

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

INTRODUCTION:

The Trustees and staff of We Are Beams fully recognise the responsibilities and duty placed upon them to have arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children & young people in their care. We recognise that all staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part to play in protecting them from harm.

We believe that our Service should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social, physical and emotional wellbeing of each individual.

We are Beams recognises its responsibility and duty to report Safeguarding concerns to the relevant Safeguarding partnership, for the local authority who is responsible for the young person. Also to assist the local Disabled Children's Services.

We are Beams will ensure that all staff attend appropriate training in safeguarding on a regular basis using KSCAP and approved online training.

Relevant Policy, Procedure & Guidance

- Article 20, The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989
- Children Acts 1989 and 2004
- Children's Homes Regulations 2001
- Every Child Matters, 2003
- Guidance for Safer Practice for Adults Who Work with Children & Young People, 2009
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Keeping Children Safe - the Government's response to the Laming Inquiry report 2003
- Keeping Your Child Safe on the Internet. 2000, Home Office
- Kent Safeguarding Children's Board, Child Protection Procedures, 2009
- Laming Inquiry Report into the death of Victoria Climbié
- National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes
- Protection of Children Act, 1999
- Safe from Bullying, 2009
- Safeguarding Children Involved in Prostitution, 2000, Department of Health
- Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked, 2008, Department of Health
- The Data Protection Act 1998
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, 1999, 2006 , 2010 ,2018 ,2023 Department of Health
- Working with Children, DCSF, 2009

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- Absences of young people without authority and missing persons
- Annual planning, monthly monitoring and audit of children's homes
- Behaviour management
- Bullying
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Consultation with children, young people, their parents & families
- Complaints & representations
- Notification of significant events & reporting incidents
- Out of hours' advice
- Personal & professional boundaries for staff
- Privacy & confidentiality
- Radicalisation
- Risk assessment
- Sex & personal relationships
- Whistle blowing
- Missing Young Person procedure

AIMS OF THE POLICY:

- To raise awareness of all staff of the need to safeguard all children & young people and of their responsibility in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To develop a structured procedure within We Are Beams which will be followed by all staff members in cases of suspected abuse.
- To support the children/young people's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To promote safe practice and challenge poor and unsafe practice.
- To develop and promote effective working relationships with parents and other agencies involved with safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- To ensure that all adults working within our Charity have been checked as to their suitability to work with children & young people.
- To ensure that the Charity operates a safer recruitment practice (see Safer Recruitment Policy).
- To ensure that all necessary risk assessments are carried out for activities. (These will be kept in a folder in the staff office and updated regularly.)
- To ensure that staff are aware of policies for safe practices including: Anti-bullying; Health & Safety; Disciplinary Procedure; Grievance Procedure and Physical Intervention.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

- Anti-bullying
- Behaviour
- Health & Safety
- Recruitment of Ex-offenders

DEFINITION:

- Child abuse refers to any child under 18 years who, through the actions of adults (with a caring role for that child) or their failure to act, has suffered or is at risk of suffering significant harm.
- Abuse is broadly divided into 4 categories: Neglect, Physical abuse, Emotional abuse and Sexual abuse.

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 because of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, it may involve a parent 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)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

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 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 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 (e.g. 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, sexual on-line images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Gang Exploitation / Honour Based Violence (HBV)

All staff that 'Honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses a range of crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. The indicators of HBV and associated factors will be covered with staff within the safeguarding training. All members of staff are given training so that they can be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBV, or already having suffered HBV. All members of staff are aware that all forms of HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and will be handled and escalated as such. Staff will speak with Designated Safeguarding Lead if they are concerned about HBV.

Child trafficking

Child trafficking is child abuse. Children are recruited, moved or transported and then forced to work or sold.

Children may be trafficked for:

- sexual abuse
- forced marriage
- domestic servitude
- forced labour
- criminal activity

Many children are trafficked into the UK from abroad but children may also be trafficked around the UK. All staff are given training so that they can be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of trafficking or having been trafficked. All members of staff are aware that all forms of trafficking are abuse and will be handled and escalated as such. Staff will speak with Designated Safeguarding Lead if they are concerned about any child.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- We believe that all children have a right to be protected from harm.
- We recognise that abuse occurs in all cultures, religions and social classes and that staff need to be sensitive to the many differing factors which need to be taken into account depending on the child's cultural and social background.
- We recognise that Child-on-child abuse, often sexual or involving bullying/exploitation may happen
- We recognise that our contact with children and young people means our staff are well placed to observe signs of abuse.
- We know that it is important that children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are sensitively listened to, and that children know that there are adults who they can approach if they are worried or unhappy.
- We adhere to the principles of working in partnership with those who hold parental responsibility for each child.
- The prime concern at all times must be the welfare and safety of the child. Where there is a conflict between the needs of the child and the parent/carer, the interests of the child must be paramount.

