



# Safeguarding Children and Young People

## Policy Statement

### *Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility:*

We believe that all children & young people deserve the same protections.

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm. As adults and/or professionals or volunteers, everyone has a responsibility to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children - and in particular protecting them from significant harm - depends upon effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise.

Individual children, especially some of the most vulnerable children and those at greatest risk of social exclusion, will need co-ordinated help from health, education, children's social care, and quite possibly the voluntary sector and other agencies, including youth justice services.

For those children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, joint working is essential, to safeguard and promote welfare of the child(ren) and - where necessary - to help bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against children. All agencies and professionals should:

- ✓ be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect;
- ✓ be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children;
- ✓ share and help to analyse information so that an assessment can be made of the child's needs and circumstances;
- ✓ contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the child's welfare;
- ✓ take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the child against specific plans; and
- ✓ work co-operatively with parents unless this is inconsistent with ensuring the child's safety.

### *Definitions of abuse and neglect:*

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

#### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical 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 Abuse**

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 feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. 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 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.

## **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (eg: rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts.

They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

## **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 and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## **Volunteer recruitment**

Y:AMHS will obtain two references for all volunteers when recruiting and follow statutory guidance to ensure volunteers are suitable for the role they will be undertaking on behalf of the charity. Where volunteers are likely to be working with children and young people in any capacity, DBS checks will be sought and records kept. All volunteers will be made aware of this policy as part of their initial induction process and there will be regular briefings and updates for everyone involved with the charity.

## **Review**

This policy and procedure will be reviewed regularly and at least every year.

The person named as Child Protection Lead (CPL) is Rachael Colbran.

The person named as Deputy CPL is Helena McGill.





Version number & ref.	Date adopted
1	18/04/2021
2	19/03/2023









## Child Protection & Safeguarding Procedures

### *Working with children and young people*

Y:AMHS overall purpose is to provide support to adults who care for children and young people with mental ill health, in the form of training, signposting, parent support groups and financial help towards treatment costs. We may, as part of our activities, occasionally run events for fundraising or information / education for children and young people. Where volunteers and/ or trustees are working with children / young people as part of the charity's overall purposes, reasonable efforts will be made to ensure they are working with at least one other authorised adult. All adults working with children and young people should have written certification of an enhanced DBS record check.

### *Allegations Involving a Volunteer or Trustee*

Y:AMHS is committed to having effective procedures, including checking all volunteers to make sure they are safe to work with children and young people. Where appropriate, those involved in recruitment processes will undertake Safer Recruitment Training. Y:AMHS expects those volunteering to abide by its Code of Behaviours.

Further, there may still be occasions when other concerns around safeguarding arise:

1. Where there is a concern that a child or young person is at risk of abuse or neglect;
2. Where allegations of abuse are made against an adult (either as trustee or volunteer with Y:AMHS); or
3. Where Y:AMHS believes a volunteer may have posed a risk to a vulnerable person.

All allegations of abuse of children by those who work with children or care for them must be taken seriously. All reports of allegations must be submitted within one working day to the board of trustees.

The following procedure should be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- ✓ Behaved in a way which has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- ✓ Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- ✓ Behaved towards a child or children in a way which indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children.

The allegations may relate to the persons behaviour at work, at home or in another setting.

The trustees will discuss the matter to determine what steps should be taken and where necessary obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made.

Y:AMHS adopts and operates the following additional procedures:





- Disciplinary and grievance procedure (for handling concerns or allegations in its role carried out by a volunteer); and
- Whistleblowing & complaints procedure (for managing concerns or allegations against a member of staff or volunteer).

The discussion should also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded, or whether a referral to MASH is necessary.

Any and all allegations will be recorded and taken seriously by the trustees and investigated in accordance with relevant legal frameworks, involving outside agencies where required. The trustees will minute any and all discussions and decisions arising from them.

What to do if you have concerns about a child.

You may have concerns about a child because of something you have seen or heard, or a child may choose to disclose something to you. If a child discloses information to you, you should:

- ✓ Do not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to share this information and refer to Children's Social Care Services.
- ✓ Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- ✓ Accept what is said.
- ✓ Reassure the child, but only as far as is honest, don't make promises you may not be able to keep e.g.: *'Everything will be alright now'*, *'You'll never have to see that person again'*.
- ✓ Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the child refers to it. For example, you could say, *'You're not to blame'*.
- ✓ Do not interrogate the child; it is not your responsibility to investigate.
- ✓ Do not ask leading questions (eg: Did he touch your private parts?), ask open questions such as *'Anything else to tell me?'*
- ✓ Do not ask the child to repeat the information for another volunteer.
- ✓ Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.
- ✓ Take notes if possible or write up your conversation as soon as possible afterwards.
- ✓ Record the date, time, place any non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child (do not paraphrase).
- ✓ Record statements and observable things rather than interpretations or assumptions.

Whatever the nature of your concerns, discuss them with the board of trustees.

If you still have concerns, you or they should refer to:

#### A. West Sussex Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Phone Number: 01403 229900

Or raise a concern online at : <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/keeping-children-safe/raise-a-concern-about-a-child/>





***What information will you need when making a referral?:***

You will be asked to provide as much information as possible. Such as the child's full name, date of birth, address, school, GP, languages spoken, any disabilities the child may have, details of the parents. Do not be concerned if you do not have all these details, you should still make the call.

You should follow up the verbal referral in writing, within 48hrs.

