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Safeguarding Policy

Alice is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is committed to safeguarding practice that reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice requirements. We recognise that the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take. We understand that all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation has an equal right to protection from all types of harm and abuse. We recognise that some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues. Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents/carers and other agencies is essential in promoting children's welfare

This Policy sets out a clear and consistent framework for paid and unpaid staff and third parties working on behalf of Alice, to deliver this commitment, in line with safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance.

It is always unacceptable for anyone to experience abuse, harm and neglect of any kind and Alice recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of our service users, particularly children and vulnerable adults, by a commitment to practice which protects them. We will carry out our responsibilities through adhering to, amongst other policies, our Safeguarding Policy.

All members of Alice, are required to commit to this policy. They will be required to complete Safeguarding Training and are expected to uphold and promote the fundamental principles of British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

This guidance has been prepared to support the members of staff to navigate their way through what can feel like a daunting and difficult process. Alice, has in place a Designated Safeguarding Lead, Kelly Dunning, who is on hand to provide 1-2-1 support as well as a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, Heather Sheldon, who can provide further support. This guidance will be shared with all members of the organisation during their onboarding.

The Safeguarding Policy and supporting procedures will be widely promoted and mandatory for all team members within Alice. Failure to comply with the Safeguarding Policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and dismissal/exclusion from the organisation may be the result.

Purpose

Alice will:

- Protect children and young people who receive support from Alice's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.
- To ensure all team members recognise their responsibilities (through guidance, support and training), minimise risk and avoid situations where abuse or neglect might be alleged.
- Provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Alice, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, agency staff and students. Failure to comply with the policy and related procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

Scope

Alice recognises that all team members have a responsibility to protect our service users from harm. Ensuring a consistent service-centred approach to coaching and supporting, based on a clear understanding of service users' individual needs and views and of the organisation.

- This policy applies to all members of Alice.
- All team members have access to this policy, the referral procedure and any supporting documentation.

Statutory Framework, Regulations & Guidance

This policy covers the legislative requirements and recommendations pertaining to the protection of children, young people and adults at risk in the UK, in accordance with statutory guidance on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of learners in education.

This policy has been created in line with:

- The Children Act 1989 provides the legal framework for the protection of people under 18 in the UK.
- The Protection of Children Act 1999 requires employers such as Alice, to apply for a Standard disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau (now known as DBS checks) for all staff working with service users.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 is a document which sets out how all agencies and professionals should work together to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults
- Alice refers to and seeks guidance from the Threshold Framework held by Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership and Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board. The Threshold Framework 'Threshold for Intervention' is the overarching document for the whole of the children's workforce. This multi-agency threshold framework is a guidance tool that all agencies, professionals and volunteers can use to consider how best to meet the needs of individual children and young people. The Threshold Framework is available on the Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership website <https://safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk> Framework is available on the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership website <https://www.staffsscp.org.uk>
- Some organisations in England, Scotland and Wales have a duty, as a specified authority under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015, to identify vulnerable children and

young people and prevent them from being drawn into terrorism. This is known as the Prevent duty. These organisations include:

- Schools
- Registered childcare providers
- Local authorities
- Police
- Prisons and probation services
- NHS trusts and foundations

Other organisation may also have Prevent duties if they perform delegated local authority functions. Children can be exposed to different views and receive information from various sources. Some of these views may be considered radical or extreme. More information available on the Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership website

<https://safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk>

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation is available from

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk>

Training

Alice will ensure an appropriate level of safeguarding training is available to its trustees, employees, volunteers and any relevant persons linked to the organisation who requires it. For all employees who are working or volunteering with children, this requires them as a minimum to have awareness training that enables them to:

- Understand what safeguarding is and their role in safeguarding children
- Understand the difference between safeguarding children and child protection
- How to spot the signs of abuse and neglect
- How to respond to the indicators of abuse and neglect and keep children safe
- Understand dignity and respect when working with children
- Have knowledge of the training available for Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire via the Safeguarding Children Partnership website (<https://safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk>)

Safer Recruitment

Alice will undertake safer recruitment training to ensure that all members of staff, volunteers, students and trustees are fit to work in a charitable setting with potentially vulnerable families. It also reserves the right to refuse to employ staff/recruit volunteers/students / trustees whom it has a reasonable belief may pose a risk to its service users.

Alice has systems in place to prevent unsuitable people from working with children or vulnerable adults and to promote safe practice. These systems apply to all new members of staff and require the following checks to be made prior to appointment:

- A minimum of two references, satisfactory to Alice, one of which should be from a previous employer.
- Documentary evidence checks of identify, nationality, residency and “right to work” status.
- Standard internet search on the name
- DBS checks of at least a Standard disclosure (Disclosure & Barring Service).
- Satisfactory completion of the probationary period.

