



# Child Safeguarding Policy

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## Introduction

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should always consider what is in the best interests of the child.

We believe that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse.

## 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 individual's needs and circumstances.
- Contribute to necessary action needed to safeguard and promote children and young people's welfare.
- Take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for individuals against specific plans.
- Work co-operatively with parents and/or other carers unless this is inconsistent with ensuring the individual's safety.

## Applicability

This policy applies to all trustees, other volunteers, employees, contractors, and third-party representatives of Heads2minds. Its requirements should be reflected in other policies and procedures, agreements, and contracts, as necessary.

## Purpose and Aims

As one of its major activities Heads2minds seeks to serve the needs of children and young people, promoting holistic development.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To protect children who receive Heads2minds's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.
- To provide all staff and volunteers, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to the protection of vulnerable adults.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Heads2minds including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as always keeping children safe:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring the children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

## Statutory Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and young people in England.

Heads2minds also works in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- Working together to Safeguard Children (HMG 2018)
- Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

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- Effective support for Children and Families in Essex (2017)  
<http://www.essexeffectivesupport.org.uk/>
- Serious Crime Act (2015)
- Children and Social Work act (2017)
- Sexual offences Act (2003)
- Data Protection Act (2018)
- Children Act (2004)
- (The act introduced the concept of child-centred work and promoted the upbringing of children by their families. It introduced the concept of children in need and children at risk of significant harm which are key to ensuring children are appropriately safeguarded and given the level of support relevant to their needs)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017)
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools/colleges and universities (2018)
- Promoting positive emotional well-being and reducing the risk of suicide (2018)
- Preventing youth violence and gang involvement (2015)
- Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adult – county lines guidance (2018)
- The Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (This act introduced the regulations around responsibilities for ensuring safer recruitment through the need for DBS Checks)
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (DFE 2018)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

## Roles and Responsibilities

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to:

- Protect them from harm and to provide a safe environment in which they can share their feelings and achieve their full potential.

However, there are key people within the charity who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those in our charity with these specific responsibilities (the designated safeguarding lead and deputy designated safeguarding lead) are shown on the cover sheet of this document.

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## Implementation

Heads2minds recognises its responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review procedures, which are designed to prevent and to be alert to such abuse.

We are committed to:

- Supporting, resourcing, and training those who work with vulnerable adults and to providing supervision.
- Maintaining good links with the statutory social services authorities.

## The Governing Body

The governing body (Trustees of Heads2minds) ensures that the policies, procedures, and training in our charity are effective and always comply with the law. It ensures that all required policies relating to safeguarding are in place, that the child protection policy reflects statutory and local guidance and is reviewed at least annually.

The governor for safeguarding arrangements is named on the front cover of this document. This governor takes leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements in our charity. The governing body ensures there is a named designated safeguarding lead and at least one deputy safeguarding lead in place (also named on the front cover).

The governing body ensures that all staff members undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction and that it is then regularly updated. All staff members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to keep children safe.

The governing body ensures children are taught how to keep themselves safe (including online) through teaching and learning opportunities.

The governing body are responsible for ensuring the charity follows recruitment procedures that help to deter, reject, or identify people who might abuse children. It adheres to statutory responsibilities to check adults working with children and has recruitment and selection procedures in place.

## The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy)

The designated safeguarding lead in the charity takes lead responsibility for managing child protection referrals, safeguarding training, and raising awareness of all child protection

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policies and procedures. They ensure that everyone in the charity is aware of these procedures and that they are followed at all times.

They act as a source of advice and support for other staff (on child protection matters) and ensure that timely referrals to Essex Children's Social Care (Family Operations Hub) are made in accordance with current SET procedures. They work with the local authority and other agencies as required.

Duties: -

- To be alert to and recognise safeguarding issues.
- To raise your concerns and assist in early intervention.
- To share information with others where necessary.
- To know when to make referrals to social care and ensure staff know how to contact the lead about doing so.
- To contribute towards any plans, meetings, and decisions about a child if necessary.
- To speak to the parent, carers or child about concerns if required.
- To recognise the importance of safer recruitment and staff conduct.
- To participate in regular training and refreshed as appropriate to be kept up to date.
- To ensure other staff members complete training in safeguarding procedures.
- To challenge poor practice at the charity.
- To ensure the charity has appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures that reflect the charity.
- Implement and follow a safer recruitment process within the charity.
- To ensure that everyone within the charity including volunteers and trustees is appropriately trained in safeguarding practice and procedure.

- If for any reason the designated safeguarding lead is unavailable, the deputy designated safeguarding lead will act in their absence.

The role also involves: -

- Acting as the first point of contact for all matters regarding safeguarding.
- Ensuring the charity follows best practice.
- Ensuring the charity maintains accurate records.
- Ensuring the staff are appropriately trained and have read all safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Keeping informed with national and local arrangements for safeguarding including guidance documents and other resources.
- Providing an effective staff supervision programme within the charity.
- Creating a culture of openness where concerns are openly discussed, and consideration is constantly given to improving and developing safeguarding practice.
- Training for the Safeguarding Lead should be refreshed on an annual basis.

