



## Safeguarding Policy

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**Reviewed: December 2022**

**Date for review: December 2023**

### Background:

Create Hope believes that all children have the right to enjoy activities in a happy, secure and safe environment. This document sets out Create Hope's policies and procedures that all members of staff are expected to know and follow in order to help create and maintain such an environment for children they work with. Where 'member/s of staff' is used within this policy, it includes all employees, volunteers and trustees.

All Create Hope 'members of staff' who work directly with children within another organisation, such as a school, does so under a contract with that agency and therefore should refer to the Safeguarding or Child Protection Procedures of that agency when reporting any incident of abuse. These policies will be made available to individuals as part of their induction into such a setting.

### Definition:

Under Create Hope's policy, a child is defined as: *"anyone under the age of 18"*.

As defined by the Children's Act 1998: *Child abuse is significant harm caused to any child by neglect, physical injury, sexual abuse or emotional damage.'*

For detailed explanation of forms of child abuse, please refer to sub-para 'Definitions of Child Abuse' of this document.

**Introduction:** The following people must comply with the Safeguarding Policy:

- All staff, full time, part time, and those engaged on short-term contracts
- Volunteers, Trustees
- Staff and representatives of partner agencies and any other individuals, groups or organisations who have a formal/contractual relationship to Create Hope that involves them having contact with children - unless it has been agreed expressly that the partner organisation may enforce its own safeguarding or protection policy (referred to as "staff of partner agencies")

The abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults (physical, emotional, sexual and neglect) is a reality that everybody should be aware of. Children and young people may be

abused regardless of their age, gender, religious beliefs, race, sexual orientation, culture or ability. A person known to the child most often is the perpetrator of abuse.

All those working with children and young people and vulnerable adults through our therapeutic services provide an important link in identifying individuals who have been or are at risk of being harmed in this way. The procedures produced here are by no means comprehensive and do not attempt to provide answers to all the questions which abuse raises but they do attempt to offer a practical outline of fundamental principles and good practice.

Please note that this strategic policy is designed to complement and provide a context for the more detailed Child Protection Procedures and does not replace them. Please refer to those for full guidance on child protection investigations and all multi-agency safeguarding procedures.

Staff and volunteers should also be aware that the Berkshire Child Protection Procedures are available on-line at [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren).

### **Statement:**

Create Hope is committed to the protection of children and the safeguarding of their welfare. We are totally committed to the right of all children to grow, develop and thrive in a safe, caring environment. Protecting children from abuse is an integral part of the policy and practice of the entire organisation's work.

Create Hope requires every 'member of staff' to be clear about what the organisation is trying to achieve, and agree aims and policy statements for that purpose:

- All our policy statements will be brought to the attention of all 'members of staff', who will also be informed of any guidelines or training which will enable them to implement the policy statement.
- We will work in partnership with parents and carers of children wherever possible and encourage an open, honest and non-judgmental channel of communication by providing information that will help parents, carers and children exercise their choice.
- We will ensure that all our services are provided in a manner that respects as far as possible the dignity, pride and identity of the children.
- We will ensure that all children are treated equally and will not be discriminated against on the basis of their culture, race, religion, language, gender or disability.
- We will ensure that all 'members of staff' are aware of the procedures through which they may raise concerns and express their concerns about the welfare of children.
- We will ensure that an effective, open and accountable Complaints Procedure is made available to the children, parents and carers and that any dissatisfaction of services is responded to and acted on in a speedy, effective and open manner.
- We will monitor the appropriateness and quality of services and, where necessary, seek the use of the Local Authority Child Protection Register.
- We will work where possible in cooperation with other agencies to ensure that the safety and welfare of the children comes first and is paramount to our aims and objectives.

All organisations that work with Create Hope must abide by this Child Protection Policy.

## Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse:

Some signs of **physical** abuse:

- Unexplained burns, cuts, bruises, or welts in the shape of an object
- Bite marks
- Anti-social behaviour
- Problems in school
- Fear of adults
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Self-destructive or suicidal behaviour
- Depression or poor self-image

Some signs of **emotional** abuse:

- Apathy
- Depression
- Hostility
- Lack of concentration
- Eating disorders

Some signs of **sexual** abuse:

- Inappropriate interest in or knowledge of sexual acts
- Seductiveness
- Avoidance of things related to sexuality, or rejection of own genitals or bodies
- Nightmares and bedwetting
- Drastic changes in appetite
- Over compliance or excessive aggression
- Fear of a particular person or family member
- Withdrawal, secretiveness, or depression
- Suicidal behaviour
- Eating disorders
- Self-injury

Sometimes there are no obvious physical signs of sexual abuse, and a physician must examine the child to confirm the abuse.

