



Support for Young People
Affected by Crime

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy (Children)

Context:

SAFE! is a charity that provides support to young people and families affected by crime and abuse across the Thames Valley area. SAFE! comes into contact with children through receiving referrals, providing direct one-to-one support sessions, text and online support, providing group sessions, running residential trips and fundraising/awareness activities. The types of contact with children and young people will be both regulated (frequent or intensive contact with a support worker) and controlled activities (access to data on vulnerable individuals by staff and freelance worker).

SAFE! recognises that, in its work with young people, their safety and protection is paramount and takes priority over all other interests. This policy seeks to ensure that SAFE! undertakes its responsibilities with regard to protection of children and will respond to concerns appropriately. This policy establishes a framework to support the whole team in their practices and clarifies the charities' expectations.

The SAFE! team includes the Director, Service Managers, Senior Practitioners, Placement & Volunteer Coordinator, Project Workers, self-employed Freelance Practitioners, Digital Engagement Officer, Admin and Finance staff, students and volunteers, including Trustees.

Legislation:

The principal pieces of legislation governing this policy are:

- Working together to safeguard Children 2018
- The Children Act 1989
- The Adoption and Children Act 2002:
- The Children act 2004
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- The Police Act – DBS 1997
- Mental Health Act 1983
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

Definitions:

Safeguarding is about embedding practices throughout the organisation to ensure the protection of children wherever possible. In contrast, child protection is about responding to circumstances that arise.

Abuse is a selfish act of oppression and injustice, exploitation and manipulation of power by those in a position of authority. This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture.

It can take a number of forms, including the following:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Bullying, including cyberbullying
- Neglect
- Child Exploitation
- Trafficking and Modern Slavery
- Peer on Peer Abuse
- Online abuse/exploitation
- Radicalisation
- Forced Marriage
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Fabricated or induced illness

Definition of a child

A child is under the age of 18 (as defined in the United Nations convention on the Rights of a Child).

Contextual Safeguarding

Children and young people can be at risk of serious harm in a range of settings and locations not limited to the familial home. Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.

Responsibilities:

All Workers and Volunteers have a responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies, and to pass on any welfare concerns using the required procedures. We expect all individuals to promote good practice by being an excellent role model, contribute to discussions about safeguarding and to positively involve people in developing safe practices.

Trustees have overall responsibility that this policy is in place and appropriate for its purpose.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is the SAFE! Director and she has responsibility to:

- Ensure the policy is accessible
- Monitor and review the policy
- Promote the welfare of vulnerable children
- Ensure all workers have appropriate training and information
- Ensure safe recruitment processes are followed
- Receive concerns about safeguarding and advise accordingly
- Keep up to date with local and national arrangements for safeguarding and DBS
- Develop and maintain working relationships with relevant agencies and organisations

How we deliver our commitment to safeguarding:

Recruitment - SAFE! ensures that safe recruitment processes are implemented for all workers and volunteers. A statement committing to safe recruitment practices is included in all recruitment adverts. Job descriptions contain reference to safeguarding responsibilities and person specifications contain a statement regarding safeguarding competency. Safer recruitment checks, included Enhanced DBS Clearance, will be conducted for all workers and volunteers. No formal job contract will be issued until after DBS clearance and two satisfactory references have been received. In exceptional circumstances a risk assessment may be undertaken by the Director and the Chair of the Trustees in the absence or delay of any of these checks.

Service delivery and contracting/subcontracting - There will be systematic checking of safeguarding arrangements of partner organisations when joint work is undertaken, to ensure that they meet the requirements of the organisation and this policy.

Training – SAFE! commits to induction and training at an appropriate level for new Workers and Volunteers in relation to safeguarding. All staff and project workers are expected to have completed a sufficient level of safeguarding training within the last three years, or as advised by the relevant Safeguarding Children's Board and dependent on their level of responsibility.

Communications – SAFE! will enable effective discussion of safeguarding issues through individual and group supervision meetings and Board meetings. There is a clear reporting procedure for any concerns. Safeguarding processes are regularly reviewed and are open to discussion. Individuals who have concerns will be responded to by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and opportunities will be open to debrief and seek further support where necessary.

