

Abbey People CIO

Child Protection and Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy & Guidance

Definitions

- A child in this policy is defined as anyone under the age of 18, in addition, this policy sets out variations to working practices where young people are volunteering and over the age of 16.
- A Adult at risk is defined in accordance with The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment) Order 2002 as a person aged 18 or over who has a condition of the following type:
 - (i) a substantial learning or physical disability;
 - (ii) a physical or mental illness or mental disorder, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs; or
 - (iii) a significant reduction in physical or mental capacity.
- safeguarding is defined as both safeguarding and promoting welfare together, through:
 - (i) protecting children, young people and adults at risk from maltreatment
 - (ii) preventing impairment of children, young people and adults at risk ' health and/or development; and
 - (iii) ensuring that children and young people are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care to enable them to have optimum life chances such that they enter adulthood successfully.

Background

Abbey People CIO believes that every young person and adult at risk has the right to be safe and that their welfare is paramount. This includes young people and adults at risk of any gender, ethnic background, sexuality or religion, or with any disability.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and adults at risk and seek to ensure that through our projects and activities, staff and volunteers work to achieve the best outcomes for young people and adults at risk.

As safeguarding underpins all our work it is essential that the work is carried out under a robust safeguarding policy framework. We recognise that safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone, and therefore seek to make safeguarding a priority throughout the organisation. Resources are allocated to support this commitment and towards making Abbey People CIO a safe organisation for all those associated with it.

We will:

- have clear lines of accountability for safeguarding throughout the organisation
set clear goals and monitor and review progress

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- undertake regular annual reviews of its safeguarding processes and practices (including the Health and Safety Policy, Confidentiality Policy, Equal opportunities Policy and First Aid Policy)
- maintain the resources necessary to support this commitment; and provide training to staff at all levels of the organisation in applying safeguarding principles to every aspect of their work. Internal training will be carried out for staff annually in how to best implement safeguarding policies and procedures. The Lead Safeguarding Trustee will also work with the management team to register staff and volunteers for relevant external training as legislation and practice is updated.

We are committed to:

- exercising proper care in the selection, appointment, and support of those working with children, young people, and adults at risk whether paid or voluntary
- working in partnership with young people and adults at risk, valuing their contributions, while ensuring they are safe and protected while partaking in Abbey People CIO activities and programmes
- working in partnership with parents and carers and offering support, encouragement, and advice
- working in partnership with other agencies who are concerned with the well-being of children, young people, and adults at risk.
- working with young people and adults at risk and including them in creating a safe environment where they can take part in development activities and consequently increase in confidence; and
- implementing and maintaining a process for dealing with concerns about possible abuse.

Partnership Working

Abbey People undertakes activities and programmes in partnership with other organisations. Where these involve children, young people, and adults at risk these arrangements will be put in place to determine the appropriate safeguarding leader and the procedures to be adhered to during the activity/programme.

Policy and Guidance Document Content

This Policy sets out agreed processes in relation to the following areas:

The Roles and Appointment of Staff and Volunteers

Codes of Conduct for Adults

Staff Supervision

Appointment of a Safeguarding Officer

Responding to possible abuse

Abuse of Trust Guidelines

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Reporting Procedure

Appendices:

- Appendix A: Recognising signs of abuse.
- Appendix B: The role of the Principal Safeguarding Officer.
- Appendix C: Responding to abuse and Incident Form.
- Appendix D: Contact details.

The Roles and Appointment of Staff and Volunteers

The authority to appoint staff and volunteers is the ultimate responsibility for the appointment of staff and volunteers is held by the Trustees.

For the purpose of administering the policy, the process of appointment may be delegated to members of the Operations Group or Executive Group.

Abbey People CIO confirms its commitment to recruit all staff and volunteers in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice and legislative requirements.

Appointment procedures

All paid positions should have a job description and a person specification. Voluntary jobs should have a volunteer's agreement.

All prospective staff are required:

- to complete an application including previous experience and a personal statement, as well as completing an equal opportunities form that includes personal details and declaration of any criminal offences or allegations
- to provide details of 2 referees, and
- to agree that they will co-operate with an enhanced DBS disclosure
- to sign terms of conditions of employment.

Volunteers are required to sign a Volunteer Agreement that makes reference to their roles and responsibilities and organisational policies. A signed copy will be held by Abbey People CIO. Volunteer roles will be risk assessed and those requiring DBS checks will be clearly noted.

