteers should not paraphrase, interpret or assume.
- Records should be stored securely.

### **Protection of Vulnerable Adults**

The nominated Trustee of CSVSS has the responsibility to keep up to date with national developments within Adult Protection and to inform all volunteers working with vulnerable adults.

#### **3.8.4. Training**

All persons working directly with the service user group, via the support line or face to face, must complete the volunteer training course which includes training on adult protection. Existing volunteers will be kept up to date.

#### **3.8.5. Confidentiality**

- Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, so be clear with vulnerable adults about where boundaries lie.
- Service users can be reassured that no information can be disclosed without their consent, **unless related to a significant risk to their life, the lives of others or the welfare of a child or a vulnerable adult.**
- If confidentiality cannot be maintained, the information will only be shared with relevant people and outside of these people will remain subject to the Confidentiality Policy. The vulnerable adult will be informed and supported.

Should workers feel they need someone to talk to during the process; this can be discussed with the nominated trustee of CSVSS.

#### **3.8.6. Allegations Made Against Volunteers**

If an allegation of abuse is made against a volunteer:

- The disclosure / suspicion and referral procedures must be followed.
- The volunteer must be suspended from duties pending investigation. This is not an assumption of guilt, but serves to allow the appropriate investigation to take place and protects the volunteer from further allegations.
- Consideration may be given to enabling the volunteer to complete duties that do not involve contact with vulnerable adults, subject to individual circumstance.

## **3.9 CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

The protection of children is a priority for the service and will supersede other considerations if a child is known to be at risk. CSVSS recognises that all children have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse. The Children Act 1989 defines a child as a person under the age of 18 years and introduced

Significant Harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in the best interests of children and defined significant harm as

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect

**How to respond where there is a suspicion that a service user is abusing a child:**

Workers must take the issue to a nominated Trustee. In considering any action the best interests of the abused child and the best interests of service user will be considered.

**How to respond when a service user knows rather than suspects that a child is being abused:**

Regardless of whether this relates to the service user's own child or another known child, workers must take the issue to a nominated Trustee. In considering any action the best interests of the abused child and the best interests of service user will be considered.

### **3.10 POLICY ON CHILDREN CALLING THE SUPPORT LINE**

Whilst CSVSS volunteers do not ask for a caller's age it is the policy of CSVSS not to support anyone under eighteen years of age.

If it becomes evident that a child telephones for support or advice, the call should be treated courteously and every effort should be made to help and support the child at this time of crisis. It is recommended that the caller should be signposted to services who specifically deal with children e.g. Childline whose contact number, along with others can be found at the CSVSS office.

### **3.11 VISITORS TO THE CENTRE**

CSVSS appreciates that attending support sessions can be very difficult for service users, and that they may feel they need additional emotional support from a **female** family member, friend or agency worker. All visitors to the centre will be required to adhere to the Confidentiality Policy. If a room is available they may wait, however this is not always possible and they may have to call back when the session is ended. Any visitor attendance should be recorded.

CSVSS is a service run by women for women and therefore men are not allowed on the premises.

### **3.12 DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY**

**Volunteers**

Whilst CSVSS is committed to promoting equality and diversity, the organisation will not tolerate the misuse of drugs and alcohol by volunteers when working on behalf of the organisation.

## **Service users**

CSVSS recognises that, due to the issues surrounding rape and sexual abuse, many of our service users are likely to have unhealthy coping strategies and these will include substance misuse disorders. It is generally accepted that 30-50% of people with a severe mental illness also have problems with substances.

CSVSS has a service user centred approach to counselling and support which acknowledges that every service user has different experiences and different needs, and therefore procedure will vary from service user to service user. The following however, should be seen as best practice and used as a general overview.

We acknowledge that effective support may not be possible if a service user presents under the influence of a substance. If a counsellor suspects a service user is presenting at a face to face appointment with a drug and/or alcohol misuse problem, they should first make a dynamic risk assessment to explore the issue with the service user. The matter should be taken to supervision.

The following alternatives are possible:-

- The service user continues counselling, and the substance misuse is dealt with simultaneously or at a later date. This decision will be reviewed regularly with the service user and at supervision sessions.
- Substance misuse is at a level which is obstructive and contrary to counselling support being received. It will be explained to the service user that in order to effectively support them they first need to begin to address this. Information will be provided for self-referral, or with the permission of the service user CSVSS will refer them, to an appropriate substance misuse support agency. It will also be made clear that, in line with CSVSS open door policy, the counselling can and will resume as soon as the substance misuse issues are no longer at such an obstructive level. The point at which this is will be jointly decided and agreed upon between CSVSS and the service user.

## **3.13 SUICIDE AND SELF HARM**

### **3.13.1 Definitions**

Suicide and attempted suicide:

- Suicide is when a person takes an action with the intention of ending their life.
- Attempted suicide is either where suicide is attempted (see above) and is unsuccessful or where it appears suicide is attempted but is a cry for help.

Self-harm is when a person deliberately inflicts injuries upon themselves often as a way of relieving emotional pain.

### **3.13.2 Procedure**

- CSVSS will not exclude service users on the basis of suicide attempts or self-harm.
- If a service user threatens or attempts suicide, CSVSS will take appropriate action. If they have attempted suicide **on the premises** an ambulance will be called with or without service user permission. If an ambulance is called to the premises, the name of the organisation and nature of the work carried out must remain confidential.

- Under no circumstances should any worker take the client to hospital or anywhere else in their car.
- If a client attempts to self-harm on the premises they will be asked to leave however if the harm inflicted is severe enough to require an ambulance the procedure will be as above (see suicide attempt).
- If a service user is known to have attempted suicide or self-harm either recently or in the past, this information will not be disclosed to other agencies in the interests of client confidentiality.
- If a caller to the helpline discloses that they are intending to commit suicide or self-harm, stay on the line with them and explore the issues that they bring and any try to help them find alternatives to suicide in their circumstances at this time.
- If a caller discloses that they have attempted suicide (e.g. overdose, severe cutting) or self-harmed ask if they would like you to call the emergency services. **Do not** do so without their permission. Stay on the line with the service user, if they do not want the emergency services called periodically check that this is still so. If they are willing, the worker may be able to explore the issues that have led to the behaviour in order to assist in finding alternatives to self-harm in the future.
- Take any situation or concerns involving suicide/ attempted suicide or self-harm/attempted self-harm to Supervision.
- Confidentiality must not be breached under any circumstances other than those laid out in the Confidentiality Policy.

