

Responsibility / Author	CEO
People intended for	Employees, volunteers, trustees
Review frequency	Annually
Date last amended	11 th October 2024
Date approved by the board	11 th January 2024
Review date	January 2025
Document version	2.6

Safeguarding children and young people policy

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1. Policy statement

We Hear You (WHY) is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment in its work with children and young people. WHY is committed to safeguarding and always promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all employees and volunteers to share this commitment.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of WHY, including senior managers, the Board of Trustees, employed staff, self-employed staff, and volunteers. This policy refers to workforce as a term which encompasses all these groups of people.

In our work with children and young people we recognise that every child has the right to live free from harm and abuse. We also recognise that every child is potentially at risk from harm and abuse. A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years old.

To facilitate our commitment to safeguarding, WHY has developed this safeguarding policy and separate procedures that set out:

- Guidelines to ensure a safe and supportive environment for children, young people, and our workforce.
- Guidance on procedures the workforce should follow if they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, have experienced, or be at risk of, harm.

- Management responsibilities and structures, and responsibilities of the workforce.

Principles

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child or young person is paramount.
- All children regardless of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children and young people are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of discrimination, 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.
- Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers, and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare. Children and young people are best supported and protected when there is a coordinated response from all relevant agencies.

We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- Creating a supportive, safe, and inclusive environment for all children and young people.
- Valuing and respecting children and young people.
- Treating all children and young people as individuals and responding to their needs in that way.
- Appointing a nominated designated safeguarding lead and a member of the trustee board who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding at the highest level in the organisation.
- Writing detailed safeguarding and child protection procedures.
- Recruiting the workforce safely ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Providing effective management for the workforce through supervision, support, and training so that the workforce knows about and follows our policies and procedures and confidently and competently.
- Recording, storing, and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance.
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families, and carers appropriately.
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against the workforce appropriately.
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have policies to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise.
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe environment for our children, young people, and workforce by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.

- Ensuring children, young people and their families know about the organisation's safeguarding policies and procedures, and what to do if they have a concern.
- Building a safeguarding culture where the workforce, children, and young people know how they are expected to behave and feel comfortable about sharing concerns.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and procedures annually.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up based on legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from: www.nspcc.org.uk/childprotection.

The policy and procedures ensure legal duties are met and best practice is maintained.

Supporting documents

This policy should be read alongside additional organisational policies and guidance including:

- Anti-harassment and bullying policy.
- Complaints and allegation management policy.
- Data protection and retention policy.
- Information systems and social media acceptable use policy.
- Health and personal safety at work policy.
- Safeguarding adults' policy.
- Safer recruitment (including ex-offenders) policy.
- Whistleblowing policy.

Confidentiality

We Hear You is an organisational member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and bound by its Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy ([BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions](#)). Our therapists make each client the primary focus of attention and work during sessions. As per the Ethical Framework, we consider how we manage situations when protecting clients or others from serious harm or when compliance with the law may require overriding a client's explicit wishes or breaching their confidentiality. In exceptional circumstances, the need to safeguard our clients or others from serious harm may require us to override our commitment to making our client's wishes and confidentiality our primary concern.

We protect the confidentiality and privacy of clients by informing clients about any limitations of privacy or confidentiality in advance of our work together, for example, to protect a client or others from serious harm, including safeguarding commitments, and when legally required or authorised to disclose.

2. Responsibilities under this policy

The implementation of this policy and associated procedures is mandatory across the full scope of We Hear You's work. Specific responsibilities are outlined below.

Overall accountability for safeguarding children and young people within WHY rests with the Chief Executive Officer and the Board of Trustees.

Key contact numbers can be found in appendix one.

Board of Trustees

Responsible for:

- Ensuring WHY acts in the best interests of children and young people and takes reasonable steps to prevent any harm to them.
- Assessing and managing risk within WHY.
- Ensuring safeguarding policies and procedures are in place.
- Ongoing monitoring and reviewing to ensure that safeguards are being implemented and are effective.
- Responding appropriately to allegations of abuse and whistleblowing cases.
- Ensuring that all members of the workforce are suitable to act in their role through carrying out relevant checks, including DBS checks.
- Ensuring that all members of the workforce receive regular safeguarding training.

The Safeguarding Lead Trustee supports the work of the charity in relation to safeguarding. This includes working with the CEO and designated safeguarding lead regularly to:

- Ensure safeguarding policies, procedures and measures are fit for purpose and up to date.
- Make sure everyone in the organisation is aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and knows how to respond to concern.
- Review whether the things the organisation has put in place are creating a safer culture and keeping people safe.

Chief Executive Officer

Responsible for:

- Implementation of the WHY safeguarding children policy and procedures.
- Ensuring that safeguarding implications are constantly reviewed across the scope of services that WHY delivers and are fully considered in the development of all new pieces of work.
- Considering and authorising any immediate changes in operational policy required due to a safeguarding incident or near miss.
- Ensuring that safeguarding is considered in all appointments of the workforce.