Relevant staff members and volunteers who are waiting for a DBS check may start working for Abbey People CIO but must be supervised while working with young people and adults at risk until the DBS is completed. This means that they must always be within eyesight or earshot of someone who has been DBS checked.

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Abbey People CIO is committed to ensuring the safety of both young volunteers, young people and adults at risk attending events. As such, youth volunteers do not have to undergo the same procedure. Instead, they are to be the responsibility of a named supervisor, as agreed upon in the volunteer contracts, and do not have to undertake the same interview procedure.

Codes of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

The following code of conduct applies to all Abbey People CIO staff and volunteers working with children, young people and adults at risk whether acting in a paid or unpaid capacity.

- Avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- Avoid taking a young person alone in a vehicle on journeys, however short.
- Unless circumstances make it impossible to comply, avoid taking a child or adult at risk to the toilet unless either (a) another adult is present or (b) another adult is aware (this may include a parent or group leader).
- If you find you are in a situation where you are alone with a child, young person or vulnerable adult, wherever practicable make sure that others can clearly observe you.
- Avoid close personal relationships with a child, young person or adult at risk in relation to whom they are in a position of trust.
- Never make suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child, young person or vulnerable adult, even in fun, as this could be misinterpreted.
- If a child, young person, or adult at risk accuses a student or member of staff of abuse or inappropriate behaviour this should be reported immediately to the relevant person.
- The duty to report applies equally to complaints or accusations of historic, and not just recent, abuse/inappropriate behaviour.
- Recipients of any complaint or accusation from a child, young person, or adult at risk, must listen without making or implying any judgement as to the truth of the complaint or accusation.
- If a child, young person or adult at risk makes a complaint, or if there are other reasons for suspecting abuse, this should be reported immediately to the designated staff member responsible for the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk named in section 4 of this policy.
- All staff and volunteers should participate in the training available to support them in your work with children, young people, and adults at risk.
- Staff and volunteers should remember that those who abuse children, young people and adults at risk can be of any age (even other children and adults at risk), gender, ethnic background or class, and it is important not to allow personal preconceptions about people to prevent appropriate action taking place.

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- Good practice includes valuing and respecting children, young people and adults at risk as individuals, and the adult modelling of appropriate conduct, which would exclude bullying, aggressive behaviour and discrimination in any form.

Those dealing with any allegations of abuse or misconduct should adhere to the principles set out in the policy. Any information received should be acted upon sensitively, effectively, and efficiently.

Wherever possible, those making allegations should be given information about the outcome.

All staff, volunteers, and 'youth volunteers' are expected to become familiar with the Safeguarding Policy. Suitable training opportunities for staff and volunteers will be provided and 'youth volunteers' will know how to identify and address child protection and adult at risk issues.

The Trustees recognise the importance of appointing a named member of staff to handle any concerns regarding the safety of children, young people and adults at risk (hereafter referred to as Principal Safeguarding Officer). The position of Principal Safeguarding Officer (PSO) is held by: **Nicky Shepard**, CEO. The position of Safeguarding Trustee is held by **Sharon Secker**.

The responsibilities of the PSO are detailed in 'The Role of the Principal Safeguarding Officer' in Appendix B and the contact details are given in Appendix E.

Responding to possible abuse

The guidelines in this section are for all staff and volunteers responding to incidences of or concerns regarding abuse. Official definitions of abuse and advice on recognising signs of abuse can be found in Appendix A.

What to do if abuse is suspected to have occurred

Report concerns as soon as possible to the PSO who has been nominated to act on behalf of Abbey People CIO, referring allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities. Reports should be made using the designated incident form.

In the absence of the PSO, all concerns should be referred to the Safeguarding Trustee.

If the suspicions in any way implicate the PSO the report should be made directly to the Safeguarding Trustee. Alternatively contact the referral desk of the local Social Services where independent advice can be obtained.

Suspicions should not be discussed with anyone other than those named on this document unless specifically requested by the child, young person or adult at risk involved. It is good

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practice to ensure young people and adults at risk feel supported through any safeguarding process; confidentiality should work to protect young people and adults at risk, not to deny them support from wider members of staff, volunteers and youth volunteers.

It is the role of the PSO to ensure that any wider staff do not take on direct responsibility of dealing with an allegation and only take on a supporting role

All reports, including electronic reports, should be kept in a locked or secure place. Reports should be kept for a minimum of 7 years although requirements may vary under contracts from different partners.

It is the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the child protection or adult at risk agencies, or to seek advice from relevant agencies, it is hoped that all members of staff and volunteers will follow this procedure. If, however, they feel that the response of the Principal Safeguarding Officer or Safeguarding Officers has not been appropriate it is open to staff to contact the relevant agencies directly.