Some signs of **neglect**:

- Unsuitable clothing for weather
- Being dirty or unbathed
- Extreme hunger
- Apparent lack of supervision

**Who Can Abuse?:** You can't tell by looking at a person whether they are an abuser – they don't appear different from the rest of the society:

- Abusers come from all classes of society, all professions and all races
- Abuse of children may sometimes be carried by strangers but it is much more common that the abuser is known to the child and is in a position of trust and /or authority
- It is not only adults who abuse children; children may suffer abuse from other children and young people

'Members of staff' should be aware that colleagues might include some adults, including professionals, who:

- Are unable to provide consistent care
- Manipulate themselves into positions of trust where they can exploit children and young people, emotionally and sexually
- By behaving inappropriately towards children and young people can cause them to suffer physical or emotional harm.

It is very important to draw the distinction between sexual abuse and the other ways in which children may suffer harm – the reasons for the sexual abuse of children and young people are very different from the reasons why people physically abuse or neglect them.

**Principles:** The following principles are key for all staff and volunteers:

- The interest of the child is paramount
- In cases of suspected child abuse all staff and volunteers have a responsibility to take action in the ways set out in this procedure.
- Immediate action, to refer or consult, is required where there is suspicion of abuse.
- Investigation is always the responsibility of the Children's Social care Services through the local authority and the police. These agencies have to balance the necessity for action to protect the child with the potential adverse effects of an investigation on the family and/or others.
- Record keeping is essential at each stage and all documents should be kept in line with Create Hope's record keeping policy

### **Code of Conduct:**

#### **Disclosures and Confidentiality :**

If a child discloses an abusive situations through any of the therapeutic work undertaken by Create Hope the member of staff /volunteer should:

- Stay calm and be reassuring. Find a quiet place to talk and write down the exact words that the child uses, and not your interpretation of them.
- Assure the child of your support.
- Confidentiality is crucial to all our relationships- but the welfare of the child is paramount. The law allows you within limits to disclose the information to the appropriate body whether it is the management, social services or the police.
- Confidentiality must not be maintained if the withholding of information will prejudice the welfare of the child.

- The child cannot be promised confidentiality as the Designated Officer may have a duty to report any incidents. Any documents relating to the disclosure need to be kept in a safe, secure place.
- If the police investigates the case, it is important that the therapeutic support of the child is discussed and agreed by the parties involved to ensure any further disclosed information is done through in an appropriate manner, and doesn't impact the legal procedures of the case.

### Reporting Possible Child Abuse:

All 'members of staff' and representatives of Create Hope must:

- Report concerns that a child is a victim of child abuse or sexual exploitation immediately in accordance with their Local Procedures.
- Undertake induction and training on this policy, which is relevant and appropriate to their position, so that they can undertake their responsibilities effectively and with confidence
- Cooperate fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns and allegations
- Respond to a child who may have been abused or exploited in accordance with the Reporting Guidelines and in accordance with the child's best interest and safety
- Identify, minimise and attempt to avoid potential situations of risk for children
- Identify and avoid potential situations which may lead to staff behaviour being misinterpreted
- Ensure, when making images of children e.g. photographs, videos, that they are respectful, that they are adequately clothed, avoid sexually suggestive poses and obtain permission of the parent or carer
- Ensure that any image or recorded case history of a child does not place him/her at risk or render him/her vulnerable to any form of abuse
- Ensure that the Codes of behaviour is complied with if any child is to participate in any activity other than as a beneficiary, e.g. a campaigning event, awards ceremony, panel or any other event or in internet social networking.

Create Hope 'members of staff' and representatives **must never**:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
- Have sexual intercourse, or engage in any sexual activity, with anyone under 18 years of age. Mistaken belief in the age of the child is not a defence
- Develop relationships with children, which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Behave physically in a way that is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home (unless necessary and previously agreed with managers that this is for the safety of the child)
- Sleep in the same bed as a child with whom they are working
- Sleep in the same room as a child with whom they are working

- Do things for children of an intimate, personal nature that they can do for themselves
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse;
- Discriminate against, show unfair differential treatment to, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others
- Act as negotiator in or assist the process of financial settlement between the family of a child victim of sexual abuse or exploitation and the perpetrator
- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others (including in vehicles) or spend time in a child's home unless exceptional circumstances apply and they have the prior approval of their Line Manager.