If a DBS check is delayed for any reason the individual will not be subject to lone working with service users. They must always have a member of staff present who is fully DBS checked until the point they receive a full DBS check. Should the DBS check be considered unsatisfactory by the DSL, the staff member may be moved into a non-contact role with service users, or their position may be terminated. – Please see Disclosure and Barring Service Policy

Allegations Against Staff

Alice takes allegations against any member of staff seriously and believe it is essential that all cases of suspected maltreatment or significant harm are investigated quickly and professionally whatever the validity.

Members of staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a service user or a situation which could be misconstrued. As our team, can regularly work alone with people, it is important that the Designated Safeguarding Lead is made aware of any potential concerns that arise. If a member of staff suspects any other member of the team of safeguarding malpractice, it is their responsibility to immediately bring these concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If the DSL is unavailable, then this concern should be immediately reported to the Chief Executive Officer (DDSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Provide support and advice to the reporting member of team including referring to and adhering to Alice’s Whistleblowing Policy. Ask the reporting team member to provide a written record of their concern following procedures for reporting concerns, which will be housed in the secure safeguarding single central file.
- Consult with the CEO as appropriate.
- In the interest of the business and the service user, immediately seek advice from the relevant Local Authority and/or the Designated Officer from the relevant Local Safeguarding Children’s Partnership or Adult Safeguarding Partnership.
- Efficiently act on advice, whether this is to take further investigative action or not.

Any allegation made against a Designated Safeguarding Lead should be reported directly to the Chief Executive Officer, who will act as above, without notifying the Designated Safeguarding Lead. All members of staff should be aware of their responsibility to immediately raise concerns, where they exist, about any member of the members of staff, including the Designated Safeguarding Leads. We recognise that our service users cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where members of the members of staff fail to do so.

Confidentiality & Information Sharing

Alice expects all employees, volunteers and trustees to maintain confidentiality. Information will only be shared in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection. However, information should be shared with the Local Authority if a child is deemed to be at risk of significant harm* or contact the police if they are in immediate danger, or a crime has been committed.

All members of staff must be aware that they have a responsibility to immediately disclose information which if not shared, may compromise a service user's safety or welfare; all members of staff will be fully supported by their Designated Safeguarding Lead

Consent

Whilst professionals should in general discuss any concerns with the child, their parents/carers and where possible seek their agreement to making referrals to Staffordshire Families Integrated front door, for Staffordshire families or Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Front door for Stoke-on-Trent families. This should only be done if where such discussion and agreement-seeking will not place the child or others at increased risk of suffering significant harm. For more information on Threshold framework go to the Staffordshire Safeguarding Board website on - [Home - Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

Consent/agreement is not required for child protection referrals; however, you, as the referring professional, would need to where possible discuss with and inform parents or carers that you are making a referral as stated above, unless by alerting them you could be putting that child or others at risk.

Safe Recruitment & Selection

There is a duty under Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004 for Alice to be committed to safe employment and safe recruitment practices, that reduce the risk of harm to children from people unsuitable to work with them or have contact with them.

Alice has policies and procedures that cover the recruitment of all trustees, employees and volunteers which can be found via the Recruitment, Selection and Retention Policy and Code of Conduct.

Escalation

Professional providing services to children and their families should work cooperatively across all agencies, using their confidence, skills and experience to make a robust contribution to safeguarding children and promoting the welfare within the framework of discussions, meetings, conferences and case management. On occasions situations may arise where there is professional disagreement in relation to safeguarding a child. Resolution is an integral part of professional joint working to safeguard children and this policy seeks to identify how such resolution can be achieved where there are professional differences of opinion.

All professionals have a responsibility to work together and to help to prevent disagreements from escalating where possible. This policy identifies a non-exhaustive list of potential areas of

disagreement, guidance and resolving disputes and procedures to be followed when disputes cannot be resolved through discussion and negotiation between professionals at front line level.

Whistleblowing

It is important that people within Alice have the confidence and support to come forward and speak or act if they have concerns that have not been addressed by the escalation policy. Additional knowledge, advice and guidance must be always sought from Alice's designated safeguarding leads. Whistleblowing occurs when a person raises concerns about dangerous or illegal activity, or any wrongdoing within their organisation. This includes concerns about another employee or volunteer. There is also a requirement by Alice, to protect whistleblowers. See the Whistleblowing Policy for more details.

Procedure

Recognise

Being able to identify possible signs of abuse is essential, whether concerns arise on-site or elsewhere. Everyone involved in supporting individuals must be informed and alert so that potential abuse can be recognised, investigated, and addressed effectively.