What to do when a child, young person or adult at risk talks about abuse

The following guidelines are not designed to be a step-by-step process, but rather an indication of helpful ways to respond to a young person or adult at risk who talks about abuse:

- Show acceptance of what you are being told, even when the story seems to be unlikely
- Keep calm, and ensure your body language remains reassuring
- Tell the young person or adult at risk that the best way you can help them is to tell someone else, but you will only tell other people who can help them like yourself
- Assure the young person or adult at risk they are not to blame
- Be aware that the young person or adult at risk may have been threatened or bribed not to tell, this is especially relevant where grooming has taken place
- Never push for information, if you feel a young person or adult at risk was about to tell you something and then changes their minds, it is important to accept that they have decided not to tell you at this time, however it is important that the child is left knowing that you are always ready to listen.
- Helpful things to say: “Thank you for telling me.” “It’s not your fault.” “I will help you and only tell other people who can help you like me.”

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- Let the child know everything you are doing step by step. This allows the child to feel that they still have some control over what is happening to them, e.g. “I am going to leave the room now and call someone who can come and help us, when I come back, I am going to tell you what was said.”

Things NOT to say: “I am shocked!” “Why did you not tell anyone before?” “I can’t believe it!” or “Are you sure this is true?” WHY? HOW? WHEN? WHO? WHERE?

Never make a promise that you cannot keep.

What to do following a child or adult at risk talking about abuse

- Make notes as soon as being told, preferably within an hour on the incident form.
- When making a recording, it is important to write down exactly what the child/adult at risk has said, what you said in reply, when it was said, and what had happened immediately before hand (a description of the activity).
- Record dates and times of the events and when you made the report.
- Keep all hand written notes even if these have been typed at a later time.
- Follow the guidance given in 5.1 with regards to informing the PSO.
- Ensure appropriate follow up has been arranged for the child/vulnerable adult, taking into consideration whether it is safe for the child to return home. This is part of the responsibility of the PSO, unless the PSO is implicated. (see Appendix B, for the process the Principal Safeguarding Officer will follow).

‘Abuse of trust’ guidelines

Young people and adults at risk who are over the age of consent are still in need of protection. Abbey People CIO is committed to protecting all those that they work with. It will therefore be unacceptable for any member of staff or volunteer to engage in behaviour that might allow a sexual or an ‘inappropriate’ relationship to develop while the relationship of trust continues.

Supervisors need to be mindful to hold their volunteers and members of staff to account in how they are supervising young volunteers.

Reporting Procedures

This section outlines guidance and recommendations regarding reporting and raising concerns regarding Abbey People CIO staff. Further guidance can be found in the Whistleblowing Policy.

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Staff responsibilities

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult, this is particularly important where the welfare of young people or adults at risk may be at risk.

Even where staff do not feel able to express their concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues or fear harassment or victimisation, this must never result in a child, young person or adult at risk continuing to be unnecessarily at risk and concerns should always be reported.

Reasons for reporting

Each individual has responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour for the following reasons:

- I. to prevent the problem worsening or widening
- II. to protect or reduce risks to others; and
- III. to prevent themselves from becoming implicated.

Challenges in reporting

Staff and volunteers may experience the following concerns when contemplating reporting, which will need to be overcome:

- I. starting a chain of events which spirals
- II. disrupting the work or project
- III. fear of getting it wrong
- IV. fear of repercussions or damaging careers; or
- V. fear of not being believed.

How to raise a concern

You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken.

- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why.
- Approach PSO or Safeguarding Trustee
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response - don't let matters rest
- Ideally you should put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places where you can.

A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, but you will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

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What happens next

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries
- Your employer has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.
- Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence

Self-reporting

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children, young people or adults at risk.

Further advice and support

It is recognised that reporting concerns can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from the PSO.

Parental Consent

No children will be allowed to participate in any activity without the consent of parent or carer.

Consent for the use of Images

Parental consent will be sought for the use of images of young people under the age of 16. Young people 16 years and over are able to give their own consent for their use of their images.

Any photographic or video images will only be used for purposes stated on the consent form and will only be shared if given express permission to do so.

Staff Supervision during Youth Club

- Staff and volunteers will follow the usual good practice guidelines.
- A log will be kept of all daily activities and any incidences recorded.
- Staff and volunteers will meet for briefing/supervision meetings.