When a service user is known to have attempted suicide or self-harmed, this policy should be made explicit so that the service user is aware of the procedures CSVSS will follow in the event of further self-harm or attempted suicide.

### **3.14 POLICY ON REFERRAL AND SIGNPOSTING TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS/AGENCIES**

CSVSS recognises that there are times when our service cannot meet all of the needs of service user and they will need to refer or signpost to other organisations/agencies.

#### **When It Is Necessary To Signpost or Refer**

Factors to take into account when deciding whether to refer/signpost include:

- 1) Whether the service user is within our geographical catchment area
- 2) Whether the service user is within our target group (women aged 18+)
- 3) Whether we are the most appropriate agency to meet the service user's needs
- 4) Whether we have the capacity and/or expertise to work with the service user's needs. This can include medical needs and/or issues relating to access to the service
- 5) When we can address the rape/sexual abuse but other issues need to be addressed by specialists
- 6) Whether there is a conflict of interests in taking on the case

Telephone numbers and information of external organisations/agencies to which service users can be referred or signposted are kept in the office at CSVSS.

### **3.15 SERVICE USER CONSULTATION POLICY**

CSVSS is committed to gathering information from and consulting with service users in order to ensure that all services are high quality, represent good value for money for funders, and meet service user's needs. Consultation with service users is essential when identifying gaps in service provision.

The aims of this policy are to:

- ensure that there is a consistent approach to user consultation across CSVSS services
- enable service users to contribute to this process
- ensure that service users have access to feedback
- promote user consultation as an on-going component of organisational development

### **3.16 SERVICE USER COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

CSVSS recognises that in addition to receiving service user feedback, complaints are a means of improving the service and helping the organisation to put things right. CSVSS will:

- ensure that making a complaint is as easy as possible;
- treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with the service which calls for a response;
- Deal with a complaint promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially;
- Respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where a mistake has been made
- Learn from complaints, ensuring they are used to improve the service and review annually or complaints policy and procedures.

Many concerns will be raised informally, and dealt with quickly. CSVSS aims to:

- resolve informal concerns quickly;
- keep matters low-key;
- if possible, enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred.

CSVSS aims to resolve complaints informally whenever possible. If concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure will be invoked. The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

#### **3.1.6.1 Definition**

CSVSS defines a complaint as 'any expression of dissatisfaction (with CSVSS, with a member of staff, volunteer, or with a CSVSS Trustee) that relates to CSVSS and that requires a formal response'.

#### **3.16.2 CSVSS's responsibility will be to:**

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- respond within a stated period of time;

- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint;
- take action where appropriate.

**A complainant's responsibility is to:**

- bring their complaint, in writing, to CSVSS's attention normally within 8 weeks of the issue arising;
- raise concerns promptly and directly with the Project Coordinator who will be responsible for any further action;
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- allow CSVSS a reasonable time to deal with the matter;
- Recognise that some circumstances may be beyond CSVSS's control.

**Monitoring and Reporting**

The Trustees of CSVSS will produce an annual report of complaints and their resolution.

**3.16.3 Formal Complaints Procedure**

**Stage 1**

If unable to resolve the issue informally, you should write to the Project Coordinator. If the complaint is in relation to the Project Coordinator then you should write to the Chairperson. In your letter you should set out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result, and the remedy you are seeking. You can expect your complaint to be acknowledged within one week of receipt. You should get a response and an explanation within three weeks.

**Stage 2**

If you are not satisfied with the initial response to the complaint then you can write to CSVSS's Chairperson and ask for your complaint and the response to be reviewed. You can expect the Chairperson to acknowledge your request within one week of receipt and normally receive a response within 28 days.

**Final Stage**

If you are not satisfied with the subsequent reply from CSVSS's Chairperson, then you have the option of writing to the Charity Commission at Charity Commission Direct, PO Box 1227, Liverpool, L69 3UG, stating the reason why you are dissatisfied with the outcome. All information on making complaints to the Charity Commission can be found on the Charity Commission's website [www.charity-commission.gov.uk](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk).

**Part 4 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

CSVSS is run entirely by volunteers and therefore the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 and its associated Regulations do not apply to CSVSS. The Charity has a duty of care under civil legislation. Therefore the Board of Trustees has approved policies and procedures concerning the health, safety and wellbeing of its volunteers, service users and others associated with its activities. Some risk assessments to identify hazards and reduce any associated risks will be carried out.

## **4.1 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

### **4.1.1 The Policy**

CSVSS acknowledges its duty of care for the safety, health and wellbeing of its volunteers, service users and other people who could be affected as a result of its operations. It will use the arrangements outlined in the schedule attached to discharge these duties and will work with other organisations sharing its premises to promote a safe working environment.

The success of this policy depends on a partnership involving the commitment of:

- The Board of Trustees
- Volunteers
- Service users and visitors, exercising personal care and co-operating with the trustees and volunteers.
- Contractors – by operating safely and liaising as necessary with the Board of Trustees.
- Partners – by each partner operating safely and liaising as necessary. Alternatively joint arrangements common to all partners may be agreed.

Although the burden of the responsibility for health and safety rests with the Board of Trustees, the implementation of this policy depends on everyone's co-operation and support. Everyone is expected play an appropriate part in ensuring the health and safety of anyone who might be affected by the organisation's activities, so far as this is reasonably practicable.