We will therefore ensure that:

- We have a Designated Senior Person (DSP) who has received appropriate training and support for this role. The CEO/Head of Charity will be the DSP.
- There are additional Managers who have received the appropriate Designated person training and will act in the absence of the Designated Senior Person. These are ;
 - Short Breaks Manager – Activities
 - Short Breaks Manager –Residential
 - Deputy Manager – Family Advice Service
 - Deputy Head of Charity – Whole Charity
- All staff, volunteers and Directors will know who is the Designated Senior Person and their remit of the role.
- All staff will be responsible for safeguarding and will understand their responsibilities in passing concerns to the designated person (DSP).
- All staff will know how to respond to a child who discloses abuse.
- All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to Safeguarding.
- the Designated Senior Person will refer any child believed to have suffered or to be likely to suffer significant harm to the appropriate Duty Social Worker on the same day of the disclosure, and will follow up any such referral in writing within 24 hours.
- We will ensure the immediate safety of any child felt to be at serious risk by taking appropriate action and by involving other relevant agencies as necessary.
- We will develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters, including attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences wherever possible, and providing reports as a matter of course.
- We will contribute to multi-agency assessments of children's needs where appropriate.
- Written records are kept of all concerns, whether or not there is a need to refer the matter immediately, and that these records are kept securely, separate from the general children's files and in a locked location.
- Children's Services are notified of any child on the Child Protection Register who is absent for more than 2 days.
- Any new concern or relevant information about a child with a Child Protection Plan will be passed to the child's allocated social worker immediately.
- If a child with a Child Protection Plan leaves the service, the child's social worker will be informed of the change without delay.
- If the DSP is unsure how to proceed in a potential Child Protection situation, or require advice, this will be appropriately sought via KSCAP

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/CARERS:

- We will ensure that all parents are informed that We Are Beams has a Safeguarding Policy and is required to follow KCC's Child Protection Procedures in respect of reporting suspected abuse to the Children's Services Department. A copy of the Policy will be sent out on request.
- in individual cases, We are Beams will raise child protection concerns with parent/carers at the earliest appropriate opportunity, unless to do so could place a child or young person at risk from further harm.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

- We recognise that matters related to Safeguarding are of a confidential nature. The Short Breaks Services Managers or Dragons Retreat Supervisor will therefore share detailed information about a child with other staff members on a "need to know" basis only.
- All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other relevant agencies where necessary, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child that they will keep certain information secret, and that if children disclose abuse this must be passed on to the Senior Designated Person.

SUPPORT FOR STAFF:

- We recognise that staff working for We Are Beams who have been dealing with child protection issues may find the situation stressful or upsetting.
- We will ensure that opportunities are provided for staff to be supported in these circumstances and to talk through any anxieties they may have.
- Children who have autism may display challenging behaviour and may not have the usual social or sexual inhibitions. This may result in complex situations for staff. Staff will follow We Are Beams policy on Physical Intervention and Behaviour and will record all incidents as detailed in the procedure which will result in senior members of staff following up any difficult situation which may put children or staff at risk.
- Behaviour Support Plans will detail the need for physical intervention, need for touching in terms of toileting/bathing/dressing support.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF:

- We recognise that there will be occasions when a child/young person, or a parent or another person may make an allegation against a member of staff.
- In this event, the CEO/Head of Charity will follow the procedures for dealing with allegations against staff in line with the Charity's procedures.
- If an allegation is made regarding the Registered Manager this needs to be reported to the Deputy Head of Charity who is the Responsible Individual.
- If there are concerns relating to the CEO/Head of Charity these should be taken to Tracy Woods - Direct Payment Service Manager or Jason Jarvis Chair of Trustees

SAFE RECRUITMENT:

- We are Beams Recruitment Policy is used to ensure that all those working in either a paid or unpaid capacity are suitable to do so.

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- Interview panels will follow recommendations from the Policy in relation to practice and this is based on OFSTED guidance on recruitment.
- Appropriate checks (i.e. enhanced DBS) will be carried out on all potential employees and volunteers working with children and young people, and all references will be taken up and verified.
- At interview, candidates will be asked to account for any gaps in their employment history.

TRUSTEES RESPONSIBILITIES:

- The Trustees will ensure that the Safeguarding Policy is reviewed on an annual basis.
- The Trustees will remedy any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to Safeguarding arrangements that are brought to its attention without delay.

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION:

- Our policy on physical intervention by staff is set out in the Behaviour Policy and acknowledges that staff should only use physical intervention in particular circumstances, and that even when necessary, the minimum force should be used to prevent harm to the child or another child or adult.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The role of the LADO is set out in the HM Government guidance **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)**.

The LADO works within KCC Children's Services and should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

The LADO role applies to paid, unpaid, volunteer, casual, agency and self-employed workers. They capture concerns, allegations or offences emanating from outside of work. The LADO is involved from the initial phase of the allegation through to the conclusion of the case.

They will provide advice, guidance and help to determine whether the allegation sits within the scope of the procedures.

Contact Details:

Kent County Council – Front Door Team

Telephone: 03000 41 11 11

Out of Hours Telephone 03000 41 91 91

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LADO

Telephone 03000 41 08 88
kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk

Kent Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit: 01622 690690