**All** 'members of staff' and representatives should aim to:

- Plan and organise the work and the workplace so as to minimise risk of abuse, exploitation or harm coming to a child
- Promote a culture of openness in relation to child safeguarding issues, where any issues or concerns can be raised and discussed
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour can be challenged
- Talk to children about their contact with staff or others
- Encourage them to raise any concerns
- Empower child beneficiaries and communicate to them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem
- Communicate to child beneficiaries what standards of professional practice they can expect of Create Hope 'members of staff' and representatives
- Communicate what to do if they feel that Create Hope 'members of staff' and representatives are falling short of these standards
- Pro-actively seek to safeguard children.

**Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers:** All staff and volunteers taking part in the activities organised by Create Hope, are vetted as part of our responsibility to our members and children.

## **Safer workforce: recruitment and selection**

The recruitment and selection process adopted by Create Hope includes the following elements:

- Job descriptions will explicitly reference safeguarding responsibilities and applicants will be provided with information about Create Hopes Safeguarding policy and practices
- Enhanced DBS check for all therapeutic workers and where the role requires this.
- Use of application forms. CVs on their own will not be accepted
- A minimum of two people will check for gaps in employment/education and training history and explore any gaps at interview

- At least two references from previous employers, which specifically covers whether or not there have been any concerns or allegations about the applicant's behaviour towards children; any disciplinary action and confirmation of the applicant's responsibilities. This will be compared with the application and any inconsistencies followed up with the referee
- Applicants attitudes towards children and young people, their motivation for pursuing the role and managing boundaries will be explored at interview

Any inconsistencies or uncertainties will always be followed up and resolved before commencement of duties.

### **Induction and Training for Staff & Volunteers:**

All 'members of staff' :

- must read and sign this policy before working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- working with children will attend a Safeguarding Level 1 course updated every 2 years.
- should read and adhere to the Health and Safety Policy and Procedures and will have these explained to them as part of their induction.

After an induction, all 'members of staff' should be able to recognise all four types of abuse and know the appropriate reporting systems as outlined in this policy.

### **Whistle blowing:**

All 'members of staff' should speak to the CEO if they have any concern about members of staff or volunteers' contact with children and adhere to the Whistleblowing Policy.

In the event that a concern is made which involves the CEO, 'members of staff' should raise their concern to a Sarah Walker member of the Board of Trustees;

Sarah Walker (sassjhardy@icloud.com)

### **Insurance:**

Public Liability insurance will be taken out for all activities.

**Staff Supervision :** All 'members of staff' and representatives working with children and families, whether employed directly or provided from another agency, must receive a minimum of monthly supervision. This will include attitude and suitability for working with children as well as performance, assessment and discussion of individual children's welfare.

## *Procedures*

**The person with overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).**

In the event that the CEO is unavailable, or an allegation is made which involves the CEO, responsibility for implementation of this policy reverts to the Board of Trustees. – First point of contact is Sarah Walker.

The CEO of Create Hope - should be advised of any such concerns even if the worker is of the view that the victim will report the matter.

If the CEO is not available, then Sarah Walker – safeguarding officer for the Board of Trustees should be informed.

**Allegations of abuse of a child against a staff member or volunteer:** The CEO should also be notified of the allegation and will be the first point of contact for the Local Authority Designated Officer appointed by Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board to investigate.

In order to protect them, the staff member will be given alternative duties or suspended for the duration of the investigation.

**General Procedures:** In all cases where a referral (e.g. to social services) is made, the telephone conversation must be followed up with an appropriate confirmatory letter.

**The CEO should be contacted within one working day of the suspicion/disclosure being made.**

If the member of staff is unable to contact the CEO or Chair of Trustees and therefore contacts Social Services first, the member of staff must contact **Sarah Walker**, the Trustee designated with responsibility for Safeguarding and Therapeutic matters, as soon as possible after. A note of the discussion with the CEO must be placed on file along with details of event/s within 24 hours.

The worker or volunteer with the CEO should note the following on a standard form:

- Date and time of what has occurred and the time the disclosure was made
- Names of people who were involved
- What was said or done by whom
- Any action taken by the group
- Any further action e.g. suspension of worker/volunteer
- Names of person reporting and to whom reporting

Only after consultation with the CEO or Sarah Walker (Trustee), should the decision about whom and when to contact parents or carers be taken. The timing of these contacts will also be decided at this point.

Similarly, the decision about who and when to contact other agencies including Local Authority Social Services Department, Police and School should only be taken after consultation with the CEO or Sarah Walker- Trustee. The timing of these contacts will also be decided at this point.



At their initial discussion of the case, the 'member of staff' or representative and the CEO should arrange a specific review date that should take place within three working days of the initial discussion.