### **4.1.2 The Schedule**

#### **4.1.2.1 Risk assessment and monitoring**

The underlying process that secures this policy is risk assessment. This involves:

- 1 Identifying hazards
- 2 Assessing the risks
- 3 Introducing control measures

Assessments of significant risks will be made in conjunction with those affected and be recorded in writing. Risks are shared with those affected. It will be the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to ensure that relevant risk assessments are maintained and kept up to date. In the interest of consistency, generic risk assessment forms are used where common risks exist. These assessments may be adjusted to meet individual needs. In circumstances where there is no generic format, individual risk assessments will be carried out.

#### **4.1.2.2 Organisation**

- Overall accountability for health and safety rests with the Trustees although day to day responsibility will rest with volunteers for the operations within their remit.
- Health and safety will be managed systematically by appropriate and specific planning.
- The Trustees will draw on the expertise of a specialist health and safety professional as necessary.

#### **4.1.2.3 Management, communication and consultation**

Priorities with regard to health, safety and wellbeing will be discussed at support meetings and supervision sessions. An annual review and action plan will be included in the annual report to the Charities Commission. Volunteers wishing to raise issues of concern are encouraged to do so.

#### **4.1.2.4 Contractors**

Contractors will be required to act in accordance with this health and safety policy and any specified local arrangements for health and safety. Contractors will be required to assess the risks to anyone who might be affected as a result of the performance of the contract. In particular they will be required to make appropriate arrangements with Trustees and volunteers to ensure that building users are sufficiently and suitably informed and consulted on issues relevant to risk control.

#### **4.1.2.5 Partners**

Partnerships will be required to exchange health and safety policies and procedures with the Board of Trustees and joint arrangements will be made to ensure safe places of work and safe methods of work for all involved in the partnership. The standard of safety should be that equivalent to that operated by CSVSS.

#### **4.1.3 Performance Review: Inspection and Accident/Incident reporting**

Trustees will arrange for policies and procedures to be reviewed periodically and workplaces inspected to ensure that safety precautions remain suitable and sufficient. Accidents, incidents and near misses will be reported. Trustees are required to ensure that they are recorded and investigated as appropriate.

#### **4.1.4 Training and Information**

It is essential that volunteers are competent to undertake their tasks safely both for themselves and for other people e.g. service users, contractors, etc. Appropriate briefing, training and development will be provided.

#### **4.1.5 Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees**

- Develop and maintain up to date guidance for volunteers.
- Compile an annual report with proposed action.
- To be consistent and proportionate in its application of the duty of care and in its dealings with external organisations.
- Monitor risk assessments for scope and quality.
- Ensure that documentary evidence is maintained to demonstrate compliance with this policy and any related procedures.
- To ensure that volunteers are appropriately consulted and can contribute to enhancing the health and safety culture.

#### **Volunteers' responsibilities**

Volunteers have a duty to take care of themselves and of others around them and to report any health and safety concerns to a member of the Board of Trustees.

## **4.2 WORKPLACE RISK ASSESSMENT**

CSVSS will carry out suitable and sufficient written risk assessments to reduce risks and promote the health, safety and wellbeing of volunteers, service users and visitors to the centre. The risk assessments will be reviewed

- when there are significant changes
- if there is an accident or near miss
- At least yearly

Significant findings of the risk assessment will be recorded and shared with all those affected by the assessment.

Risk assessments may be delegated to “competent” persons. Competency for the purpose of carrying out a risk assessment means:

- An understanding of the work activity and best practice;
- An understanding of the regulations they are complying with;
- The ability to be objective and remain impartial.

CSVSS will ensure that volunteers receive relevant training in any type of risk assessment that they will be required to carry out.

Volunteers will be expected to comply with preventative measures identified by risk assessments. Failure to do so may put themselves or others at risk and as such failure to follow these measures will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

### **4.3 DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT POLICY**

CSVSS must determine whether there are any significant risks to volunteers at their work stations and whether there is a need for DSE risk assessments.

#### **Organisation**

Where significant users of Display Screen Equipment are identified, the Board of Trustees is to:

- A risk assessment will be carried out using the form and guidance.
- Ensure each individual is provided with the necessary information, instruction and training regarding the hazards, risks and controls associated with DSE;
- Consider any special arrangements that may be necessary for those individuals with an existing/developing health condition or disability;
- Investigate any complaints of discomfort or ill health relating to DSE.

Volunteers must:

- Report any concerns they may have to the Board of Trustees;
- Arrange their working day to ensure regular breaks away from DSE (as a guideline 5 minutes per hour);
- Correctly use the equipment provided;
- Comply with instructions and training.

#### **Training**

All volunteers will be advised through training of the risks associated with DSE use, current policy and procedures.

### **4.4 OFFICE SECURITY PROCEDURES**

It is the responsibility of each CSVSS worker to ensure that:

- All doors and windows are locked when leaving the building.
- All confidential information is locked away when the centre is empty.
- All lights and electrical appliances are switched off and unplugged when leaving the building.

- The support line answer phone is switched on at any time that the support line is not open.
- The front door is securely locked when leaving the building, provided no other person is in the office.

## **4.5 FIRE PROCEDURES**

- All persons working on CSVSS premises shall be instructed and trained to ensure that they understand the fire precautions and the action to be taken in the event of fire.
- The person who sounds the alarm becomes the designated Fire Officer for that incident. Therefore volunteers must be made aware of the following Fire Officer responsibilities:
  - On discovering the fire, the Fire Service should be called by dialling 999
  - All rooms should be checked before leaving the building
  - The incident must be reported to the nominated Trustee as soon as possible
- Volunteers must be responsible for ensuring their own visitors or service users get safely to the Assembly Point at the end of the car park.
- The nominated Trustee shall be responsible for organising fire instruction and training.

All other personnel must leave the building and report to the designated Fire Officer at the Assembly Point and should

- Use the nearest available exit
- not stop to collect personal belongings
- not re-enter the building
- The Assembly Point is the end of the office car park

## **4.6 FIRST AID POLICY**

CSVSS will provide

- A suitably stocked first aid box
- A nominated Trustee who will take charge of checking and restocking the box
- Ensuring information on obtaining first aid is made available and is up-dated
- Ensuring volunteers are informed of first aid arrangements

### **Responsibilities**

The Board of Trustees are responsible for:

- Ensuring first aid needs are assessed and addressed
- Organising provision of first aid services
- Periodically reviewing first aid arrangements.

