



Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy	
Latest Review: February 2025	Next Review: February 2026
<p>Compliance: Children Act (1989); Working Together to Safeguarding Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (2015); What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (2015); General Data Protection Regulations (2018); Sexual Offences Act (2003); Children Act (2004); Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their families; Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB) policies and procedures</p>	
<p>Associated Policies: Recruitment and Selection Recruitment of Ex-Offenders GDPR and Data Protection Staff and Volunteer Induction and Supervision Volunteer Policy</p>	
<p><i>The Designated Safeguarding Children and Young People Leads are: Lucy Graver and Claire Hopkins</i></p> <p>The Children Act (2004) places a duty on organisations to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and young people. Whilst staff and volunteers at Assist Trust do not work with children or young people directly, they do work with adults who may come into contact with children and young people - this may be as a parent, relative or as part of a work placement or in many other situations, and work in environments where children and young people may be present. Assist Trust recognises that they have a duty of care towards children and young people under the age of eighteen if ever they are in our charge to protect them from physical, emotional and sexual abuse or harm and ensure their well-being. Assist Trust seeks to comply with Norfolk’s local Safeguarding Children’s Board in promoting good working practices that safeguards children and young people, and promotes their welfare. It is a requirement that any member of Assist Trust staff or any volunteer working on behalf of the Assist Trust has the responsibility to pass on information and concerns</p>	

regarding a child or young person who may have been or is likely to be harmed or abused.

Legal Context

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

Children Act (1989);

Working Together to Safeguarding Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (2015);

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (2015);

General Data Protection Regulations (2018);

Sexual Offences Act (2003);

Children Act (2004);

Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their families;

Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB) policies and procedures

Roles and Responsibilities

Assist Trust will ensure that its staff and volunteers;

- Understand the importance of safeguarding and their role in safeguarding children and young people
- Recognise a situation where a child or young person is potentially in need of safeguarding and know what action to take
- Are aware of the different forms of abuse and neglect
- Know how to report a safeguarding concern in line with this policy

When any adult has concerns about the welfare of any child/young person then he/she is expected to share those concerns with the Safeguarding Children and Young People Officer.

Recruitment and Training

Assist Trust will carefully recruit and select its workforce, whether paid or voluntary, and carry out a DBS check where appropriate for the role - please also see Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedures, and Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy.

A comprehensive induction period will be arranged which includes familiarisation with the organisation's safeguarding policies and procedures. All new staff and volunteers will be expected to read the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and will be given advice and training on how to report a safeguarding incident/concern.

Assist Trust will ensure that members of staff receive regular training on Safeguarding Children and Young People appropriate to their role.

Duty to Refer

The Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB) makes it clear that professionals, employees, managers, helpers, carers and volunteers in all agencies must make a referral to Children's Social Care Services if it is believed or suspected that:

- A child or young person is suffering or is likely to suffer Significant Harm; or
- A child or young person would be likely to benefit from family support services with the agreement of the person who has Parental Responsibility.

When there are concerns about Significant Harm, then the referral must be made immediately. The greater the level of perceived risk, the more urgent the action should be. The suspicion or allegation may be based on information, which comes from different sources. It may come from a member of the public, the child or young person concerned, another child or young person, a family member or professional staff. It may relate to a single incident or an accumulation of lower level concerns.

The information may also relate to harm caused by another child or young person, in which case both children/young people, i.e. the suspected perpetrator and victim, must be referred.

The suspicion or allegation may relate to a parent, professional, volunteer or anyone caring for or working with the child or young person.

What to do in the event of a disclosure

- Never guarantee absolute confidentiality, as child/young person's protection will always have precedence over any other issues.
- Listen to the child/young person, rather than question him or her directly.
- Offer him/her reassurance without making promises, and take what the young person says seriously.
- Allow the young person to speak without interruption.
- Accept what is said – it is not your role to investigate or question.
- Do not overreact.
- Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgement.
- Advise that you will try to offer support, but that you must pass the information on.
- Explain what you have to do and whom you have to tell.
- Use the child/young person's words or explanations – do not translate into your own words, in case you have misconstrued what the child/young person was trying to say.

Reporting Incidents or Concerns

Staff members must report any incidents or concerns relating to a child or young person without delay to an Operations Manager and/or the Safeguarding Children and Young People Designated Officer, who will decide how to proceed.

If a child or young person is in immediate danger, or is suffering from a serious injury, medical attention must be sought immediately by calling 999.