Designated safeguarding lead

Responsible for:

- Fulfilling duties as the designated safeguarding lead. The responsibilities of the designated safeguarding lead are included as appendix two.

- Overseeing all safeguarding referrals, incident reports and actions taken and checking they are recorded, fully reviewed, and in accordance with the organisation's data protection and retention policy.
- Ensuring all safer recruitment processes are followed in the recruitment of volunteers and that the relevant checks are in place and up to date.
- Continuing to act as a contact person in liaising with the relevant external agencies as required.
- Ensuring all members of the workforce are aware of their roles and responsibilities within this policy.
- Developing an open and responsive management culture and ensuring all members of the workforce feel able to discuss safeguarding issues confidentially and receive guidance and support as situations arise.
- Ensuring all members of the workforce feel confident of receiving personal support for needs that may arise because of safeguarding issues and situations.
- Providing oversight to ensure children, young people and their families are aware of WHY's safeguarding procedures and who to contact if they have any concerns.
- Managing safeguarding training across the organisation. Appraising the training needs of all members of the workforce on a regular basis. Developing guidance and training to increase the level of understanding and expertise on safeguarding including safer recruitment across the organisation.
- Ensuring the safer recruitment policy is always followed.
- Alerting the CEO of any significant safeguarding concerns, leading investigations, contributing to decision-making and ensuring appropriate follow-up to manage and reduce risk.
- Giving feedback to the CEO and the Trustee Board about safeguarding activity, trends, concerns, and emerging issues.
- Ensuring that safeguarding is considered in strategic decision-making.
- Reviewing and updating WHY's safeguarding and policy and procedures at least annually.

Managers

Responsible for:

- In consultation with the designated safeguarding lead, responding immediately in the event of possible, actual, or suspected child abuse, collating the necessary information i.e., name and address of young people and other people involved, details of actual/suspected abuse, name, and place of work of the young people's social worker if applicable. They must then contact the relevant children's social care team, the emergency / out of hours teams, or the police depending on the situation, to pass on all information.
- In consultation with the designated safeguarding lead, ensuring that any referral which is made by phone is followed up by email, confirming the information provided and including copies of any records made at the time.
- Keeping a record of safeguarding information sharing decisions and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If the decision is to

share, then recording what has been shared, with whom and for what purpose. Information shared must be necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure.

- Ensuring records of all reports of safeguarding related incidents and concerns are accurate and stored in line with the data protection and retention policy.
- Ensuring that safeguarding processes and policy are shared with all volunteers on recruitment when there are any updates and at regular ongoing intervals.
- Ensuring that volunteers have undertaken safeguarding training, and that training is kept up to date.
- Ensuring that volunteers are fully aware of the code of behaviour expected in their role.
- Responding immediately in the event of possible, actual, or suspected child abuse involving a volunteer, collating the necessary information i.e., name and address of volunteer, child/young people and other people involved and details of actual/suspected abuse. They must contact the relevant children's social care team, the emergency / out of hours team, the police, and/or the DOFA/LADO depending on the situation, to pass on all information.
- Ensuring that any referral is followed up in writing, confirming the information provided and including copies of any recordings made at the time.
- Following the duty and guidance outlined by the Disclosure and Barring Service to refer information to them where there is a safeguarding concern regarding a volunteer's behaviour.
- Ensuring records of all reports of safeguarding related incidents or concerns are accurate and stored in a secure location.

All staff and volunteers

Responsible for:

- Ensuring their conduct is in line with the safeguarding policy and procedures, and other relevant policies and the training that has been provided to them.
- Ensuring they are always vigilant in respect of children and young people's welfare and safety, including being aware of the conduct of all other members of the workforce and external parties.
- Ensuring they report any concerns, suspicions, disclosures, observations, or issues as soon as possible to the relevant person or authority as outlined in this policy.
- Ensuring they record any concerns, suspicions, disclosures, observations, or issues as soon as possible and pass this recording on to the relevant person as outlined in this policy.
- Notifying the police without delay if they believe a crime has been committed and/or a child is at immediate risk.

Counsellors / therapists

In addition, all counsellors / therapists who work directly with children will be responsible for:

- Recognising when safeguarding issues may be present, consequently contacting the designated safeguarding lead and following the safeguarding children's procedures.
- Communicating effectively with children and young people and staying focused on the child's safety and welfare.
- Liaising closely with other agencies, including other health and social care professionals, and sharing information as appropriate.
- Recognising when a child needs help, services or is at potential risk of suffering significant harm.
- Recording accurate, detailed, and timely notes in the client database and communicating with the designated safeguarding lead when a concern is urgent.

3. Safer recruitment

We recognise that anyone may have the potential to abuse a child in some way, and therefore all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that unsuitable individuals are prevented from working or volunteering within WHY. The WHY safer recruitment policy must be followed in recruitment of all members of the workforce.

All members of the workforce must be vetted through a Disclosure and Barring Service check. This is set out in the safer recruitment policy.