## **4.7 LONE WORKING POLICY**

Chester Sexual Violence Support Service acknowledges the general duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare, so far as is reasonably practicable, of all employees

and volunteers by having systems and procedures in place which will prevent and/or control the risk to Lone Workers from hazards associated with working. Volunteers should ensure that they know where their nearest emergency exit is and check that it is not obstructed in any way.

If volunteers have medical conditions whereby working alone puts them at risk, they should notify the Board of Trustees immediately.

#### **4.7.1. Definition of Lone Worker**

Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision; on or off CSVSS premises.

CSVSS volunteers will adhere to a “buddy” system. This is designed to promote the health, safety and security of any colleagues working at the office alone or visiting service users off-site.

#### **4.7.2. Guidance for Lone Working**

The following guidance should be adhered to by volunteers to ensure their safety and so that they can be located in the event of an emergency.

##### **On-site lone working at CSVSS**

It is essential that you agree with a colleague that when working alone on an evening or weekend you will contact them at a certain (stated) time to advise them that you have arrived at your destination safely. Having completed your work you must advise your contact that you are leaving the premises. This is known as the “buddy” system.

If your colleague/appointed contact have not heard from you within one hour of the time in which you were meant to have left the premises, the colleague will call the police and instruct them to attend the premises in which you were working.

There is also a ‘code’ which should be used if you feel you are uncomfortable within the situation you are working in. In this instance you should ring your contact and say ‘I’ve left the red file at the other office’. The contact will ask whether you are able to leave or whether you want them to phone the police and you can respond appropriately without arousing the person with whom you are working.

##### **Minimum Requirements and Procedures for Office Appointments**

- When meeting a service user in one of the counselling rooms ensure that the main office is locked and that you only take essential items into the session.
- Always allow the service user to lead the way and avoid entering the room first.
- Never sit with your back to the door.
- Service users should not be seen if they appear heavily intoxicated or under the influence of drugs. No effective work can be undertaken in these circumstances.
- If a volunteer experiences any personal discomfort with a particular service user they must inform the nominated Trustee

##### **Protection of address**

CSVSS requires its volunteers to keep the address of the office confidential within reason because CSVSS would like service users to visit the office and not feel that

the general public knows the nature of their business. Being based in the CAB office allows service users to claim that their visit was to CAB rather than CSVSS if they feel the need to. However, volunteers working alone should let someone know where they are.

### **Admitting people to the building**

During CSVSS office hours, the door to the main building should remain closed and locked. The spy hole and chain should always be used. If a volunteer support worker is alone, they should not be expecting any service user so should NOT open the door to anyone.

A volunteer counsellor may, on occasion, see a service user when they are alone in the office. In such cases, the counsellor should consult the nominated Trustee before arranging the appointment.

They should use the chain and spyhole to let the service user in. They should also contact the nominated Trustee before and after the appointment. This should NEVER happen with a new service user.

### **4.7.3 Working away from the CSVSS office**

Volunteers may attend meetings or events that involve them working away from the office. Plans to travel to such events should be discussed with the nominated Trustee. When visiting another organisation, volunteers should comply with that organisation's safety policies.

CSVSS volunteers will adhere to a "buddy" system. This is designed to promote the health, safety and security of any colleagues working at the office alone.

## **4.8 PERSONAL SAFETY PROCEDURES**

CSVSS Board of Trustees is committed to helping volunteers stay safe however volunteers must take the practical measures outlined to ensure their own safety.

Volunteers should:

- check that they have not been followed before entering the building and should securely lock the door behind them.
- Use the "buddy" System outlined in the lone working policy (Section 4.7) if working alone.
- Set up a code to warn someone of problems. Therefore, in an emergency, you can alert someone to danger when you are unable to easily ask for help.
- Keep mobile phones switched on.
- Ensure that the nearest exit is not obstructed.
- Always use the spyhole and chain.
- NOT OPEN THE DOOR to anyone who you are not expecting.
- Use the contact numbers available for the nominated Trustee if they wish to discuss their actions at the time.
- Contact the Police if a volunteer feels that they are in danger.
- Ensure everything is turned off and locked when closing and leaving the building.

- Take care when opening the door to leave, using the spyhole and chain as necessary.
- When safe, leave and lock the door behind you.
- Be aware of their personal safety when walking home / to their car.

If volunteers are uncomfortable about working alone in the evenings, they should inform the Board of Trustees.

## **4.9 VIOLENCE AGAINST VOLUNTEERS POLICY**

CSVSS is committed to ensuring that its workers are able to carry out their work in a safe and secure environment and without fear, and will take all reasonable steps to protect and support its workers.

CSVSS operates a policy of 'zero tolerance' concerning violence and inappropriate behaviour against its workers. Individuals who threaten, use inappropriate behaviour, or are violent towards workers may be excluded from the premises and/or reported to the police.

### **4.9.1. Definition of violence**

**'Any incident where Volunteers are abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being or health'**

### **Unacceptable behaviour**

The following are examples of unacceptable behaviour. Although not exhaustive this indicates the type of behaviour that employees should not be exposed to:

- Verbal abuse including derogatory racial or sexual remarks.
- Malicious allegations.
- Offensive sexual gestures or behaviours.
- Abusing alcohol or drugs (though CSVSS does not exclude alcohol/drug user in recognition that this can be a coping strategy – see Drug and Alcohol Policy).
- Drug dealing.
- Wilful damage to CSVSS property.
- Theft.
- Threats or threatening behaviour.
- Physical violence of any type.
- Threatening or abusive language involving excessive swearing or offensive remarks, including helpline calls.

### **4.9.2 Roles & responsibilities**

A positive approach to the prevention of violence and unacceptable behaviour is encouraged by all volunteers to create a culture that minimises the risk of incidents. This section sets out the relevant responsibilities.

