

STEP TOGETHER

Transforming lives through volunteering

Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy

Version 3.5

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Policy Statement

We recognise that the welfare of all children is paramount and that *all* children and young people; regardless of ability or culture, have equal rights of protection. We have a duty of care when they are in our charge and we will do everything we can to provide a safe and caring environment whilst they attend our activities.

Policy Aim

As members of SAFE, we aim at all times to attain the SAFE standards in all our activities with children, young people, their families and/or carers. We will achieve this by adhering strictly to this policy and the guidance and risk assessments

Child Safeguarding Lead and Deputy

The responsibility of managing the safeguarding of children can be both demanding and challenging, and therefore must be appointed at managerial level to personnel who are available when we are operational.

Our lead for child safeguarding is: Head of Programmes

Name: Josie Clarke

Contact details: josie.clarke@step-together.org.uk 07809 517 079

Our deputy is: Director

Name: Anna-Clare Temple

Contact details: anna-clare.temple@step-together.org.uk 07872 635073

Their role is to oversee and ensure that our safeguarding children policy is fully implemented and that we attain SAFE standards. These details will be made available to all adults, children and parents/carers by training, staff handbook and enrolment information. This includes ensuring they and all staff receive child protection training as appropriate. The deputy should be available to support or cover for the nominated lead. S/he will also handle any complaints or allegations against the nominated lead if appropriate.

Why do we need a Safeguarding Children Policy?

The five main outcomes for children as detailed in “Every Child Matters” agenda 2003 and subsequent Children Act 2004 are:

- being healthy
- staying safe
- enjoying and achieving
- making a positive contribution

- economic well-being

Government guidance is clear that all organisations working with children, young people, families, parents and carers have responsibilities (see Appendix for References). It is important to remember that children and young people can also abuse and that such incidents fall into the remit of this policy.

All organisations should:

- **have senior managers committed to safeguarding**
- **be clear about people’s responsibilities and accountability**
- **have a culture of listening to children**
- **safe recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers working with children & young people**
- **procedures for safeguarding children and young people**
- **procedures for dealing with allegations against, and concerns about, staff & volunteers**
- **make sure staff have mandatory induction and further safeguarding training, supervision, reviews and support**
- **have agreements about working with other organisations and agencies**

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015

“Children are individuals whose rights, needs and welfare are paramount.”

Children Act 1989

The 2 key principals of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 are:

- **Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility; for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part and**
- and
- **a child centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based upon a clear understanding of the needs and views of children**

“No child or group of children must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs”

Equality Act 2010

All references and documents are available under “References” on the homepage of www.safecic.co.uk

Recognising Abuse

Physical:

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing significant harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional:

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

Sexual:

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect:

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Treating Children with Respect

We endeavour to treat all children and young people with respect, regardless of ability or culture. We ensure that everyone signs up to the SAFE Adult's and/or Young People's Codes of Conduct.

We also circulate and make available to everyone by training, staff handbook and enrolment information our confidentiality statement, complaints procedures, allegations and "whistleblowing" statements and disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Celebrating Children's Achievements

We positively encourage all children and young people to succeed and celebrate their achievements by:

Awarding certificates of achievement where appropriate and issuing achievement packs once young people have finished working with Step Together staff.

We are particularly sensitive to the needs of disabled children who may achieve in smaller steps than their peers but are equally entitled to celebration.

Rigorous Recruitment

We adhere to the Local Safeguarding Children Board (SCB) Key Standards for Recruitment and SAFE guidelines for recruiting all staff, paid or unpaid by obtaining full personal details and application forms (not CVs) with particular relevance to previous work with children and young people.

We always take up two written references and insist that any appointment, where staff has direct and/or unsupervised access to children and young people, will only be confirmed subject to a satisfactory DBS check at the appropriate level.

At interview, we have sound procedures and recording to ensure we are satisfied, and can evidence that the applicant is appropriate and suitable.

At least one person on each interview panel will have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training

Induction & Training

In line with SAFE recommendations, we have a clear induction and training strategy detailing clear job descriptions and responsibilities and all relevant procedures as detailed under **“Treating Children with Respect”**. All new staff sign to record they have received and understand the “Good Practice” leaflet and those with direct contact with children and young people, or managers, will attend child protection training within 3 months of appointment. We also agree a probationary period of 3 months with clear goals and then provide appraisals and supervision at regular intervals of 6 months with Head of Programmes or the Director.

Staff will undertake the free online government training for [PREVENT/Channel](#) and [FGM](#)

Confidentiality

We have a clear policy in line with SAFE recommendations about confidentiality and information sharing and these details will be made available to all adults, children, parents and carers by training, staff handbook and enrolment information.

We fully endorse the principal that the welfare of children and young people override any obligations of confidence we may hold to others. Individual cases will only be shared or discussed on a “need to know” basis. Under “whistleblowing” anyone in our organisation may refer direct to either children’s social care services or the police (CQC and Ofsted as relevant) if they are concerned that a child is at risk of harm and this policy is not being adhered to. All media enquiries will be handled by Head of Programmes or the Director.

