



# Safeguarding children and young people policy

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## **Part 1 – Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy**

### ***Introduction***

OTR (OTR) provides emotional wellbeing and mental health support for young people aged 8-25 in Hampshire. As such it has contact with many different children, young people and adults in the course of carrying out its work.

OTR takes seriously its safeguarding responsibilities toward its service users, staff and volunteers and anyone who may come into contact with OTR through its activities. This Policy is part of the OTR Safeguarding Policy Framework and deals specifically with how we safeguard children and young people. How we safeguard adults is addressed in our Safeguarding Adults Policy.

OTR is committed to Safeguarding Children and Young People in line with national legislation and relevant national and local guidelines.

### ***Policy Statement***

OTR believes everyone has the right to live free from abuse or neglect regardless of age, ability or disability, sex, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status. We believe that the welfare of the child and young person is paramount and that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

OTR is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment and an open, listening culture where people feel able to share concerns without fear of retribution.

OTR recognises that many factors including health, disability, language, culture and circumstances, power dynamics and imbalance of power can introduce increased risk of abuse and barriers to seeking help. OTR are guided by safeguarding best practice in order to recognise those factors and create an open safeguarding culture, where children and young people, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders know they can raise their concerns and that they will be taken seriously.

OTR conducts Equality Impact Assessments to enable us to consider the likely impact of our work regarding different groups, ensure fairness and remove barriers. OTR are particularly mindful of the needs of certain groups or circumstances which may place a child or young person at greater risk or require early intervention or involvement of other agencies and professionals. We follow statutory and best practice guidance. Further information is also set out in the Responding to and Reporting Safeguarding Concerns Procedures.

OTR policy and procedures are in line with safeguarding children legislation.

### ***Purpose***

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of OTR to safeguarding children and young people and to ensure that everyone involved in OTR is aware of:

- The legislation, policy, and procedures for safeguarding children and young people.
- Their role and responsibility for safeguarding children and young people.

- What to do or who to speak to if they have a concern relating to the welfare of a child or young person.

## **Scope**

This safeguarding children and young people policy and associated procedures apply to all individuals involved in OTR including trustees, staff, volunteers, and other workers and to all concerns about the safety of children and young people whilst taking part in our organisation, its activities and in the wider community.

We expect all organisations we may partner with to adopt and demonstrate their commitment to the principles and practice as set out in this Safeguarding Children and Young people Policy and associated procedures.

This Policy will take precedence over all other policies, such as complaints.

## **Commitments**

To implement this policy OTR will ensure that:

- Everyone involved with OTR is aware of OTR safeguarding procedures and knows what to do and who to contact if they have a concern relating to a child or young person.
- Any concern that a child or young person is not safe is taken seriously, responded to promptly, and followed up in line with OTR Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures.
- The welfare of the child or young person will be paramount and the child or young person, their parents/carers will be actively supported to communicate their views and the outcomes they want to achieve. Any decisions will take these views into account wherever possible.
- Any actions taken will respect the rights and dignity of all those involved and be proportionate to the risk of harm.
- Confidential, detailed, and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored in line with our policies and procedures
- OTR acts in accordance with best practice advice, for example, from NSPCC
- OTR will cooperate with the relevant agencies such as Local Authority Children's Social care
- All trustees, staff, volunteers, and other workers understand their role and responsibility for safeguarding children and young people and have completed and are up to date with safeguarding training and learning opportunities appropriate for their role.
- OTR uses safe recruitment practices and continually assesses the suitability of volunteers and staff to prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals in this organisation.
- OTR shares information about anyone found to be a risk to children or young people with the appropriate bodies. For example: Disclosure and Barring Service, Services, Police, Local Authority/Social Services.
- When planning activities and events OTR includes an assessment of, and risk to, the safety of all children and young people from abuse and neglect and designates a person who will be in attendance as a safeguarding lead for that event.

- Actions taken under this policy are reviewed by the Board and senior management team on an annual basis.
- This policy, related policies (see below) and the Safeguarding Procedures are reviewed no less than on a two yearly basis and whenever there are changes in relevant legislation and/or government guidance as required by the Local Safeguarding Partnership, or as a result of any other significant change or event.

### ***Multi-Agency and partnership working***

The lead role for adult safeguarding sits with the Local Authority Children's Social Care. However, it is recognised that safeguarding can involve a wide range of organisations.

OTR may need to cooperate with the Local Authority and the Police including to:

- Provide more information about the concern you have raised.
- Provide a safe venue for the child or young person, their parent/carers to meet with other professionals e.g. Police/Social Workers/Advocates.
- Attend strategy meetings and child protection conferences.
- Coordinate internal investigations (e.g. complaints, disciplinary) with investigations by the police or other agencies.
- Share information about the outcomes of internal investigations.
- Provide a safe environment for the child or young person to continue their involvement with OTR, if they wish

As part of multi-agency and partnership working, OTR recognises its duty to co-operate and contribute to necessary processes such as S11 Audits, Serious Case Reviews, Strategy Meetings or Domestic Homicide review. We will take this obligation seriously and provide the support and resources necessary to enable our staff to fully participate in the process.