### **Chair of the Board of Trustees**

The overall responsibility for the development of policy proposals to reduce the incidence of violence and unacceptable behaviour against volunteers, and the

implementation of decisions concerning incidents against volunteers rests with the Board of Trustees.

They are also responsible for promoting a culture amongst volunteers which recognises that violence and unacceptable behaviour should not be accepted or tolerated. Incidents should be reported and dealt with effectively to minimise further risks and create a more pleasant and safe working environment. Where incidents are reported, the nominated Trustee must support and protect staff by ensuring issues are dealt with promptly.

### **Volunteer Responsibilities**

All volunteers have a general duty of care to take responsibility for the safety of themselves and others, and should take all reasonable steps possible to prevent incidents of violence or inappropriate behaviour in the workplace. To ensure effective implementation of this policy all volunteers have a responsibility to;

- be aware of and abide by this policy, and undertake training as necessary to assist with its implementation,
- ensure that they do not place themselves in a position where they are exposed to unnecessary risk,
- report all incidents of violence or unacceptable behaviour to the nominated Trustee and complete an incident form.

#### **4.9.3. Informal approach**

The worker concerned must report this to the nominated Trustee, and the abusive service user must be advised of this policy and informed verbally that their actions or behaviour is unacceptable. She should be advised clearly of behaviour that is acceptable, in order that she understands the standards required and has the opportunity to comply, and that a repeat of the behaviour could lead to sanctions being applied.

This approach may be made by the volunteer or nominated Trustee, and should be agreed as appropriate to the circumstances. In many cases this leads to an improvement without further need to develop a more formal approach. Although the approach used is informal, the incident must be formally reported in line with the incident reporting system.

#### **4.9.4 Formal approach**

Where the above approach has already been tried or where it can be justified that this is deemed inappropriate due to a severe or serious incident or threat/act of violence or genuine belief that this will not result in a modification in behaviour, a more formal approach is required.

This will entail a formal written warning in all cases as described below. A letter must be sent to the individual concerned from the Chair of the Board of Trustees, which must refer to this policy and clarify the behaviour demonstrated that is deemed to have been unacceptable and in breach of it. The letter must state that a repeat of such behaviour cannot be tolerated, and clarify any sanctions that may be applied at this stage.

Consideration should be given as to whether it is safe and/or reasonable to continue to work with the service user in the same way, or whether changes should be made

to protect volunteers. If changes need to be made, these may include measures that fall short of withdrawal of service, such as:

- Access to support may be permitted only at certain dates or times when more than one worker can be present;
- Requiring that future communications are managed via the support line;
- Withdrawal of service;
- A referral or signposting may be made.

Service users should also be informed at this stage that if there is another incident, further sanctions may have to be imposed to ensure the safe delivery of support, or that ultimately support may be withheld.

Where acts of abuse or violence occur against volunteers on grounds of race, sex, disability, religion, belief or sexual orientation volunteers should be aware that they may also have grounds for a complaint or prosecution.

### **Withholding Support**

In extreme cases where there is a threat of serious and imminent danger or due to the serious nature of an actual incident, support may be withdrawn. This decision must be taken by the Chair of the Board of Trustees who may refer to the Board of Trustees.

The service user must be made fully aware and understand that because of their unacceptable behaviour, support is being withdrawn. A formal letter backing this up should be prepared by the Administrator.

## **4.10 HEALTH AND SAFETY ON THE SUPPORT LINE POLICY**

### **4.10.1 Difficult calls**

Sometimes volunteers will experience calls that for some reason are 'difficult'.

#### **Abusive Callers**

CSVSS accepts its responsibilities towards maintaining the health, safety and welfare of all of its volunteers. We place high value on creating a positive working environment and take the view that any form of violence, aggression and abuse towards any volunteer is unacceptable. CSVSS operates a 'Zero Tolerance' attitude to abuse, and affirms that our workers should not be expected to tolerate unacceptable, aggressive and abusive behaviour from callers.

All volunteers have the right to be able to perform their duties without fear of abuse or threats of violent acts. CSVSS volunteers should not consider aggression or abuse to be an acceptable part of their work.

### **4.10.2 Procedure**

It is recognised that each individual worker will have a differing threshold and perception of what they consider as 'abusive'. CSVSS does not wish any worker to feel uncomfortable or threatened when dealing with difficult callers, and wishes to support the principles of equality and respect.

Once it has been identified that a call is of an 'abusive' nature, workers should advise the caller that their behaviour or language is not acceptable and ask that they modify their behaviour.

If behaviour is not modified, the caller should be advised that continued abusive behaviour might not only result in the call being terminated, but that it could lead to the caller being formally reported for abusive behaviour.

If the abusive call has included a personally directed threat, a volunteer should, at the earliest opportunity, inform the nominated Trustee, who will take appropriate action which may include contacting the police. This should also be taken to and explored in supervision. An incident report form should be completed jointly by the volunteer and nominated Trustee.

### **Repeat callers**

Where there are persistent callers who are frequently abusive, the matter should be brought to the attention of the nominated Trustee. In extreme circumstances the matter should be reported to the Police.

### **Hoax Calls**

CSVSS volunteers take every call seriously and will always offer support to the best of their ability giving benefit of the doubt in all circumstances.

## **4.11 INCIDENT REPORTING POLICY**

### **All volunteers will:**

- Ensure that any accident/incident, no matter how minor, is reported in the Accident Book.
- Inform a Trustee of any dangerous occurrence or near miss.

### **The Board of Trustees will:**

- Ensure that any incident which occurs within CSVSS premises should be properly investigated.
- Designate a "nominated Trustee" to assist in collecting incident information, completing paperwork and taking remedial action.
- Communicate to all volunteers the procedures for dealing with incidents and ensure that they have been informed of the name(s) of the nominated Trustee.
- Ensure that the Board of Trustees is informed if there is a serious accident/incident.

