

A WAY OUT

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

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1.Introduction

What is Child Protection?

Child protection relates to action taken to prevent children suffering harm or further harm caused by deliberate abuse and / or neglect.

Whilst we all may contribute to child protection by being alert and passing on our concerns to the authorities, child protection work can only be carried out by specific professionals such as Social Workers and Police officers.

What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding is about managing a safe environment for children and young people to access.

It combines an approach to safety that draws together both reactive and preventative approaches to the management of children's safety and well-being. It describes a wider set of actions and responsibilities designed to promote children's wellbeing.

Safeguarding includes child protection, but also involves keeping children safe from accidents, bullying, crime and issues such as ensuring safer recruitment of staff and volunteers and safe practices at work are in place.

Any group or organisation that works with children and young people should be able to deal with situations when they arise, but also be able to take all reasonable steps to prevent, wherever possible, situations arising in the first place.

Safeguarding children is EVERYONE'S responsibility and business in any organisation

- All children and vulnerable people have the right to feel safe and secure in any environment - at home, in the community or in a faith based organisation.
- People who work with children on a regular basis in faith based organisation and other community organisations can play an important role in identifying children at risk of neglect or abuse.
- Good practice reduces the potential for abuse and increases safety for children.
- Organisations must therefore develop policies, procedures and practices to safeguard children in their care.

2.Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles and definitions that underpin safeguarding work along with detailing what the statutory duties are. The policy is linked to:

- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Information Sharing Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Child Protection Procedure
- Risk Assessments Guidance
- PREVENT policy

3.Scope

This policy sets out the responsibilities of A Way Out to help protect children from abuse or neglect. Every child or young person has the right to protection. A Way Out endeavours to deliver positive outcomes for children and young people and to help protect them from harm.

This policy covers any child up to the age of 18 regardless of their age, gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability. The policy aims to help keep children safe from adults or other children who might pose a risk to them.

The policy aims to demonstrate that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and includes all staff, volunteers and Trustees at A Way Out.

4.Policy Statement

A Way Out believes that children must be protected from harm at all times:

- We believe every Child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that Children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- We want Children who use or have contact with this Organisation to enjoy what we have to offer in safety.
- We want Parents and Carers who use or attend our Organisation to be supported to care for their Children in a way that promotes their Child's health and wellbeing and keeps them safe.

- We want Organisations who work with or commission work from us, or who provide funding to us to have confidence and recognise that we are a safe Organisation.
- We will achieve this by having an effective Safeguarding Children Procedure and follow National Guidance (What to Do if you're worried a Child Is Being Abused) and Local LSCB Procedures (<http://www.teescpp.org.uk>).
- If we discover or suspect a Child is suffering harm we will notify Social Services, via the Hartlepool & Stockton Safeguarding Hub: 01429 284284 / 01642 130080 Email: HSSCP@hartlepool.gov.uk or Emergency Duty Team (Outside of Office Hours) Tel: 01642 524552 or Police: Tel: 101/999 in order that they can be protected if necessary.
- This Safeguarding Children Policy Statement and our Safeguarding Children Procedure apply to all staff, volunteers and users of A Way Out and anyone carrying out any work for us or using our premises.
- We will review our Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures at least every 2 years to make sure they are still relevant and effective.

Director/Manager of
Organisation : _____

Signed : _____

Date : _____

5. Legal Framework

The policy has been developed within the context of the law and guidance that seeks to protect children including:

- Children Act 1989;
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Police Act 1997;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Data Protection Act 1998;
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- Protection of Children Act 1999;
- Children Act 2004;
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Further links to useful websites can be seen at page 13

6. Partnership Working

We work closely with a variety of partner agencies across the statutory, voluntary and private sectors and are members of a number of multi-agency forums that seek to work collectively to safeguard children. Our collaborative approach helps us to protect, prevent and identify safeguarding issues for the children and young people we work with.

We are members of the Hartlepool and Stockton Safeguarding Partners (HSSCP'S) and strategic sub group for VEMT and take part in the Early Help Panel meetings.