Indicators of abuse may include direct disclosure. Others who may identify concerns include Family Support Workers, Early Years Workers, all staff, colleagues, and peers. All individuals in these roles will receive training to recognise signs of abuse and understand how, where, and to whom they should report concerns.

Respond

Providing an appropriate response is crucial. No report or concern about possible abuse should ever be ignored. To respond effectively, clarify the nature of the concern:

- Is this an allegation made by a service user against a staff member, another service user, or someone else?
- Is the individual disclosing abuse towards themselves or someone else?
- Is this a report of a suspicion or a specific incident?
- What exactly has happened?

Clear understanding is essential.

When responding:

- Do not lead or probe with questions. Stay calm and show interest and concern.
- Listen carefully. Explain that what they have shared must be recorded and passed on to ensure the concern is dealt with appropriately, and that this will be shared on a strictly "need to know" basis.
- Reassure them that reporting the concern was the right thing to do and that you will act to help, without making unrealistic promises.
- Ensure their account is accurately recorded and reported, and that both the complainant and the subject of the allegation are treated in accordance with Alice's safeguarding policy and procedures.

Report

Report any safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in the first instance.

If this is not appropriate, report directly to the Chief Executive Officer, whom is also the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

Record

Record exactly what has been alleged, using the complainant's own words wherever possible.

Your record should:

- Include direct quotations
- Include factual observations about the person's physical or emotional state, if relevant
- Be stored securely in accordance with the Alice's Privacy Notice and GDPR Statement
- Be accessible only to those who require the information to take action

Refer

The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy is responsible for deciding whether a referral to an external agency is required, once all relevant information has been gathered.

However, in exceptional circumstances—for example, where someone is at immediate risk of harm or where the DSL/deputy is acting inappropriately—any staff member may make a referral.

If this occurs, the staff member must still report the referral to the DSL.

Responsibilities

All Staff Must:

- Understand and fulfil their safeguarding duties as outlined in this policy and related procedures
- Maintain confidentiality in accordance with the Alice Privacy Notice and GDPR Statement
- Report safeguarding concerns or disclosures immediately to the DSL
- Follow the safeguarding referral procedure
- Maintain strict confidentiality as directed by the DSL
- Complete all required safeguarding training and assessments
- Prioritise the welfare of service users and seek advice from the DSL if unsure
- Undertake safeguarding training at least every two years, with attendance at update sessions as needed

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Must:

- Hold a Level 4 safeguarding qualification
- Be available for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns
- Ensure concerns are referred to appropriate external agencies
- Ensure all staff are fully trained and able to identify and report concerns
- Complete regular refresher training to remain compliant with updated guidance
- Maintain effective reporting and recording systems
- Keep safeguarding policies up to date with statutory guidance
- Communicate procedures, concerns, and referrals appropriately
- Comply with Local Authority requirements
- Be aware of individuals with specific safeguarding needs or vulnerabilities

Safeguarding Concern Identified – Immediate Actions

- Ensure the person is safe; if there is immediate risk, contact emergency services
- Move to a safe and private space to discuss the concern
- Complete a safeguarding report form with full details
- Inform the person that external agencies may need to be notified
- Reassure them that they have acted appropriately in raising the concern, and share the written record
- Notify and seek guidance from the DSL
- Confirm agreed follow-up actions

Safeguarding Lead Responsibilities

- Ensure the individual and the reporter are safe and supported
- Collate detailed reports on the concern
- Log all information on the safeguarding tracking sheet
- Ensure the safeguarding policy and procedures have been followed
- Provide support to the reporting staff member where needed
- Inform appropriate external agencies
- Inform HR where relevant
- Provide feedback to the reporting staff member
- Review the case and any actions taken
- Close the case when complete

Important Contacts

Senior Lead for Safeguarding

- Name: Kelly Dunning
- Email Address: kelly.dunning@alicecharity.org
- Telephone Number: 07729092706

Deputy Senior Lead for Safeguarding

- Name: Heather Sheldon
- Email Address: Heather.sheldon@alicecharity.org
- Telephone Number: 07729 092704

Staffordshire Families Integrated Front Door

- 0300 111 8007 and select option 1 - (Mon-Thurs, 8.30am – 5pm and Fri, 8.30am – 4.30pm)
- Emergency Duty Team (outside office hours) 0345 604 2886

Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Front Door

- 01782 235100 (Mon-Thurs, 8.30am – 5pm and Fri, 8.30am – 4.30pm)
- Emergency Duty Team (outside office hours) 01782 234234

Police

- Emergency – 999
- Non-emergency – 101

NSPCC Helpline

- 0808 800 5000