Handling Disclosures

A disclosure may be made verbally or through play or through the behaviour by a child, young person or an adult and it is important for everyone to remember the following:

If you are concerned about a child, it is important that this information is communicated to the lead and/or deputy for child safeguarding.

You may become aware of suspected or likely abuse by:

- Your own observations and concerns;
- Being told by another person that they have concerns about a child;
- The child tells you;
- The abuser tells you.

Also remember that you may not always be working directly with the child but become concerned because of difficulties experienced by the adults e.g.

- Domestic violence incidents
- Mental health issues
- Substance and alcohol abuse Incidents

Other concerns may be:

- Children living away from home or gone missing
- Peer abuse including bullying
- Race and racism
- Radicalisation
- Gang membership
- Violent extremism
- Sexual exploitation
- Female genital mutilation
- Forced marriage
- Concealed pregnancy
- Child trafficking
- eSafety

Remember:

- Do not delay.
- Do not investigate.
- Seek advice from the child protection lead or deputy.
- Make careful recording of anything you observe or are told.

Responding to Concerns

We ensure and emphasise that everyone in our organisation understand and know how to share any concerns immediately with the child protection lead and deputy. We do this by training, staff handbook and enrolment information. Everyone including both the lead and deputy for child safeguarding will deal with concerns using the following:

Step 1

If you are worried a child has been abused because:

- You have seen something
- A child says they have been abused
- Somebody else has told you they are concerned
- There has been an allegation against a member of staff
- There has been an anonymous allegation
- An adult has disclosed they are abusing a child
- An adult has disclosed they were abused as a child

Important: Any consultation should not delay a referral. In an emergency dial 999

Step 2 (within 24 hrs)

Your organisation should have a policy for child protection. Talk to the Lead Person for Child Protection or their Deputy.

Consult Monitor & Record (Sign/date/time)

Step 3

S/he (or anyone else if not available) should refer the concern to Children's Social Care Services and/or the police (in an emergency) and follow up the referral in writing within 24 hours**.

*** In cases of allegations against a person with a "duty of care", the LADO will coordinate the next procedural steps.*

Handling Allegations / Dealing with Complaints / Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures

We have clear policies in line with SAFE recommendations about handling allegations, dealing with complaints and our own disciplinary and grievance procedures and these details will be made available to all adults, children, parents and carers as necessary by training, staff handbook and enrolment information.

We are mindful that the three procedures may confuse the next appropriate steps to take. We are clear that, in any case where a complaint has been made with regards to any inappropriate or poor practice, we will discuss the situation with children's social care services before making an open decision about the best way forward.

It is the responsibility of the child protection lead and/or deputy to ensure that these procedures are rigorously adhered to. In the case that the child protection lead is implicated, the deputy should be informed. In the exceptional circumstances that both are involved, it is the duty of the person concerned to contact children's social care services direct.

Children's social care services will manage any investigations, overseen by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (SCB) procedures. These are available on the SCB website.

With regards to disciplinary and grievance procedures, we are very clear that we will take no steps until we have fully discussed and agreed a strategy with the Local Authority Designated Officer, children's social care services and/or the police. Any investigation will override the need to implement any such procedures. Our management are responsible for making referrals to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS), and the relevant professional bodies of an individual who does or may pose a danger to children and young people. Other organisations will liaise with their LADO and local agencies if such a referral needs to be made.

Record Keeping

All records will be securely kept in a locked cabinet/drawer in the Step Together head office. Only the child safeguarding lead and/or deputy will have access and records will only be kept as long as necessary.

Normally these records will be passed to children's social care services as soon as possible. All records will be handwritten (and if recorded electronically, kept in a secure area) by the person with the concern within 24 hours, on headed paper or incident sheets and will be factual, non-judgmental. All such records will have a front page listing the papers in chronological order.

It is helpful to record any known details of the child/children or young people involved e.g. name, address, date of birth etc. All records should be factual. It is equally important to record the reasons for making the decision not to refer to children's social care services as when the decision is taken to refer. Always sign, clearly detail name and job role of the person making the record, date and time these records.

Providers of child care, educational, health or other formal services will use the Common Assessment Framework (now under review) referral forms

SAFE Recommendations

In order to attain and retain our SAFE award everybody needs to be vigilant in adhering to this policy and also assessing the risks of their own work and activities. These risk assessments will be carried out annually by the lead and/or deputy for child safeguarding, however it is the responsibility of everyone to draw attention to practices and procedures that they are unhappy or uncomfortable with.

It is only through adopting SAFE policies and practices that we can all be confident we have done everything we can to safeguard the children and young people in our care. (For large organisations audits may optionally be carried out by the SAFE team every three years for each site.)

Policy Date

This policy was agreed and disseminated on 17/01/2017 and will be reviewed annually or when there are substantial organisational changes.

Policy Review Date: 22/02/2018

Signed: Josie Clarke

Lead for child safeguarding: Josie Clarke

Deputy for child safeguarding: Anna-Clare Temple

Date: 22/02/2018

A separate record for staff signatures should be maintained to evidence they have seen and understand this policy

Note, all references can be found in the reference section at www.safecic.co.uk