We have partnership agreements and arrangements set up with a range of agencies and services across the Stockton area:

- Drug and alcohol treatment provider e.g Lifeline
- Youth Direction
- Housing Options
- Police
- Social services
- Mental health support providers
- Domestic abuse specialists
- Sexual Health
- Two primary schools in Port Clarence and Thornaby
- CSE specialists e.g. Barnardos ACE project
- Housing / supported accommodation Providers
- Residential children's homes
- The Local Authority – Children's Hub
- Health care providers
- Northfield Secondary School

7. Categories of 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/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 in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate. 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, (including cyber-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, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
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. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. 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, 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); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment).
MODERN SLAVERY
Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to

coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE

Including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
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Possible signs of abuse include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries or the explanation of the cause of the injury is does not seem right. In addition to be cautious of any injuries on a non-mobile child.
- The child discloses abuse, or describes what appears to be an abusive act.
- Someone else (child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child.
- Unexplained change in behaviour such as withdrawal or sudden outbursts of temper.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or sexually explicit behaviour
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Difficulty in making friends / forming relationships.
- Eating disorders, depression, self-harm or suicide attempts.
- Any change in behaviour and demeanour not usually expected of that child/young person – this could be a sign and would need further exploration with the individual child/young person.

The new 'Prevent Duty' established under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 requires responsible organisations to 'have due regard to the need to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism in the exercise of their duties.' This includes working with children and young people.

Children, Young People and adults can be drawn into violence or they can be exposed to the messages of extreme groups by many means. These can include; exposure through the influence of family members or friends and /or direct contact with extreme groups and organisations or increasingly, through the internet. This can put a young person or adult at risk of being drawn into criminal activity and has the potential to cause significant harm.

PREVENT training can be accessed and completed at www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk

Please refer to A Way Out PREVENT policy 04701.

8.Principles

The child's interests are paramount and his or her safety and welfare will always be given first priority.

Children and young people have the right to protection from neglect, abuse and exploitation (article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child).
Safeguarding children and young people (including child protection) is everyone's responsibility .
A child's concern will be listened to and always taken seriously and we will make opportunities to ensure that the voice of the child can be heard .
The limits of confidentiality in the context of child protection will be explained to service users at the time of their initial involvement with the organisation.
Care will be taken not to infringe privacy and confidentiality any more than is necessary to safeguard the welfare of the child.
In assessing the need for action when faced with safeguarding concerns, staff will consider the situation in the context of family relationships, religion and culture, but will not condone or ignore abusive behaviours that may be deemed acceptable to others.
Unless there are exceptional circumstances staff will share their concerns with service users and inform them of any action they intend to take.
Arrangements will be made to assist with communication in circumstances of disability or where English is not the service user's first language.
Staff will use plain, jargon-free language appropriate to the age , understanding and culture of each person, and will explain any unavoidable technical or professional terms.
A Way Out will ensure that all staff, including volunteers, understand the charity's safeguarding children , and are trained to appropriate levels in safeguarding and child protection matters, including the latest Government guidance and requirements.
A Way Out will ensure that adequate pre-recruitment checks are undertaken for all staff, including volunteers and trustees. This includes requesting independent references from two sources and completion of an enhanced DBS disclosure application for which A Way Out will cover the cost. The contents of all DBS disclosures will be reviewed by the Management Team before permitting the staff member to work in an unsupervised capacity with any client group.
A Way Out will ensure that the child protection procedures for the authorities within which it operates are understood , in order to maintain good working relationships and appropriate levels of co-operation. This will include staff attending relevant training sessions arranged by the LSCB.

A Way Out will ensure that all **staff receive appropriate supervision** on a regular basis, and have access to a line manager in the event of the need for an urgent case discussion.

9. Key Roles and Responsibilities

All staff and volunteers have a duty to report suspected abuse or neglect without delay taking due care and attention and guidance from Co ordinators, Team Leaders and the Child Safeguarding Leads as stated below. You should not:

- promise to keep abuse a secret
- alert the abuser as this could make matters worse and make it difficult to help the child
- delay in reporting the abuse straight way.

