



## **Make Space for Girls: Safeguarding Policy**

### **Introduction**

Safeguarding is important for Make Space for Girls because it forms a key part of our commitment to promoting the interests of girls and young women. Everyone needs to care about safeguarding and we all play a key role in preventing, detecting, reporting and responding to abuse, neglect or exploitation.

This policy sets out what we should do when abuse or neglect of a child or young person is suspected by anyone who works for or with Make Space for Girls.

A copy of this policy is made available to all trustees and those who work or volunteer for the charity.

The policy will apply to activities delivered by Make Space for Girls alone and may apply when we are working in partnership with other organisations. However when we work in partnership with other organizations it may make sense for their safeguarding policy to be the lead policy: for example if we are working with a school we would expect the school/s safeguarding policy to take precedent over ours and we would report concerns relating to their pupils or staff to their safeguarding lead. Therefore it is important that, at the initial stages of planning to work with a partner we establish whose is the lead policy.

Where we are working on a project which will lead to us being in contact with children, the lead on that project for Make Space for Girls will:

- If we are working with a partner, check at the beginning of each project which safeguarding policy will be the lead safeguarding policy on that project; and how we should feed into the other organisation's safeguarding policy if it is appropriate that their policy is the lead.
- If we are not working with a partner or we intend to use this policy as the route to record any concerns, check how to contact the relevant local social services department child protection team;
- record these details and make sure those involved in the project are aware.

### **In this policy the following key terms are important:**

**Child:** means any person under the age of 18;

**Child Protection:** means protecting individual children identified as either suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect or other identified risk factors such as parental violence or substance misuse.

**Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people:** is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up and living in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Through the provision of safe and effective care, enable children to have optimum life chances

### **Potential abuse: categories and signs of potential abuse.**

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

It is important that everyone who works for or with Make Space for Girls is alert to the types of maltreatment that can occur and the signs to look out for.

### **Types of Abuse**

All maltreatment and abuse has unique features and it is impossible to draw up hard and fast categorizations. But the following 4 types are frequently referred to and are useful in terms of thinking about how abuse and neglect can manifest.

#### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may involve any form of physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child. Physical abuse can also be caused by administering or allowing access to drugs or alcohol.

#### **Emotional Abuse**

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 insofar as they meet the needs of another person. 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 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**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing any child to take part in any form of sexual activity, whether or not s/he is aware of what is happening; or behaving, or inducing a child to behave, in sexually inappropriate ways - including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking and touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the child either cannot consent (legally) or if they can consent has not consented or was pressured into consenting. This includes inappropriate sexual relationships with people in positions of power or influence. Sexual

abuse does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual.

### ***Neglect***

Neglect involves 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 and development – these include ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, and the withholding of the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating, access to family and friends. Neglect can also include *Organisational abuse* where there can be neglect and poor care practice within an institution or special care setting such as a hospital or care home, or where care is provided within their own home.

### **Potential Signs of Abuse**

#### ***Physical***

- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse\*

#### ***Sexual***

- Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia\*

#### ***Emotional***

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.
- Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

#### ***Neglect***

- Under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc

### **What to do if you are concerned: our procedures**

You may have concerns about a child because of something you have seen or heard, or a child or young person may choose to disclose something to you.

If you have concerns (whether because of something you have seen or heard or because a child has chosen to disclose to you) you must use the Disclosure Form to record these concerns.

If a child discloses information to you, it is very important you follow these steps:

- Do not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to share this information and we may need to refer to the local Children's Social Care Services.
- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is said.
- Reassure the child, but only as far as is honest, don't make promises you may not be able to keep eg: *'Everything will be alright now'*, *'You'll never have to see that person again'*.
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the child refers to it. For example, you could say, *'You're not to blame'*.
- Do not interrogate the child; it is not your responsibility to investigate.
- Do not ask leading questions (eg: *Did he touch your private parts?*),
- Do ask open questions such as *'Anything else to tell me?'*
- Do not ask the child to repeat the information for another member of staff.
- Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.
- Take notes at the time and in any event write up your conversation as soon as possible afterwards using the Disclosure Form that is part of this policy
- Use the Disclosure Form to record any non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child (do not paraphrase).
- When completing the Disclosure Form record statements and observable things rather than interpretations or assumptions.