## Safeguarding Statement

All children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, or beliefs.

We at heads2minds are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We expect all staff, volunteers, and visitors to share this common commitment. All staff and volunteers will be DBS Checked prior to working with children and this will be recorded and kept on file.

If you are concerned about the safety of any child, you must report this to one of the Safeguarding Leads. Liz Rotherham and Mark Pinnock are the dedicated Leads.

If the child discloses that they may be subject to abuse, the adult that they disclose to will take the following steps:

- React calmly in your response.
- Listen carefully to the person, particularly what is said spontaneously.
- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Explain to the person that you must pass on the information if you are worried about their safety.
- Do not ask leading questions or make judgements.

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- Clarify and check your concern, if you feel that you are unsure, by using, for example tell, explain, describe, or outline, but as soon as you believe that there might be a genuine issue, ask no further questions so to avoid added stress to the person. This would compromise further enquiries.

Record carefully what the person says in their own words including how and when the account was given. Date, time and sign the concern form (we can provide a template form), then pass to one of the Safeguarding Leads. For more details of what to include in the record please see section 'Records and Information Sharing' in this document.

If you feel that the child might be at risk of harm but are not sure, then inform the Safeguarding Lead immediately who will take the appropriate action.

Child abuse can happen to any child regardless of elements such as gender, culture, religion, social background ability or disability.

## Types of abuse

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2020) describes abuse in the following way:

“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 others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children”.

**Physical abuse** is defined as intentional bodily injury. Some examples include slapping, pinching, choking, kicking, shoving or inappropriate behaviour using physical restraints.

**Signs:** Bruises, black eyes, welts, lacerations, rope marks, broken bones, open wounds, cuts.

**Sexual abuse** covers a range of illegal sexual activities. Examples include forcing a child to strip or masturbate, engaging in any kind of sexual activity in front of a child, including watching pornography, taking, downloading, viewing, or distributing sexual images of children, encouraging a child to perform sexual acts in front of a webcam, not taking measures to protect a child from witnessing sexual activity or images, inappropriate sexual touching of a child, whether clothed or unclothed, penetrative sex.

**Signs:** including changes in behaviour – a child may start being aggressive, withdrawn, clingy, have difficulties sleeping, have regular nightmares or start wetting the bed, the child may dislike or seem afraid of a particular person and try to avoid spending time alone with them.

**Emotional/Psychological abuse:** Deliberately causing mental or emotional pain. Examples include intimidation, ridiculing, harassment, isolation.

**Signs:** A child being emotionally upset, withdrawn and non-communicative or non-responsive, seeming unconfident or lacking self-assurance, struggling to control their emotions, having difficulty making or maintaining relationships, acting in a way that's inappropriate for their age.

**Neglect** occurs when a person through his/her action or inaction, deprives a child of the care necessary to maintain the child's mental or physical health. Examples include lack of provision of basic items, such as food, water, clothing, or a safe place to live. This can put children and young people in danger. And it can also have long term effects on their physical and mental wellbeing.

**Signs:** Dehydration, malnutrition, untreated wounds, poor personal hygiene, unsafe living conditions, developmental problems, housing and family issues or a change in behaviour.

Indicators:

**Sexually inappropriate behaviour:** children who have been abused may behave in sexually inappropriate ways or use sexually explicit language.

**Physical problems:** children may develop health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas or sexually transmitted infections, or they may become pregnant.

**Problems at school:** an abused child may have difficulty concentrating and learning, and their school grades may start to drop as a result.

**Giving clues:** children may also give verbal hints and clues that the abuse is happening without revealing it outright.

Our charity has an understanding and awareness of child exploitation. Both child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male



and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation. The SET Child Exploitation Screening Framework provides local pathway guidance for professionals to identify key child exploitation risk factors present for the child and what further support services are available.

Our charity understands the safeguarding risks for children who run away or go missing.

Definitions of missing:

**Absent:** a child not at a place where they are expected or required to be. **Missing:** a child reported as missing to the police by their family or carers.

**Missing from care:** a looked after child who is not at their placement or the place they are expected to be (e.g., school) and their whereabouts is not known.

**Away from placement without authorisation:** A looked after child whose whereabouts is known but who is not at their placement or place, they are expected to be, and the carer has concerns or the incident has been notified the local authority or the police.

Abuse can also take the form of Honour Based Abuse, Female Genital Mutilation, Forced Marriage, and child abuse linked to spirit possession.

**Honour Based Abuse** is an international term used by many cultures for justification of abuse and violence. It is a crime or incident committed in order to protect or defend the family or community 'honour'. Honour based abuse will often go hand in hand with forced marriages, although this is not always the case.

It is important to remember that the signs of emotional abuse can also be different for children at different ages.

**Whistleblowing** is when someone reports concerns or wrongdoing within their organisation, usually for the sake of public safety, ethical standards, or the well-being of individuals. This often involves an employee bringing to light information about illegal, unethical, or unsafe activities happening in their workplace or organisation.