Team Leader

Should you identify or suspect abuse or neglect or someone tells you that this is happening you should speak straight away to your Team Leader to make them aware of the situation prior to escalating the concern. Keeping your Team Leader informed of your concern allows them to appropriately manage the service/staff/service users safely in conjunction with your concern and to provide support to you whilst you report and record and take action.

Following notification to the Team Leader the concern will need to be escalated for consideration and decision making to the Child Safeguarding Lead. This should be done as soon as practicable and when possible on the same day.

Adult and Child Safeguarding Leads

The Adult and Child Safeguarding Leads in the organisation are:

- Kay Nicolson, Chief Executive (kay.nicolson@awayout.co.uk)
- Sue Willoughby, Operations Manager (susan.willoughby@awayout.co.uk)
- Tracey Brittain, Services Manager (tracey.brittain@awayout.co.uk)
- Vicky Adamkiewicz, Liberty Team Leader (Victoria.adamkiewicz@awayout.co.uk)
- Charlotte Gibbons, Blossom Team Leader (charlotte.gibbons@awayout.co.uk)

The decision to escalate a case to a statutory level should normally be made in conjunction with the Child Safeguarding Lead and in some instances this may not be the action that is recommended by them. More information may be needed from other partner agencies or to be collected and monitored or guidance may be required from the Local Authority.

The Hartlepool & Stockton-On-Tees Safeguarding Partnership (HSSCP) seeks to ensure that the children of Stockton are protected from all forms of abuse and neglect by ensuring that everybody working with children works effectively together.

If the Child Safeguarding Lead has any doubt that a child or young person is being abused or neglected they will advise you to inform Children's Social Care or the Police.

To report concerns:
During working hours contact:
The Children's Hub Contact
Hartlepool & Stockton-on-Tees
Civic Centre - Level 2
Victoria Road
Hartlepool TS24 8AY
Tel: 01429 284284 / 01642 130080
Email: HSSCP@hartlepool.gov.uk
Out of hours contact:
Emergency Duty Team
Tel: 01642 524552
In an emergency contact the Police on: Tel: 101 or 999

They may ask you to monitor the case only or take some additional internal actions or alongside other partner agencies.

They will discuss with you what provision has been put in place to keep the child safe now if they are in imminent danger or what should be put in place to help them to stay safe

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

If you believe or suspect that someone at A Way Out has:

- Behaved in a way that 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 that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children?

If you have any of these concerns about staff or volunteers This should be reported through the Child Safeguarding Lead to discuss the concern prior to it being reported to:

The Hartlepool and Stockton-On-Tees LADO is Phil Curtis email: Phil.curtis@hartlepool.gov.uk telephone number: 01429 401844. You can also get in touch through the Children's Hub

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) has a statutory responsibility to provide advice about what action needs to be taken.

Contact Statutory Agency

The Police and/ Children's Hub should this be the recommended route will make sure that the right people investigate the abuse to help safeguard the child/children. They will listen to you and provide you with good advice. A Concern Form at Appendix 2 is attached that will need to be completed when reporting a children's safeguarding concern to the Stockton & Hartlepool Children's Hub

The Children's Hub may be able to give you the advice and information you need over the phone or by e-mail but if your enquiry is complicated or requires lengthy discussions they will make an appointment at a convenient time and place to make sure you get the best possible assistance.

If you wish to make a referral, please download the **Safer Referral Form** and complete all relevant sections prior to contacting us. Please follow the instructions on the form for the procedure to be followed.

Prior to referral, ask yourself these questions:

- Have I assessed the child and documented my findings?
- Have I documented existing risk factors or issues?
- Is there any evidence of substance abuse, domestic abuse, mental illness, a chaotic lifestyle or missed appointments?
- Has the Early Help Assessment Framework been followed?
- Has the situation been discussed with the child's parent(s)?
- Who else is in the household?
- Have I updated myself on the children's recent health history (Health staff)?
- Do I have knowledge of any siblings? May they be at risk of harm too?
- Is there a social worker allocated? Have I discussed this referral with that social worker?
- Has the situation been discussed with a manager/senior colleague for safeguarding?

By completing the form prior to making a call you will ensure that you have the following available:

- The evidence triggering the call
- A list of recent events
- The child's health record (Health staff)

Family involvement

We would work with families and involve them as part of the process around safeguarding where this is appropriate and reasonable to do so and would not negatively impact on the safety and wellbeing of the child/children.

Advocacy

A Way Out will endeavour to advocate on behalf of their beneficiaries, however in circumstances whereby a child/young persons' wishes and views conflict with their safety this must be highlighted

also. A Way Out staff will endeavour to explain to a child/young person why they are concerned/worried in age appropriate language they can easily understand.

Information Sharing

The Safeguarding Children policy is linked to A Way Out's Information Sharing Policy outlining that information will only be shared on a "need to know" basis when it is in the interest of the child to keep them free from abuse, harm and neglect. The policy details the Act and the Caldicott Principles that govern how to do this lawfully.

VEMT

VEMT stands for Vulnerable, Exploited, Missing, Trafficked and is the acronym used by the four Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) in the Tees area (Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees) related to work they do individually and together to understand and address the issues relating to children who are at risk due to going missing from home and care and / or are at risk of sexual exploitation and trafficking.

This group chaired by Cleveland Police is attended by senior professionals of the four Tees LSCBs (Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees) who they are accountable to. They work together to address the issues of vulnerable, exploited, missing or trafficked children through the remit of this group which meet. We are members of the operational and strategic sub group for VEMT in Stockton.

Early Help

Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Early help can also prevent further problems arising, for example, if it is provided as part of a support plan where a child has returned home to their family from care.

An Early Help Panel takes place once per month and is attended by individuals from both statutory and voluntary agencies within the local area to ensure any families are discussed within this arena as part of a multi-agency approach. We actively take part in this panel.

Funders

A concern or issue should be reported to those funding the interventions if there is likely to be reputational damage to the organisation.

Record Keeping

It is essential to maintain and make clear, concise and accurate notes in a timely manner to enable swift and appropriate action to be taken and accurate advice to be obtained. This will assist when considering what action is needed. The completion of AWO Doc 12 – Abuse Concern Form at Appendix 1 should be completed within 24 hours of a concern being flagged with the Child Safeguarding Lead regardless of the outcome. This will ensure that all the appropriate information has been correctly logged and will enable the safeguarding concern to be monitored and tracked allowing repeated, low level harm incidents to be easily identified and subsequently referred.

These forms should also be saved on the central recording system for each service area.

Sensitive personal data should be stored in line with the Information Sharing and Data Protection Policies.

Staff should discuss contents of Safeguarding Policy with clients and evidence discussion within case notes. Clients should be given the option to access Safeguarding Policy.

Management Arrangements

Every month each service area during their team meeting will discuss safeguarding concerns, practices and cases. Safeguarding is a standard agenda item discussed and reviewed each month by each project to continuously improve and better meet the needs of children around safeguarding.

Every month the Senior Management Team (SMT) also discuss any issues/concerns that have arisen during team meetings around safeguarding. The Board of Trustees has a nominated Safeguarding Champion who is currently a practicing Social Worker who advises and ensures alongside Senior Managers that safeguarding concerns are considered as part of the Board's decision making and who will inform alongside SMT Trustees of any changes in legislation/practice/regulation in this area.

A Way Out has a whistle blowing and disciplinary policies and procedures that enable staff and volunteers to confidentiality report any safeguarding concerns that they may have that are being caused by other staff or volunteers to ensure appropriate controls and measures are in place to identify, report and address this.

Monitoring Arrangements

Team Leaders carry out monthly case file reviews including associated documents to ensure compliance with policy and procedures and consistency across the team. Every 6 months Abuse Concern Forms are reviewed and shared with the team to understand any patterns/trends, action taken, multi-agency responses, lessons learnt and outcomes for the individual.