### **Acting on concerns regarding adults behaviour:**

If you have any concerns about an adult's behaviour towards children or young people:

- Do not ignore it – Create Hope will take any concerns very seriously
- You must discuss your concerns with the Create Hope CEO (or Trustee Sarah Walker), who will support you in liaising with the statutory agencies should any child protection matter arise
- Do not confront the adult but seek the advice of the Create Hope CEO (or Trustee Sarah Walker). If they are not available seek advice from the Local Authority Social Services Department

### **Summary of Action Required:**

#### **Disclosure of abuse from a child in a therapeutic session in school setting:**

- Reassure the child, and clarify what they are saying
- Explain that you need to share this information with someone else, and why
- Contact the School's designated Child Protection Officer and hand over information that you were told
- Record the information that the child told you
- Follow the School's Child Protection Procedures for dealing with the disclosure
- Inform the CEO of Create Hope about what has happened as soon as possible; in their absence, inform **Sarah Walker**, member of the Board of Trustees.

#### **Disclosure of abuse from a child in a therapeutic session (not within a school):**

- Reassure the child, and clarify what they are saying
- Explain that you need to share this information with someone else, and why
- Inform the CEO of Create Hope about what has happened as soon as possible; in their absence inform **Sarah Walker**, member of the Board of Trustees.
- Record information that child told you.

#### **Concern of safety/information shared by child during therapeutic session in school setting:**

Reassure the child, and clarify what they are saying:

- Explain that you need to share this information with someone else, and why.
- Contact the School's designated Child Protection Officer and hand over information that you were told
- Record information that child told you
- Follow the School's Child Protection Procedures for dealing with concerns
- Inform the CEO of Create Hope about what has happened as soon as possible; in their absence, inform **Sarah Walker**, member of the Board of Trustees.

## **Concern of safety/information shared by child during therapeutic session not in school setting:**

- Reassure the child, and clarify what they are saying
- Explain that you need to share this information with someone else, and why
- Inform the CEO of Create Hope about what has happened as soon as possible; in their

absence, inform **Sarah Walker**, member of the Board of Trustees.

- Record information that child told you.
- The CEO is to make an informed decision regarding handing information over to the appropriate Social Services

## **What happens when a referral is made to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)?**

When a referral is made to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub you can expect that it will be treated seriously, handled sensitively and shared only on a 'need to know' basis entirely to protect the interests of the child/young person. To ensure that young people are safeguarded based on proper evidence, the source of the referral cannot be kept anonymous. *(The Create Hope confidentiality clause will mention the legal limitations of confidentiality and the client is to be reminded of what was discussed at the initial session)*. Verbal and telephone referrals must be confirmed in writing within 48 hours. Ensure that a written response is received through your supervisor.

A record of contact with the MASH MUST be noted on the cause for concern/ Safeguarding task on Jabez This must also be reported to the safeguarding lead for Create Hope. The Safeguarding Lead will send you encrypted email documents to keep you up to date with information.

**If you have not heard back from the Safeguarding Lead please follow up before the next client session takes place.**

## **Maintaining a safe working environment** The following guidelines apply

to Create Hopes paid staff and volunteers:

- Always avoid unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person
- Do not take a child or young person alone in a car, however short the journey. Do not offer to take a child/young person home, to hospital or anywhere else.
- Maintain appropriate relationships with a child or vulnerable adult.
- Do not divulge personal contact details such as an email address or telephone number. • Do not invite a child or young person to stay at your home or offer to drive them home.
- Do not make suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child, even in fun, as this could be misinterpreted

- If a child, young person or vulnerable adult makes any kind of accusation regarding a member of staff or volunteer at Create Hope you should report this immediately to the designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Participate in all annual mandatory safeguarding training which is available to you to support your work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Remember that those who abuse children, young people and vulnerable adults can be of any age (including other children, young people and vulnerable adults), gender, ethnic background or class, and it is important not to allow personal preconceptions about people to prevent appropriate action taking place
- Good practice includes valuing children, young people and vulnerable adults as individuals and the adult modelling of appropriate conduct – which would exclude bullying, aggressive behaviour, racism, sectarianism or sexism.

**Contact details:**

**Catherine Hockley – [catherine@createhope.co.uk](mailto:catherine@createhope.co.uk)**

**Sarah Walker – [sassjhardy@icloud.com](mailto:sassjhardy@icloud.com)**

**Useful telephone numbers:**

Bracknell Forest Duty Team	<b>01344 352020</b>	9am – 5pm Mon to Fri
Social Care Emergencies Duty Service: 01344 351999	<b>01344 351999</b>	
Thames Valley Police:	<b>0845 850 5505</b>	
NSPCC Child Protection Helpline:	<b>0808 800 5000</b>	
Childline	<b>0800 1111</b>	
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	<b>01344 351572</b>	