### **Nominated Trustee will:**

- In the case of a serious incident /accident telephone the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- Investigate incidents before completing the relevant parts of any Incident Report Form and recommending remedial action, identifying where possible any immediate or underlying causes.
- Ensure remedial action is carried out.

## **4.12 WORK RELATED STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY**

CSVSS recognises that it has a duty of care towards its volunteers and that reaching its objectives is best achieved through the effective contribution of motivated and committed volunteers. CSVSS aims to promote a culture of trust and co-operation, where all volunteers and service users alike are treated with dignity and respect.

#### **4.12.1 Work Related Stress**

The HSE stress as "the reaction people have to excessive demands or pressures, arising when people try to cope with tasks, responsibilities or other types of pressure connected with their work, but find difficulty, strain or worry in doing so".

#### **4.12.2 Organisational Arrangements**

CSVSS aims to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that volunteers work in a safe environment with safe systems of work, by:

- providing a workplace free from harassment and victimisation
- by developing sound management practice based on equality of treatment by providing a framework of management, health, safety, and security policies and systems to support volunteers in minimising the risk of work related stress
- by effective workload allocation and feedback on performance
- by ensuring good communication throughout CSVSS
- by providing information and training volunteers to enable them to develop their skills and maximise their contribution to the service provided by CSVSS
- by providing appropriate volunteer support and supervision

#### **Trustee responsibilities**

The Trustees have an active role in facilitating and supporting volunteers to perform their roles effectively and to contribute to the service provided by CSVSS. In order to minimise the risk of work related stress, the Trustees must:

- ensure good communication particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes
- ensure roles are designed to avoid conflicting demands and that expectations and the roles themselves are clear
- ensure volunteers are fully trained to undertake the demands of their role and are able to contribute towards decisions about how the role is carried out
- ensure there are regular opportunities for feedback on performance, e.g. support nights, regular supervision, 'one to one' meetings and team meetings
- identify or respond to issues of concern promptly and seek constructive solutions
- make use of the support and training resources available
- ensure that any form of bullying or harassment is not tolerated
- be aware of signs of problems and offer additional support to a volunteer who is experiencing stress outside work (e.g. bereavement or separation)
- comply with CSVSS recruitment policies and policies on health, safety and security

#### **Volunteer Responsibilities**

It is essential that volunteers have an active role in contributing to their own development and the service provided by CSVSS by using resources available to carry out their role effectively. In order to minimise the risk of work related stress, volunteers must:

- ensure good communication with colleagues
- support colleagues by providing appropriate information and by sharing knowledge and resources
- engage in discussion about their performance and act on feedback
- raise issues of concern at an early stage and seek constructive solutions

- make use of the support and training resources available
- ensure that any form of bullying or harassment is not tolerated
- comply with CSVSS recruitment policies and policies on health, safety and security
- seek appropriate advice and support at an early stage if difficulties arise

#### **4.12.3 Strategies for dealing with stress.**

##### **Preventative measures at an organisational level**

CSVSS will:

- Promote a culture of consultation, participation and open communication throughout the organisation
- Provide advice and support to help identify tasks or structures that may create stress
- Ensure that volunteers receive induction, training and development for their roles and also, through the Supervision and Appraisal processes, receive regular feedback on their progress at work
- Raise the awareness of Trustees and volunteers about stress and its causes
- Provide opportunities for volunteers to maintain and promote their health and well-being (training, support nights etc.)
- Ensure all volunteers are aware of the CSVSS Work Related Stress Management Policy
- Make information available for volunteers on stress awareness and management so they are better able to handle pressure they may encounter and they are able to recognise stress when it occurs in themselves and others
- Manage pressures, which may affect volunteers by anticipating likely problems and taking actions to reduce the effects of them
- Provide support through Supervision for volunteers
- Monitor levels of occurrence of stress with proper regard for confidentiality
- Monitor levels of stress through open discussion and the supervision process.

#### **4.13 ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

CSVSS is committed to providing a quality service which minimises its potential impact on the environment. We will operate in compliance with all relevant environmental legislation and we will strive to use pollution prevention and environmental best practices in all we do.

CSVSS will:-

- integrate the consideration of environmental concerns and impacts into all of our decision making and activities;
- promote environmental awareness among our employees and volunteers and encourage them to work in an environmentally responsible manner;
- train, educate and inform our employees and volunteers about environmental issues that may affect their work;
- reduce waste through re-use and recycling and by purchasing recycled, recyclable or re-furbished products and materials where these alternatives are available, economical and suitable;
- promote efficient use of materials and resources throughout our facility including water, electricity, raw materials and other resources, particularly those that are non-renewable;

- avoid unnecessary use of hazardous materials and products, seek substitutions when feasible, and take all reasonable steps to protect human health and the environment when such materials must be used, stored and disposed of;
- purchase and use environmentally responsible products accordingly;
- communicate our environmental commitment to service users, and others where appropriate and encourage them to support it;
- strive to continually improve our environmental performance and minimise the social impact and damage of activities by periodically reviewing our environmental policy in light of our current and planned future activities.

CSVSS recognises its responsibility to protect the environment and expects volunteers to minimise the impact on the environment. The Board of Trustees are responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to.

## **5 FORMS**



## 5.1 EXPENSES CLAIM FORM

NAME:

DATE:

NATURE OF CLAIM:

Please give details of the claim, ensuring that receipts are attached.

TOTAL CLAIMED: £ \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_



### 5.2 Travel Expenses Claim Form

Please complete the table below for all travel expense claims, whether by car or by public transport. Receipts must be attached for claims for public transport travel.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The maximum claim for any journey is 25 miles one way (£20) or equivalent by public transport. Any claims over this amount must be agreed by the Board of Trustees prior to travelling.