4. Safeguarding training

WHY will ensure that all its workforce receive safeguarding training, recognising that a proper awareness and understanding of child protection and safeguarding is crucial.

Operational staff will participate in relevant and regular external and internal safeguarding training at a suitable level for their role. They will participate in regular safeguarding and child protection updates, reviews, discussions, and briefings including scenario-based training sessions. They will update their safeguarding training at least every three years, to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard young people effectively.

All members of the workforce must complete the NSPCC's 'Introduction to safeguarding and child protection' online training course or equivalent provider, agreed with We Hear You. Children's therapists must also complete the Advanced Child Protection (inter-agency) two-day course with the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership or equivalent provider, agreed with We Hear You.

All members of the workforce will be required to read the WHY safeguarding children policy and procedures.

Supervision

Clinical supervision is offered to all employed staff within WHY and provides opportunity for discussion of, and reflection on, complex casework including safeguarding.

Employed staff should also use team meetings, peer supervision and risk review meetings as opportunities to reflect on safeguarding issues.

Appendix 1 Key contact numbers

We Hear You key contacts:

- Head of Counselling and Wellbeing Services and designated safeguarding lead – Joe Cleaver: 07735 373745
- Chief Executive Officer and deputy safeguarding lead – Lucy Kitchener: 07917 134758
- Chair of trustees and deputy safeguarding lead – Anne Montague: 07545 860013
- Board of Trustees safeguarding lead – Tessa Warry: 07763 216516

Local safeguarding contacts

Somerset

[Report a Concern - Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

Contact the Family Front Door if you are a Designated Safeguarding Lead or GP and you require real time advice about a child/ren / family you are supporting or if you are considering making a referral to Children's Services but are unsure and want guidance to sound out your own thinking in a safe space.

This line should only be used for child/ren / families who are not already open to Children's Social Care or the Family Intervention Service.

To contact the Family Front Door, call: 0300 123 3078

If you are worried about a child or young person who could be in danger, please contact children's Social Care on: 0300 123 2224.

By e-mail at: childrens@somerset.gov.uk

Or the Police.

You can contact the police directly by dialling 101 and they will discuss with Children's Social Care what action should be taken. In an emergency always contact the police by dialling 999.

Bath and North East Somerset

<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/report-concern-about-child>

Report a concern about a child or young person online here:

<https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/webforms/concerned-about-a-child-or-family/>

If you need to talk to us about a child with disabilities or additional needs, call us on 01225 39 69 67, or email us at ChildCare_Duty@bathnes.gov.uk

Out of office hours - if you think a child is in immediate danger, please call our Emergency Duty Team on 01454 61 51 65. Report all other concerns on our online form.

Swindon

https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk/info/15/for_professionals/34/referral_guidelines_and_mash_contact_information

New referrals and referrals on closed cases should be made to the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Referrals on open cases should be made to the allocated social worker for the case, or in their absence their manager or the duty social worker.

E-mail: Swindonmash@swindon.gov.uk

Telephone: 01793 466903 (during normal office hours - 8.30am to 4.40pm, Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4.00pm Friday)

Emergency Duty Service (EDS) is available outside office hours on 01793 436699.

Wiltshire

<https://www.wiltshiresvpp.org.uk/p/children/about-safeguarding-children>

Enquiries should be made when you have concerns for the welfare and or safety of any child or young person under 18. If you are not sure about the needs of the child, you can call the MASH using the contact details below to discuss the case with professionals in the MASH.

If you think a child or young person is at risk of significant harm, or is injured, contact the Integrated Front Door (IFD) on 0300 4560108, 8.45am-5pm, Monday-Thursday and 8.45am-4pm Friday; Out of Hours 0300 456 0100.

Or if there is immediate danger, phone the police or emergency services on 999.

For less urgent enquiries, email mash@wiltshire.gov.uk

Appendix 2 Responsibilities of the designated safeguarding lead

As We Hear You works with children or adults at risk, the Charity Commission expects our organisation to have a safeguarding lead. This is generally the individual who would respond to concerns about a child or adult at risk and ensure referral to statutory services.

As We Hear You works with children, it must follow the Working Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance ([Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/working-together-to-safeguard-children)). This requires us to have both a board level lead and an operationally focussed designated safeguarding lead.

Responsibilities of the designated safeguarding lead

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) acts as the main source of support, advice, and expertise for safeguarding in the organisation.

- Advise and support the senior team in developing and establishing our organisation's approach to safeguarding.
- Play a lead role in maintaining and reviewing our organisation's plan for safeguarding.
- Coordinate the distribution of policies, procedures, and safeguarding resources throughout our organisation.
- Advise on training needs and development, providing training where appropriate.
- Provide safeguarding advice and support to the workforce.
- Manage safeguarding concerns, allegations or incidents reported to our organisation.
- Manage referrals to key safeguarding agencies (e.g., social services or police) of any incidents or allegations of abuse and harm.

Information taken from: <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/safeguarding/specialist-guides/certain-roles/designated-leads/responsibilities/role/>