

1. Purpose of This Document

This document explains the nature, scope, and limitations of welfare support provided by the Swiss Benevolent Society (SBS) Welfare Officer service.

The Welfare Officer provides non-statutory, non-clinical, and non-regulated support focused on wellbeing, practical assistance, and signposting.

This service does not replace statutory services or regulated professionals.

By engaging with SBS welfare support, you acknowledge and accept the terms outlined in this document.

2. Nature of the Welfare Officer Role

The Welfare Officer may provide:

- Practical assistance (e.g. completing forms, applications, correspondence)
- General wellbeing support (listening, guidance, and signposting)
- Support accessing external services (health, housing, welfare, social care, community services)
- Assistance communicating with third parties (with consent)
- Advocacy support where appropriate and agreed
- Signposting to specialist or statutory services where required
- Support with identifying options and next steps
- Record-keeping in line with SBS policy and legal obligations

The Welfare Officer acts solely in a facilitative and supportive capacity and does not assume responsibility for outcomes or decisions made by the client or third parties.

3. Important Limitations of the Service

The Welfare Officer and SBS do not provide:

- Medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment
- Legal advice or legal representation
- Regulated financial advice
- Social work services or statutory casework
- Emergency intervention or crisis response
- Guaranteed access to funding, services, benefits, housing, or other outcomes

SBS does not act as a statutory body and has no legal authority to compel action by external organisations.

All decisions made by the client or third parties remain their own responsibility.

4. Information and Engagement

To provide safe and appropriate support, SBS may request relevant personal information, including (where applicable):

- Contact and identification details
- Household and emergency contact information
- Relevant health, housing, financial, or welfare information
- Details of involved professionals or services
- Documentation required for applications or referrals

You are not obliged to provide information. However, failure to do so may limit the ability of SBS to provide effective support or risk assessment.

5. Contact and Service Boundaries

- Welfare support is not an emergency service
- Standard contact is by agreed methods (telephone, email, messaging platforms, or video call)
- Appointment duration and frequency will be agreed as appropriate
- SBS cannot guarantee immediate availability or response times
- In emergencies, clients must contact emergency services directly (e.g. 999/112 or local equivalent)

6. Confidentiality and Safeguarding

Information shared with SBS will be treated as confidential and handled in accordance with applicable data protection legislation and SBS safeguarding policies.

Information will only be shared externally with consent, except where SBS reasonably believes disclosure is necessary to:

- Protect the client or another person from serious harm
- Safeguard a child or vulnerable adult
- Prevent or respond to a safeguarding concern or emergency
- Comply with legal, regulatory, or statutory obligations

Where possible, SBS will seek to inform the client prior to sharing information, unless doing so may increase risk or is not reasonably practicable.

Safeguarding concerns may be reviewed internally on a strict need-to-know basis, including by designated safeguarding leads and senior personnel.

7. Risk, Safeguarding, and Escalation

Where safeguarding concerns arise, SBS reserves the right to:

- Escalate concerns to appropriate external agencies (including emergency services or local authorities where applicable)
- Share relevant information without consent where necessary and lawful
- Take proportionate action based on available information and assessed risk

All decisions will be made in good faith, proportionately, and with regard to the safety of those involved.

8. Jurisdictional Limitations

SBS primarily operates within the United Kingdom and is not a statutory authority.

Where a client is located outside the UK, SBS may have limited ability to access or coordinate local services.

In such cases, SBS will act within its capability and may escalate safeguarding concerns to appropriate international or local services where necessary.

9. Client Responsibilities

By engaging with SBS welfare support, you agree to:

- Provide accurate and complete information where possible
- Inform SBS of relevant changes in circumstances
- Engage respectfully with staff and representatives
- Retain responsibility for personal decisions and actions
- Seek emergency assistance directly where required
- Acknowledge that SBS does not direct or control external services or outcomes

10. No Guarantee of Outcomes

SBS does not guarantee:

- Service provision by third parties
 - Financial assistance or funding outcomes
 - Housing, immigration, benefits, or legal outcomes
 - Specific resolutions to individual circumstances
- Support is provided on a best-efforts, informational, and facilitative basis only.

11. Right to Withdraw or Modify Support

SBS reserves the right to:

- Refuse, pause, or discontinue welfare support at any time
- Limit support where risk, capacity, or scope requires
- Refuse engagement where it falls outside organisational remit
- Refer clients to alternative services where appropriate

12. Acknowledgement

By engaging with SBS Welfare Officer services, you confirm that you understand:

- The support provided is non-statutory and non-clinical
- SBS does not provide legal, medical, or regulated financial advice
- Welfare support is not an emergency service
- SBS may need to share information without consent in safeguarding situations
- SBS does not guarantee outcomes from any support, referral, or signposting
- Responsibility for decisions remains with you and relevant external bodies
- SBS may withdraw or limit support where appropriate

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