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Travel From	Travel To	Type of Transport Used	Mileage (40p per mile)	Expense Amount
------	-------------	-----------	------------------------	------------------------	----------------

For Office Use Only	
EXPENSES PAID BY:	_____ & _____
TOTAL PAID:	£ _____
CHEQUE NUMBER:	_____ DATE ON CHEQUE: _____
COMMENTS:	

<b>TOTAL CLAIMED</b>					



---

Paid by: \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

Cheque Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Cheque Total: £ \_\_\_\_\_

Date cheque issued: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments



## 5.4 Telephone helpline caller front sheet

<b>Client name:</b>	<b>Gender:</b>	<b>Ethnicity:</b>
<b>Age:</b>	<b>First half of postcode:</b>	
<b>First contact date:</b>	<b>Initial reason for their call:</b>	



### 5.5 Telephone helpline caller notes

Client first name:

Date of call	Time of call	Time call ended	Call taken by	Brief details of call

--	--	--	--	--





Client code:
Counsellor name:

**5.7 Contact details and counselling sessions log**

Client first name:	Contact no.	OK to leave message? Y / N
Call taken by:	Referred by/found us:	Post code:

Notes section (please note all contact/attempted contact)		Details of sessions (where the boxes are shaded a GAD/PHQ form should be completed)		
Date	Details of contact made	Session	Date	Attended/DNA/Cancelled?
		1		
		2		
		3		
		4		
		5		
		6		
		7		
		8		
		9		
		10		

Notes section (please note all contact/attempted contact)		Details of sessions (where the boxes are shaded a GAD/PHQ form should be completed)		
Date	Details of contact made	Session	Date	Attended/DNA/Cancelled?
		11		
		12		
		13		
		14		
		15		
		16		
		17		
		18		
		19		
		20		
		21		
		22		
		23		
		24		
		25		
		26		

Notes section (please note all contact/attempted contact)		Details of sessions (where the boxes are shaded a GAD/PHQ form should be completed)		
Date	Details of contact made	Session	Date	Attended/DNA/Cancelled?
		27		
		28		
		29		
		30		
		31		
		32		
		33		
		34		
		35		
		36		
		37		
		38		
		39		
		40		
		41		
		42		

### 5.8 CSVSS Client Evaluation Form (Beginning of counselling)

Thank you for completing this evaluation form of our service. The information you provide will remain anonymous, however it might be beneficial for us to use your comments in any publicity material (e.g. our leaflets, Annual Report and/or funding applications).

**Are you happy for us to use the information for these purposes? Yes / No**

1. How long was it before you were re-contacted after the initial interview?

2. Did you understand the reason for the initial interview?      Yes      No  
Partly

3. Did you feel the initial interview prepared you for counselling?      Yes      No

4. Was our confidentiality policy explained in the initial interview?      Yes      No

5. Was it explained how CSVSS works in the initial interview?      Yes      No

6. Were you asked about what you wanted to achieve from the counselling?      Yes  
No

7. Was the written information you received easy to read/understand?      Yes      No

8. Is there anything else you would like to say about the initial interview?

9. Are you:

Lesbian	Bisexual	Heterosexual (straight)	Gay
Unsure	Celibate	Prefer not to say	Other

9. Any other comments?

**Thank you for your valuable feedback which will help us improve our service**

### 5.9 CSVSS Client Evaluation Form (End of counselling)

Thank you for completing this evaluation form of our service. The information you provide will remain anonymous, however it might be beneficial for us to use your comments in any publicity material (e.g. our leaflets, Annual Report and/or funding applications).

**Are you happy for us to use the information for these purposes? Yes / No**

1. Do you feel you have benefited overall from the counselling service? Yes / No  
Can you say why?

2. How are you coping? (please tick)  
    I am coping more now      I am coping the same      I am coping less  
 Can you say why?

3. Are there any ways in which we could improve the counselling environment?

4. Did you find the counselling to be:      Not helpful      Helpful      Very helpful  
 Please give details:

5. Did you feel safe enough to talk about difficult issues with your counsellor? Yes / No  
 Can you say why?

6. Are there any other comments you have about your counsellor/the counselling?

7. What did you like about the service (tick as many as you want)  
 Women-only      Free service      Felt welcome      Not limited to certain no. of sessions  
 Availability      Other (please give details)

8. Was there anything you did not like about the service?

9. Are you:  
                                  Lesbian      Bisexual      Heterosexual (straight)      Gay  
                                  Unsure      Celibate      Prefer not to say      Other

9. Any other comments?

**Thank you for your valuable feedback which will help us improve our service**

## 5.10 Client Agreement

- All counsellors are qualified to Diploma level.
- CSVSS is able to offer its counselling sessions free of charge. Should you wish to make a donation then you can do so by way of a cheque made payable to 'Chester Sexual Violence Support Service'.
- We provide a women-only environment.
- We abide by current health and safety legislation.
- Whatever issues you bring to counselling, will be dealt with in a non-judgemental, understanding manner and in your own time, as counselling is not time-limited.
- Counsellors do not offer advice or guiding for how to solve your issues but offer a safe place in which to explore your feelings and make your own decisions.
- Your counsellor will review with you regularly throughout your counselling at CSVSS to ensure that you are getting the most out of your counselling sessions.
- If you wish to ask to work with another counsellor then please let us know.
- If your counsellor becomes permanently unable to work with you then we can arrange for you to see another counsellor if you wish.

### Appointments

- Appointments are currently offered on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6pm-8pm and Saturdays from 10am-1pm.
- Sessions will normally be weekly and the counsellor will agree the days and times with you of future appointments although sessions are normally at the same time and day of the week.
- Each counselling session lasts for 50 minutes.
- If the counsellor needs to cancel a session they will give you as much notice as possible.
- If for any reason you are unable to attend an appointment, can you please ring to let us know as soon as possible.
- If you miss three consecutive appointments or do not attend regularly then you will be contacted to see if you wish to continue with counselling.

### Contact

- Counsellors cannot be contacted between sessions.
- We have a 24 hour answerphone where you can leave messages about appointments.

### Ending Counselling

- You can choose when you wish to end the counselling.
- Your counsellor can end the therapy if she feels that she is unable to work with you.