Whistleblowing can take various forms, including:

**Internal Whistleblowing:** Reporting concerns or misconduct to individuals or departments within the organisation, such as a supervisor, manager, or HR department.

**External Whistleblowing:** Reporting concerns to external entities or authorities, such as regulatory agencies, law enforcement, or the media. This is typically done when internal reporting mechanisms are ineffective or when there is a risk of retaliation within the organisation.

**Anonymous Whistleblowing:** Providing information without revealing one's identity to protect the whistle-blower from potential reprisals.

Heads2minds will follow the SET child protection procedures if any concerns are raised:  
[SET SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES](#)

## Procedures

Our charity promotes the welfare of children and protects them from harm. This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to provide additional support (through a 'child in need' or a 'child protection' plan).

All staff and volunteers have a duty to identify and respond to suspected / actual abuse or disclosures of abuse. Any member of staff or volunteer who receives a disclosure or allegation of abuse or suspects that abuse may have occurred must report it immediately to the designated safeguarding lead (or, in their absence, the deputy designated safeguarding lead).

Any staff and volunteers must refer any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy designated safeguarding lead. Where there is risk of immediate harm, concerns will be referred by telephone to the Children and Families Hub and / or the Police. Less urgent concerns or requests for support will be sent to the Children and Families Hub via the Essex Effective Support portal. The charity may also seek advice from Social Care or another appropriate agency about a concern if we are unsure how to respond to it. Wherever possible, we will share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care, with parents or carers. However, we will not do so where it is felt that to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On occasions, it may be necessary to consult with the Children and Families Hub and / or Essex Police for advice on when to share information with parents / carers.

If a member of staff or volunteer continues to have concerns about a child and feels the situation is not being addressed or does not appear to be improving, the staff member concerned should press for reconsideration of the case with the designated safeguarding lead.

If, for any reason, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Safeguarding contact details are available within the charity to ensure that all staff members have unfettered access to safeguarding support,

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should it be required. Any individual may refer to Social Care where there is suspected or actual risk of harm to a child.

## Training

The designated safeguarding lead (and deputy) undertake Level 3 child protection training at least every two years.

- All staff members and governors receive appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated and in line with advice from the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB).
- All staff members receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.
- Records of any child protection training undertaken is kept for all staff and governors.

All staff & volunteers to have DBS Checks and confirmed acceptability.

## Professional Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an issue, which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to anyone about a safeguarding concern (including parents / carers or children) or promise to keep a secret.

In accordance with statutory requirements, where there is a child protection concern, this must be reported to the designated safeguarding lead and may require further referral to and subsequent investigation by appropriate authorities.

The designated lead (or deputy) may share information on individual child protection cases with other relevant staff from the charity where strictly necessary and if in the child's best interests to do so. Sharing should be necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure.

## Records and Information Sharing

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our charity is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children and when these records should be shared with other agencies. Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the

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sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the Data Protection Act 2018 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent sharing information where there are real safeguarding concerns. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect.

Any member receiving a disclosure of abuse or observing indicators of abuse must complete a record of an allegation of suspected abuse.

The record **must** include:

- Name and contact details of individual making the disclosure.
- Date and time the disclosure was made.
- Date and time reported to safeguarding lead

Details of the disclosure:

- What was said or seen using a body map if appropriate?
- Date, time and location
- Who may be the perpetrator?
- Were there any witnesses?
- Signature of person to whom the disclosure was made.
- Signature of safeguarding lead and action to be taken

Remember:

- Write down the exact words the person disclosed to you.
- Ensure the record distinguishes between fact and opinion.
- Record should be written in permanent ink and not pencil.
- Upon completion, present the record to a designated safeguarding lead.

Any records related to child protection are kept in an individual child protection file for that child. All child protection records are stored securely and confidentially and will be retained for 25 years.

## **Promoting Positive Mental health and Resilience in the charity**

Positive mental health is the concern of the whole community, and we recognise that the charity plays a key part in this. Our charity aims to develop the emotional wellbeing

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and resilience of all children and staff, as well as provide specific support for those with additional needs. We understand that there are risk factors, which increase someone's vulnerability, and protective factors that can promote or strengthen resiliency. The more risk factors present in an individual's life, the more protective factors or supportive interventions are required to counter-balance and promote further growth of resilience.

It is vital that we work in partnership with parents to support the well-being of the children. Parents should share any concerns about the well-being of their child with the charity, so appropriate support and interventions can be identified and implemented.

The charity should be able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and feel confident the safeguarding leadership team will take any concern seriously.

Parents or others in the wider community with concerns can contact the NSPCC general helpline on 0808 800 5000 (24-hour helpline) or email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

Further Heads2minds policies which promote children's and young people's safety, and welfare are social media policy and health and safety policy.

## Version Control - Approval and Review

Version No	Approved By	Approval Date	Main Changes	Review Period
1.0	Board	Apr 23	Initial draft approved	Annually