Professional Boundaries:

Professional boundaries are what define the limits of a relationship between a support worker and a service user. They are a set of standards we agree to uphold that allows this necessary and often close relationship to exist while ensuring the correct detachment is kept in place. SAFE! expects staff to protect the professional integrity of themselves and the organisation at all times. The following professional boundaries must be adhered to:

- SAFE! does not encourage workers or volunteers to give gifts to or receive gifts from clients. However, gifts may be provided by the organisation as part of a planned activity. On occasion gifts are received from service users at the end of an intervention. Any receipt of a gift should be declared to the relevant Service Manager.
- Personal relationships between a worker or volunteer and a service user or previous service user is prohibited. This includes relationships through social networking sites (See SAFE! Social Media Policy). Once the support sessions are completed there should be no ongoing relationship between a SAFE! Project Worker and a service user.

If the professional boundaries and/or policies are breached this could result in disciplinary procedures or enactment of the allegation management procedures.

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns:

Any concerns regarding Safeguarding should be immediately referred by the worker to their supervisor, and at the least within 24 hours. These concerns should then be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (SAFE! Director) or Deputy Safeguarding Lead, or the Chair of the Trustees (or the Social Services Emergency Duty Team if contact is not possible). If there are any

immediate medical concerns then these should also be reported and medical attention sought for the young person.

If there are safeguarding concerns or a disclosure is made, detailed records should be kept of all contact and conversations with the young person on the Safeguarding Concern form, including details of any injuries witnessed, conversations with anyone other than the young person involved, any advice received and any action taken.

Where it is decided that a safeguarding referral should be made, the information of concern obtained from or about a child should always be shared by telephone with the local Children's Social Care Service, Locality Team or Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). This should be done immediately if there is a concern that the child is suffering significant harm or is likely to do so. Please refer to the relevant Local Authority guidance for the particular process and contact arrangements. Any actions decided during the call should be clearly recorded for our records.

Any action required as a result of safeguarding concerns will ideally be discussed with the young person and their parents/carers where appropriate. In the event of a disclosure, where possible young people should be supported to action a referral themselves to the Local Authority.

The referral information from the telephone call should be followed up in writing within 48 hours to the Local Authority using their referral template. The Local Authority should acknowledge receipt of this referral and provide advice on their decision about the type of response that will be required to meet the needs of the child, within one working day. If acknowledgement has not been received within three working days, the Local Authority Children's Social Care services should be contacted again to ensure that the referral is receiving attention and to seek their decision and plan in response to the concerns shared.

For further guidance, see the Safeguarding Children Procedural Handbook

Monitoring and Recording:

SAFE! will monitor safeguarding aspects including safe recruitment practises, DBS checks, reference checks, records of any supervision sessions, training, monitoring actions and outcomes of concerns that are raised and presence of a Designated Lead responsible for Safeguarding. Information will be gathered, recorded and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Policy and the File Retention Policy.

All Workers and Volunteers must be aware that they have a professional duty to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. The public interest in safeguarding children may override confidentiality interests. However, information will be shared on a need to know basis only, as judged by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Workers have a duty to discuss confidentiality and its limits, including their responsibilities regarding safeguarding, with their service users and their families during initial meetings.

Related policies and procedures:

Safeguarding Children Procedural Handbook
Case Recording Policy
Grievance and disciplinary procedure
Health and Safety Policy

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
Data Protection Policy
Social Media Policy
Code of Conduct
Supervision Policy

Further advice and Resources:

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board - <http://www.oscb.org.uk/>
Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board - <http://www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/>
Milton Keynes Safeguarding Children Board - <http://www.mkscb.org/>
Pan Berkshire LSCB Procedures Manual - <http://www.proceduresonline.com/berks/>

Reviewing:

All policies are subject to an annual review and any additional regular review to reflect, for example, changes in legislation or to the structure of policies of SAFE!

The next review of this policy will be April 2024.