The incident or concern should be recorded on an Incident Form as soon as possible. The report should be factual and not contain your views. The form should be completed in black ink, signed and dated, and given to the Safeguarding Lead/Operations Manager.

Making a Safeguarding Referral

Where there is concern for the welfare or safety of a child or young person, the Safeguarding Lead/Operations Manager should contact the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) on 0344 800 8021.

For any call raising concerns about a child or young person, CADS will ask;

- for all of the details known to you/the organisation about the child/young person,

- their family composition including siblings, and where possible extended family members and anyone important in the child/young person's life,
- the nature of the concern and how immediate it is,
- any and what kind of work/support you have provided to the child/young person or family to date.

They will also need to know where the child/young person is now and whether you have informed parents/carers of your concern.

All actions should be recorded on the Assist Trust Incident Form, including any advice or guidance given by the Consultant Social Worker. All records, information and confidential notes should be kept in separate files in a locked drawer or filing cabinet. Only the designated persons will have access to these files.

Allegations regarding a member of staff or volunteer

Concerns about the behaviour of adult/s in our organisation will be referred without delay to the Safeguarding Children and Young People Officer/Operations Managers who will contact Social Services or the police as appropriate.

Where a member of staff or volunteer has behaved (or is alleged to have behaved) towards children or young people in a way which means they pose a risk of harm to adults with care and support needs, these concerns will need to be reported via a Safeguarding Adults Data Sharing Referral (SADS) Form.

Where a staff member or volunteer's conduct towards an adult may impact on their suitability to work with or continue to work with children and young people, this must be referred to the Local Authority's Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day of the allegation being reported. The LADO will lead the investigation from this point onwards.

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the reporting of unsafe or illegal practices in the workplace. You have a duty to report things that you feel are not right, are illegal or if anyone at work is neglecting their duties. This includes when someone's health and safety is in danger; damage to the environment; a criminal offence; that the company is not obeying the law; or covering up wrongdoing. Please see the Assist Trust Whistleblowing Policy.

Forms of Abuse and Neglect

The abuse or neglect of a child or young person can be caused by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and young people may be abused in a family, in a community or institutional setting, by those known to them or, much more rarely, by a stranger.

Physical Abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or young person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child or young person.

Emotional Abuse is a form of Significant Harm which involves the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or young person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child or young person's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to children or young people that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child or young person 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 or young people.

These may include interactions that are beyond the child or young person's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child or young person participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing children or young people frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children or young people.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child or young person, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse is a form of Significant Harm which 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 or young person is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children or young people in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children or young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child or young person 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 their children.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child or young person's health and development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food and clothing, shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child or young person from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

Indicators of Significant Harm

The following guidance is intended to help all professionals who come into contact with children and young people. It should not be used as a comprehensive guide, nor does the presence of one or more factors prove that a child or young person has been abused, but it may however indicate that further enquiries should be made;

- An unexplained delay in seeking treatment that is obviously needed;
- An unawareness or denial of any injury, pain or loss of function;

- Incompatible explanations offered or several different explanations given for a child or young person's illness or injury;
- A child or young person reacting in a way that is inappropriate to his/her age or development;
- Reluctance to give information or failure to mention previous known injuries;
- Frequent attendances at Accident and Emergency Departments or use of different doctors and Accident and Emergency Departments;
- Frequent presentation of minor injuries (which if ignored could lead to a more serious injury);
- Unrealistic expectations/constant complaints about the child or young person;
- Alcohol misuse or other substance misuse;
- A parents request to remove a child or young person from home or indication of difficulties in coping with the child or young person;
- Domestic violence;
- Parental mental ill health;
- The age of the child or young person and the pressures of caring for a number of children in one household.

Further indicators of each category of abuse can be found in the attached guidance, *'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – advice for practitioners'* (March 2015)

Useful Contact Numbers/Further Information

- Children's Advice and Duty Service – 0344 800 8021 (Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm)/Out of Hours Team – 0344 800 8020
- LADO (Local Area Designated Officer) – 01603 223473
- NSPCC – 0808 800 5000 or text 88858
- Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board www.norfolkscb.org

Data Protection

In the implementation of this policy, the organisation may process personal data and/or special category personal data collected in accordance with its GDPR and data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which this policy is invoked will only inform the organisation for the benefit of implementing this policy. All data is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of this policy. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the organisation's GDPR and data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedure.

Signed and Authorised by:

Name:

Role:

Date:

Name:

Role:

Date: