

Title: **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**
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Aims and Objectives

This policy assists bank, paid staff and volunteers to minimise risk, protect from harm and safeguard the welfare of children and young people. The policy aims to ensure any concerns are managed effectively via:

- Effective recruitment of bank, paid staff and volunteers
- Ensuring effective service delivery to adults and children, minimising harm to children
- Clear roles and responsibilities of bank, paid staff and volunteers
- Clear procedures for recognising, raising and dealing with concerns
- Training

Scope

This policy is applicable to all bank, paid staff and volunteers.

Related Policy and Procedure

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Code of Conduct, Recruitment Policy, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Policy, Confidentiality Policy and Data Protection Policy, Whistle blowing Policy and all Services Policy.

Legal Context

The following legislation is relevant to this policy:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Every Child Matters 2003
- Working together to safeguard children (2015)
- Equality Act (2010)

The following have recommendations relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people:

- National Service Framework
- Education Act 2002 2011
- Youth Matters
- Child Care Matters
- Birth to 3 Matters
- Greater Manchester Safeguarding Children Procedures 2014
- Child in Need Procedure 2011

The following provides the legislation regarding recruitment of ex-offenders:

- Care Standards Act 2000

This policy is written in line with Tameside, Oldham's and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Board (TSCB; OSCB and DSCB) Child Safeguarding Procedures.

Definition

Throughout the policy and procedure the term "child" or "children" includes young person(s).

The Policy

It is always unacceptable for a child or vulnerable person to experience abuse or harm of any kind. Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults through its commitment to practices that protect them.

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind provide services to people of all ages. The organisation recognises that people aged 0 to 18 years are defined as children or up to the age of 25 years for those with a disability. Therefore the organisation's policy relates to both direct and third party concerns regarding safeguarding children issues. The organisation also recognises its responsibility to children of people using our services and will implement this policy accordingly.

Every child and young person who participates in the activities or has contact through a third party with Tameside, Oldham and Glossop Mind should be provided a safe environment and be protected from abuse. This is the responsibility of every worker, paid or unpaid, involved in this organisation.

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind recognise its responsibility, both legally and morally to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse including online abuse, neglect, bullying/cyber bullying and exploitation. The organisation recognises its responsibility to protect the welfare of all children and young people in relation to grooming, child trafficking, FGM and harmful sexual behaviours. The organisation recognises that mental health, domestic abuse and substance misuse are all increased risk factors in relation to the welfare and abuse of children.

This policy will ensure that:

For the child:

- their welfare is paramount
- whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, they have the right to protection from abuse
- respect and promote their rights, wishes and feelings, while keeping them informed of the organisation's role in minimising harm and risk
- involve them as much as possible with any issue and action taken, ensuring their safety is not compromised

For any third party:

- where a third party discloses safeguarding children related issues, they should be involved as much as possible with any issue and action taken, ensuring the child's and their safety is not compromised

For the worker:

- abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school, at work and sporting environments. Any suspicions regarding child abuse should be reported internally and externally if necessary following the procedures detailed below
- paid and unpaid workers should be alert to the signs of potential child abuse
- workers will respond to all suspicions and allegations of abuse and take them seriously and respond swiftly and appropriately
- paid and unpaid workers are clear about and follow the processes to share information both internally and externally and share information with external agencies in line with this policy. However is it recognised that as a citizen separate from the organisation, an unpaid and paid worker has the right to raise concerns direct with social services.
- where a worker reports abuse by a colleague or other agency, the worker will be reassured that the law protects them from actions by those individuals who have been implicated in the abuse, harm and/or neglect of a child or young person as long as the worker's report was not malicious or vexatious

Appropriate Worker Conduct and Behaviour

The organisation wants to ensure that under no circumstances are workers the subject of allegations concerning their conduct or behaviour towards children or vulnerable people. To ensure this, workers must ensure that professional boundaries are vigorously adhered to at all times. These are detailed in the Code of Practice but if in doubt discuss with a manager or failing that ANY colleague before proceeding. If in doubt heed caution. The following list are likely examples where a worker's behaviour would be brought into question and should be avoided at all costs. This list is not exhaustive:

- Meeting the child outside of usual places or arrangements or times.
- Attending social events such as birthdays
- Divulging or entering into an exchange via personal mobile, email, or social media
- Engaging with the child via phone, text, email, or social media including through professional mobile, text, email or social media beyond undertaking professional duties?
- Transporting via private vehicle including "a lift round the corner"
- Any exchange that could be construed a gift or a present from one party to the other. Where the child is insistent or leaves the gift then it should immediately be declared and handed over to a senior member of staff.

Note that parental permission to take part in the examples given above does not provide safeguarding to either party should an allegation then be made.

Where there are concerns about a child's presenting behaviour towards a worker then the matter should be addressed firmly and a senior member of staff informed immediately. Consideration should be given as to who else should be informed. Guidance on this matter may be sought from the associated local Children's Social Care Team.

Should an allegation be made despite these safeguards then the organisation's formal capability and disciplinary will be employed and the police informed.

For the organisation:

- a culture is created in which issues relating to safeguarding children can be raised in an appropriate and well managed manner
- To ensure that any workers that undertake "restricted activity" with children or vulnerable adults require a DBS check and are not allowed to undertake such activity until the organisation has seen, checked and documented the DBS and is assured of the person's suitability. Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind reserve the right to take advice from other organisations including Children's Social Care in making this decision.
- recruit, induct, supervise and train paid staff and volunteers relevant to their role to adopt best practice through the Code of Conduct and this Child Safeguarding Policy to safeguard and protect children and young people from abuse
- ensure that all workers understand their legal and moral obligations to protect and safeguard all children and young people from harm.
- identify a designated child safeguarding officer for the organisation.
- build relations and ensure contact as necessary with local children social care teams, TSCB, OSCB and DSCB to ensure up to date practice and policy
- as with any other risk issue, inform other relevant agencies of any child protection and safeguarding issues relating to individuals
- Any counselling or one to one work with a child aged 12 or under or a child over that is deemed not to have capacity requires parental permission before that activity can start.