**Whatever the nature of your concerns, it is essential that you discuss them immediately with one of the trustees so that we can make any appropriate referral to the Local Authority safeguarding team.**

**It is not your or our job to investigate; it is not your or our job to make judgements about what has happened; it is your and our job to ensure that concerns are raised with appropriate professionals within the safeguarding team local to the child or young person involved.**

### **Consents before sharing information with local social services child protection team**

As a general rule, children should be given the opportunity to decide whether they agree to their personal information being shared as part of a referral. If a child doesn't have the capacity to make their own decisions, we need to carefully consider asking their parent or carer ( but must not do so if this would put the child at risk of harm).

However if consent is refused or we are unable to seek consent, we can still share information with relevant professionals if this is in the public interest. This includes protecting children from significant harm and promoting the welfare of children.

When deciding whether to share information without consent, we will consider each case individually. We will decide if the need to share information is in the public interest and whether it outweighs the need to maintain confidentiality. We will consider all the implications of sharing the information, for example if we would be sharing sensitive details about a person's life.

If we are unclear about the correct approach in to take in relation to consent, we will contact the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000

### **What information will we need when making a referral to the relevant social services?**

We will normally be expected to provide as much information as we can, although frequently we will not have details such as the child's GP. The fact that we do not have all this information does not prevent us from making the report.

### **Allegations Involving a Members of Staff / Volunteer**

We are committed to having effective recruitment and human resources procedures. However, there may still be occasions when there is an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer.

All allegations of abuse of children by those who work with children or care for them must be taken seriously.

All reports of allegations must be submitted within one working day to the trustees.

The following procedure should be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way which 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 which indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children.

The allegations may relate to the persons behaviour at work, at home or in another setting.

The trustees will discuss the matter to determine what steps should be taken and where necessary obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The discussion should also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded, whether a referral to the relevant social services team is required and/or whether disciplinary action is appropriate.

Some allegations will be so serious as to require immediate referral to the relevant social services team and/or the Police, but common sense and judgement must be applied in reaching a decision about what action to take.

If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the trustees will immediately refer the matter to the relevant social services team and seek guidance.

Some allegations may be less serious and at first sight might not seem to warrant consideration of a police investigation or enquiries by the local social services team. However, it is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are followed up and examined objectively.

Where such allegations are made, consideration must be given to the following three strands:

- 1: The police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
- 2: Enquiries and assessment by Children's Social Care Services as to whether the child is in need of protection or in need of services;
- 3: Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

## **Record Keeping**

The Disclosure Form (attached) will be completed by the staff/volunteer who receives the disclosure. The information recorded should;

- a. Wherever possible include the actual words said by the child rather than an interpretation of what was said.
- b. Specific facts relating to the named people dates, places etc. should be recorded accurately along with any details of the injuries or consequences i.e. where they are and what they looked like.

Completed Disclosure forms will be kept centrally by the trustees, securely and away, from other personal files along with our Safeguarding Register which will record concerns raised and steps taken.

**To contact the trustees:** please call either Imogen Clark on 07798 503543 or Susannah Walker on 0796 8774736

## **Other National Advice Providers**

- NSPCC Child Protection Helpline - 0808 800 5000
- ChildLine - 0800 1111
- NSPCC 24/7 Helpline - 0808 800 500 or [help@nspcc.org](mailto:help@nspcc.org)

## **If you think a crime has taken place**

- In an emergency call 999
- For non-emergency crimes call 101

## **VERSION CONTROL**

Date prepared	08/02/2022
Date adopted by board	21/04/2022
Date for next review	April 2023

### Safeguarding Register

Date	Disclosure made	Action taken	Learnings

### Disclosure Form

#### Details of person reporting concern/disclosure

First name:		Surname:	
Role:	Staff Volunteer	Date/Time of this report:	Date: Time:

#### Details of person at risk

First name:		Surname:	
Phone number:		Address:	

#### Details of Concern/Disclosure

Date:		Time:	
Location:			
What is are the concern/disclosure? Please tick as many as appear relevant.			
Physical	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neglect	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)			
Details of	It is important that this is recorded clearly and accurately; the facts of what was		

<p>concern OR disclosure</p>	<p>seen/heard or as close the words used during disclosure</p>
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<p>Rec'd by:</p>	
<p>ACTIONS:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emergency services called: Y/N</li> <li>2. External referral made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Police</li> <li>Social Care</li> <li>Original referral agency</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Safeguarding Incident Register updated:</li> </ol>