Site Safety

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The use of any activity site will be checked for compliance with health and safety regulations for its use and special consideration will be given to the use of fires and electrical appliances.

Workers may not transport individual young people alone in their vehicles as this exposes both workers and young people to unnecessary levels of risk. All travel, whether via public transport or in private vehicles, must be risk assessed, as well as being covered by the normal levels of staff ratios and first aider provision.

Insurance

Abbey People CIO holds appropriate insurance for public liability.

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Definitions and signs of abuse

Definitions of abuse

Neglect: The persistent or severe neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Emotional: Actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment. This category is used where it is the main or sole use of abuse.

Physical: Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child, including deliberate poisoning, suffocation and Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

Sexual: Actual or likely exploitation of a child or adolescent. The child may be dependent and/or developmentally immature (Sexual exploitation represents the involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or violate social taboos or family roles).

Organised Abuse involving one or more abuser and a number of related or non-related abused children and young people. The abusers concerned may be acting in cohort to abuse children, sometimes acting in isolation or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse.

Recognising signs of abuse

The following signs may or may not indicate abuse, in the event that one or more of the signs is present the possibility of abuse should be considered: -

Neglect

- under-nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care.

Physical

- any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.

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- injuries which have to receive medical attention.
- reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming.
- repeated urinary infections or unexplained abdominal, 'tummy' pains; or
- bruises, bites, burn, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation.

Emotional

- changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy. Also depression, aggression and extreme anxiety
- nervousness, frozen watchfulness, persistent tiredness
- obsessions or phobias.
- sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- inappropriate relationships with peers or adults
- attention seeking behaviour; or
- running away, stealing, and lying.

Sexual

- any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse
- a **child** with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who engages in age-inappropriate sexual play
- sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- child who is sexually proactive or seductive with adult
- inappropriate relationships with peers and or adults
- severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares
- eating disorders – anorexia or bulimia; or
- evidence of grooming by individuals or groups of adults.

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Appendix B The Role of The Principal Safeguarding Officer

The Principal Safeguarding Officer (PSO) acts as person responsible for Child Protection and Adult at risk issues reported by staff, volunteers and members of the public.

The PSO will follow set procedures in responding to a Child Protection or Adult at risk Report. In the absence of the PSO, another Trustee will follow the same procedures.

The PSO is responsible for assisting staff in the follow up of allegations and ensuring best practice is maintained.

Allegations of Physical Injury or Neglect

If the young person or adult at risk has a physical injury or symptom of neglect the PSO will:

Contact Social Services for advice in cases of deliberate injury or where there are concerns about the young person or vulnerable adult's safety. The parents should not be informed by the PSO in circumstances where a parent/carer or close family member is suspected. Where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. The PSO will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.

In other circumstances the PSO will speak with the parent/carer and suggest medical help/attention is sought for the young person or vulnerable adult. The doctor or health visitor will then initiate further action, if deemed necessary

If appropriate the parent/carer will be encouraged to seek help from the Social Services Department.

Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, if appropriate, the PSO will offer to go with them. If they still fail to act the PSO should, in case of real concern, contact Social Services for advice. vi. The PSO will follow up any referral made to the Social Services Department so best practice can be maintained with any on-going work with that young person or vulnerable adult. Any workers working alongside that child will only be given the information that they need to ensure the physical and emotional wellbeing of a young person or adult at risk is being met.

Allegations of Sexual Abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of current sexual abuse the PSO will:

Contact Social Services duty social worker or Police Child Protection team directly. The PSO will not speak to the parent or carer or anyone else about the suspicion. The PSO may inform their line manager of events to ensure best practice is met.

Under no circumstances will the PSO try and carry out an investigation into the allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse.

While allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse will normally be reported to the PSO, the absence of the PSO or another Trustee should in no way delay the referral to Social Services.

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Staff may ask for assistance from Social Services directly if they feel that they are unable to follow the child protection procedure if they are unable to contact the PSO

The PSO will follow up any referral made to the Social Services Department, so best practice can be maintained with any on-going work with that child. Any workers working alongside that child will only be given the information that they need to ensure the physical and emotional wellbeing of the child is being met.

| | | | |
|--|--|------------|--|
| Date and Time of Incident | | | |
| Date and Time of Reporting | | | |
| Location and Context of Incident | | | |
| Name of Child/ Young Person/ Vulnerable Adult | | DOB | |
| Address | | | |
| | | | |
| Name of Person Reporting Events | | | |
| <i>Details: sequences of events, actual words used and observations.</i> | | | |
| | | | |