Procedure

The Procedure in Summary

**STAY CALM REREAD THIS DOCUMENT COLLECT INFORMATION DO NOT JUDGE
REFER TO CHILD SOCIAL CARE**

At any stage in the referral, assessment or on-going work with an individual, where issues relating to child protection and safeguarding arise, these will be dealt with on an individual basis and action taken will be in line with this policy. This could include Referral to Children's Social Care and/or withdrawal of the service, but this is not necessarily the only course of action and individual circumstances will be taken into account.

Any action taken will be done on an individual basis, so where issues regarding these matters arise in a group situation e.g. courses, café, network events, carer's group, etc, an appropriate individual meeting will be arranged as soon as possible after the issues arose.

Referral and Assessment

Referrals to the services can either be self-referral or from a third party. In line with information sharing protocols, external agencies should provide any information relating to risk issues to the individual and the organisation.

During the referral and assessment procedure, if someone's behaviour or information regarding that person causes concerns or information is received that the individual presents issues relating to safeguarding children, this will be referred to Children's Social Care Team.

On-going work/contact

Where any issues relating directly to a child or to children connected to an individual arise, these should be documented and be referred to Children's Social Care Team. If there is a concern that a child may be experiencing significant harm or is danger of experiencing significant harm action is taken immediately

Where there are concerns regarding safeguarding

This information can come from a number of different sources:

- Disclosure from a child
- Disclosure from a third party
- Suspicions of a worker observing behaviour/markings
- Disclosure relating to a paid staff member or volunteer within the organisation
- Disclosure of a client's historic abuse

Where there is any suspicion the paid staff member or volunteer should first revisit this policy to ensure it is adhered to. In cases where a paid staff member or volunteer has concerns, the person should remain calm. Any concerns regarding safeguarding children should be discussed internally with any member of the management team and a decision made as to whether to refer as a safeguarding concern. This decision should never be made in isolation. There is a designated child safeguarding officer who can provide day-to-day support and advice regarding child safeguarding issues. Depending on the severity of the issue consideration should be given to informing the relevant Director, CEO or in their absence, the Chair but this should not delay referral.

The following principles should be applied when collecting information regarding safeguarding:

- Children and third parties should be reassured they were right to tell and if talking with the child, they should be reassured they are not to blame
- Questions should be kept to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. Don't ask about explicit details
- Reassure but do not promise confidentiality, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments
- Inform the child/third party what you will do next
- Make a full and written record of **exactly** what has been said/heard
- As soon as possible pass on the information to a manager and/or the designated child safeguarding officer regarding what action to take
- In the unlikely event that none of the above staff are available for discussion, contact Children's Social Care direct
- Don't delay in passing on the information

A written record should be compiled including as much information as possible:

- Child's name, age and date of birth
- The child's home address and telephone number
- Whether the report related to themselves or to a third party
- The nature of the allegation, type of abuse, including dates, times
- Other relevant information related to the allegation
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries
- Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural issues
- Details of witnesses to the incidents
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how a bruising or other injuries occurred
- Any contact with anyone else relating to the abuse
- If so what has been said?

The organisation's confidentiality and data protection policies ensure that information is stored safely within the organisation.

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind are not responsible for deciding whether abuse has taken place or not. The organisation has a responsibility to pass onto any relevant authorities as much information as possible. The organisation will never attempt to investigate any safeguarding children concerns (including allegations made against a worker). This remains the duty of children services. The organisation will cooperate with any investigations following reports of child safeguarding issues.

Disclosure of historical abuse

Before beginning these conversations, it is essential that paid staff and volunteers make it clear to the individual concerned that whatever information they divulge may have to be passed on to the appropriate authorities if the organisation believes that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm or if it is suspected that a crime may have been committed. This allows the individuals to make a choice about disclosure regarding historical abuse. It is recognised that it may take more than one session in order to come to a decision about how to deal with these issues.

If the adult does disclose historical abuse, paid staff or volunteers should explore the following issues with the adult concerned:

- Is there reason to suspect that alleged perpetrator is still in contact with children?
- Is there reason to suspect that the alleged perpetrator may be abusing vulnerable adults?
- What action would the individual like to take against the alleged perpetrator?

Consultation with Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, Adults Safeguarding Board or the Police Public Protection Investigation Unit (PPIU) can then take place in an informed manner.

Information sharing protocol and obtaining advice

The organisation recognises that it will pass on any information, however small it appears as often small amounts of information from different agencies when joined up provide a more coherent picture. This will be to children social care service and other agencies as appropriate.

A number of agencies are available for advice and for reporting any issues for safeguarding children. Information sharing protocols exist to ensure that information is shared amongst agencies and ensure duty of care across all organisations. Information sharing is a two way process: Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will share information regarding child safeguarding issues. Other agencies involved with individuals are also responsible for informing Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind regarding any issues relating to safeguarding children. The organisation will share any relevant information where this is required for any reviews or incidents concerning safeguarding children.

Due to the nature of the information, it may not always be possible to know about any outcome of any information shared within the organisation or with an external agency. However, good practice suggests that feedback be provided in relevant individuals within the confidentiality issues of any particular case.