**Confidentiality**

- Confidentiality is kept within the service.
- There may be instances where confidentiality needs to be broken however, such as if we feel you may be at serious risk of harming yourself or somebody else and us telling someone could make a difference. Wherever possible we would discuss this with you first. Your counselling notes may be subpoenaed by a judge or by police investigating your case.
- We may also be required by law to break confidentiality and would discuss this with you first, where possible. Instances in which we would break confidentiality on legal grounds are:
  - Terrorism
  - Child Protection
  - Money Laundering
  - Drug Trafficking
  - Significant risk of significant harm. Where possible the counsellor would get consent from the client to pass on information. Included in this however, is that it is important to explore feelings around self-harm and suicide.
  - Your counsellor has regular supervision sessions with a supervisor to support their work with you. Your counsellors may ask for your permission to record sessions for use in their own supervision in training. Recordings will be destroyed after use.

**What Information We Keep**

- Our counsellors keep case notes on sessions, which only they access. These notes, together with the other information we have on your file, are stored securely and kept for six years after you finishing your counselling, after which point they are destroyed.
- Statistical information is kept anonymously on our database.

**Other**

- If you require other forms of support we can refer you on to other appropriate local agencies.

**I agree with the terms of this contract.**

Signed  
(client).....Date:.....

Signed  
(counsellor).....Date:.....

### 5.11 CLIENT CONTACT INFORMATION

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Postcode:</b>	
<b>Home Tel. No</b>	<b>Mobile No</b>
<b>Email address</b>	

<b>Any medical conditions that we should know about:</b>
--

<b>GP name/address</b>
<b>Post Code</b>
<b>GP Telephone No</b>

Can we send letters to your address?	Yes	No
Can we leave messages with other people on your home number?	Yes	No
On your mobile?	Yes	No
Is it OK to contact you via email?	Yes	No

#### Emergency contact details

<b>Name:</b>		
<b>Relationship:</b>		
<b>Contact No.</b>		
<b>Does this person know you are attending CSVSS?</b>	Yes	No

**In the event of an emergency, CSVSS may need to contact your GP or emergency contact.**

Signed (Client).....

Date.....



## 5.12 Client referral form for counselling

Completed by:	Date:	Client code:
---------------	-------	--------------

Name:	Contact no:	Can we leave a message on this number?
-------	-------------	--

### Personal details (for monitoring purposes)

Age		Ethnicity	
Religion		Employment	
Living with		No. of children & ages	
Referred by		How did you hear about CSVSS?	

**Availability** The white boxes are the times we currently operate, however we may be able to offer a daytime appointment if these are not convenient so if daytime is preferable please tick which day(s) and times(s)

Day	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Morning (10am-1pm)						
Afternoon (1pm-4pm)						
Evening (6pm-8pm)						

1. Are you currently receiving, or have you received, counselling previously relating to your sexual violence? If yes, please state the type of counselling, where it took place and with whom:

2. What do you hope to achieve by attending CSVSS?

**3. Do you have any health conditions which we should be aware of? If yes, please provide details:**

**4. Do you have a registered disability? If so, please state what support you need:**

**5. Are you currently on any medication? If yes, please give details:**

**6. Are you currently using any other services? (e.g. drug/alcohol) If yes, please give details:**

**Are you suffering from any of the following (please tick):**

Anxiety	Depression	Eating problems	Problems sleeping
Drug/alcohol misuse	Suicidal thoughts	Suicide attempts	Flashbacks
Dissociation	Sexual problems	Self harm	Low confidence/self esteem
Body image issues	Dreams/nightmares	Other	

**7. Abuse type (ie childhood sexual abuse/rape/sexual assault)**

**8. Could you please provide brief details of the incident(s) such as how old you were at the time of the incident(s), name of the perpetrator, number of incidents etc**

--

<b>9. Was the incident(s) reported to the police? If so, please give details:</b>
---

**Has the following been discussed?**

<b>Confidentiality</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>Comments:</b>
------------------------	-----------------	------------------

**First appointment**

<b>Date</b>			
<b>Time</b>			
<b>Counsellor</b>			
<b>Date closed</b>			
<b>Appointments offered</b>		<b>Appointments kept</b>	
<b>Reason for closing</b>			

**5.13 CLIENT NOTES**

**Client code:**

<b>Session no.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Notes of the session</b>

<b>PHQ-9</b>	Over the last 2 weeks (or other agreed time period) how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
1.	Little interest or pleasure in doing things	0	1	2	3
2.	Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless	0	1	2	3
3.	Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much	0	1	2	3
4.	Feeling tired or having little energy	0	1	2	3
5.	Poor appetite or overeating	0	1	2	3
6.	Feeling bad about yourself – or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down	0	1	2	3
7.	Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television	0	1	2	3
8.	Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed? Or the opposite – being so fidgety or restless that you have been moving around a lot more than usual	0	1	2	3
9.	Thoughts that you would be better off dead or hurting yourself in some way	0	1	2	3
<b>PH-9 Total Score =</b>					

<b>GAD-7</b>	Over the last 2 weeks (or other agreed time period) how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
1.	Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge	0	1	2	3
2.	Not being able to stop or control worrying	0	1	2	3
3.	Worrying too much about different things	0	1	2	3
4.	Trouble relaxing	0	1	2	3
5.	Being so restless that it is hard to sit still	0	1	2	3
6.	Becoming easily annoyed or irritable	0	1	2	3
7.	Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen	0	1	2	3
<b>GAD-7 Total Score =</b>					

<b>Risk Assessment</b>				
1.	Do things ever feel that bad that you think about harming or killing yourself?		Yes	No
2.	Do you ever feel that life is not worth living?		Yes	No
3.	Have you made plans to end your life?		Yes	No
4.	Do you know how you would kill yourself?		Yes	No
5.	Have you made any actual preparations to kill yourself?		Yes	No
6.	Have you attempted suicide in the past?		Yes	No
7.	(On a sliding scale of 1 to 10 with 10 meaning certain) How likely is it that you will act on such thoughts and plans?		Yes	No
<b>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</b>				

<b>Review Question</b>	
Do you feel that CSVSS have treated you with dignity and respect?	Yes / No