Senior Management Team review every 6 months the position with the Abuse Concern Forms following a review by the Team Leaders and their teams as above. Outcomes are reviewed and any appropriate recommendations and learning passed across to the service areas. Annual evaluation and monitoring reports of the same are considered by the Board of Trustees to provide the Board with assurance around safeguarding practices at A Way Out.

HR Practices

All job descriptions contain a requirement which will vary depending on level of responsibility around safeguarding. Recruitment practices involve at interview questions and scenarios around safeguarding prioritising this area as a key commitment for the organisation.

Induction programmes for new staff cover training and development in this area to ensure that we have suitably qualified and skilled staff to deliver in line with the Safeguarding Policy requirements to help empower, prevent and protect the adults that we work with to be free from abuse, harm and neglect. Appraisals take place annually and look to assess safeguarding practices and delivery for each member of staff.

Training is secured through the local safeguarding boards for staff, volunteers and Trustees and where required guidance is requested from the same to further underpin our commitment to safeguard the adults that we support.

Public Awareness & Whole Community Approach

We provide tailored support to each and every member of the public that we work with. Safeguarding, consent, confidentiality and information sharing are all areas that we engage our clients with providing bespoke advice and guidance that best suits their needs and empowers them to be part of the process; informs their decision making allowing them to have choice and control and respects their rights.

We proactively promote the service that we offer on our website, information leaflets, twitter, Facebook, at multi agency forums and community events reinforcing our commitment to prevent the harm and exploitation of the vulnerable and at risk women, families and young people we work with through a person centred service delivery model of reach, engage and empower.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity

We are committed to equality and diversity, every person supported will have their individual needs comprehensively addressed and will be treated equally and without discrimination through referral, assessment and support processes. We adopt the principles of fairness, respect, equality, dignity and autonomy, support by our Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy

10. Links to Useful Websites & Information

The following may help you to further develop your good safeguarding practice:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/>

The NSPCC provides safeguarding information related to activities outside the home – from after school art clubs to weekend reading groups.

It supports organisations and groups; community, charities, faith, voluntary and social enterprise by providing them with a wide range of support services including templates and guidance for policies and procedures.

<https://www.hsscp.co.uk/>

This website is provided by the four Tees Local Safeguarding Children Boards (Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-On-Tees) and outlines the roles and responsibilities that professionals from organisations have in taking action and working together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

<https://www.hsscp.co.uk/professionals/page/51>

This link will take you to the Hartlepool & Stockton-On-Tees Safeguarding Partnership web pages, including information regarding the Multi Agency Training Programme.

<https://thirtyoneeight.org/>

thirtyone: eight – Provides professional advice and support in all areas of safeguarding children throughout the UK. Their services are used not only by churches and groups across the denominational spectrum, but increasingly by other faiths as well.

<http://minab.org.uk/>

The MINAB (Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board) Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board

<http://www.catalyststockton.org>

The VCSE Safeguarding Forum aims to allow VCSE organisations to discuss any issues they may have around Safeguarding policies and procedures in a safe environment. For more information please contact enquiries@catalyststockton.org or call 01642 733906.

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/safeguarding/>

No	<i>Policy Document Change History</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Who</i>
14	Updated safeguarding leads	3/22	KB
13	Update safeguarding leads.	8/21	KB
12	Planned Review	05/21	LH
11	Policy full reviewed and updated	04/12/20 20	AL
10	Stockton Safeguarding Board changed to Hartlepool & Stockton Safeguarding Partnership and updated weblinks	April 19	AB
9	Reviewed	June 18	SMT
8	Policy re-written and re-named (changed from Child Protection Policy to Safeguarding Children Policy) and approved by LSCB	May 17	SMc
7	Policy reviewed	01/06/16	AB
6	Policy reviewed and updated	01/06/15	DB
5	Policy updated to reflect title changes and roles	01/03/15	AB
4	Policy updated to reflect title changes and roles	23/06/14	RP
3	Policy reviewed and updated	20/04/13	RP
2	Policy reviewed and updated	01/02/12	RP
1	Initial release	01/07/10	SC