### ***Information Sharing and Confidentiality***

All staff and volunteers must handle information in line with the OTR Data Protection Policy, ensuring that confidential information is secure.

However, multi agency working and information sharing is key to effective safeguarding. Whilst working in line with data protection at all times, confidentiality and data protection will never be a barrier to sharing information in order to meet our safeguarding duties. Under no circumstances will any staff or volunteer of OTR keep confidential any information that raises concerns about the safety and welfare of a child or young person.

### ***Implementation***

OTR is committed to developing and maintaining its capability to implement this policy and procedures. In order to do so the following will be in place:

- A clear line of accountability within the organisation for the safety and welfare of children and young people
- Access to relevant legal and professional advice.

- Regular management reports to the Board detailing how risks to child and young person safeguarding are being addressed and how any reports have been addressed.
- Safeguarding procedures that deal effectively with any concerns of abuse or neglect, including those caused through poor practice.
- A Safeguarding Lead and Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- A delegated Safeguarding Lead/DSO for events and trips.
- A process for forming a Case Management Group on a case by case basis within clear terms of reference.
- Arrangements to work effectively with other relevant organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults, including arrangements for sharing information.
- Codes of conduct for Board members, Staff, and Volunteers that specify zero tolerance of abuse in any form.
- Risk assessments that support safe working with and safeguarding of children and young people
- Training and other CPD opportunities for staff and volunteers to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities
- Policies and procedures that address the following areas and which are consistent with this Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy including:

<a href="#">Safeguarding Adults Policy</a>	<a href="#">Safer Recruitment Policy</a>
<a href="#">Safeguarding Procedures: Responding to and Reporting Concerns</a>	<a href="#">Managing Allegations Policy</a>
<a href="#">Unfair Treatment Policy and Procedures</a>	<a href="#">Whistleblowing Policy and Procedures</a>
<a href="#">Social Media Policy and Guidelines</a>	<a href="#">IT Policy</a>
<a href="#">Equality and Diversity Policy</a>	<a href="#">Data Protection Policy</a>
<a href="#">Risk Assessment Guidance</a>	<a href="#">Confidentiality Policy</a>
<a href="#">Professional Boundaries and Conduct Policy</a>	<a href="#">Management Supervision Policy and Agreement for Non-Clinical Staff</a>
<a href="#">Disciplinary Policy and Procedure</a>	<a href="#">Staff Training and Development Policy</a>
<a href="#">Complaints Policy</a>	<a href="#">Grievance Policy and Procedure</a>
<a href="#">Counsellor's Guide</a>	

## **Responsibilities**

### *Trustees*

- To ratify policy
- To have an awareness of the issues relating to clients and abuse
- To read and understand Charity Commission Guidance 'Safeguarding and Protecting People for Charities and Trustees 2017'

### *Chief Executive*

- At the discretion of the Chief Executive, a Senior Manager may be made responsible for carrying out a staff disciplinary investigation into abuse.

### *Safeguarding Lead and Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)*

- To create and review policy
- To authorise variations in policy in local circumstances

- To authorise and monitor any actions resulting from an investigation
- To decide upon what information should be shared with individuals and agencies during the course of and following an investigation into abuse
- To deploy staff in a way that deters collusive relationships and opens up opportunities for disclosure
- To enforce the policy and procedures
- To report any alerted allegation or suspicion of abuse to the registering authority
- To carry out an initial assessment of any allegation or suspicion of abuse
- To report any allegation or suspicion of abuse to the Police where appropriate, Social Services and service user's family or 'significant other'
- To know the procedures for reporting and investigating allegations or suspicions of abuse
- To identify any potential conflict that exists between OTR and the local authority procedures
- To assess the 'safety' of services by observing and listening to clients and looking for positive and negative indicators of performance as part of their visits to services
- To monitor and support embedding of best practice including making safeguarding personal, mental capacity and safeguarding principles
- To produce a written report for the Case Management Group and Trustees following an investigation together with any recommendations for action
- To act as Safeguarding leads for specific areas:

Child Sexual Exploitation including Missing, Exploited and Trafficked  
Looked After Children  
Prevent

#### *Local Managers/Supervisors*

- To implement the policy and guidelines within their service
- To set standards and practice which promote a 'safe service' free from abuse
- To ensure there are written aims and objectives for the service
- To follow all OTR procedures for reporting and responding to concerns and allegations within the timescales specified
- To be aware of the OTR procedures for reporting and investigating an allegation or suspicion of abuse
- To include safeguarding reflective practice in 1-2-1s and other staff and volunteer support activities
- To ensure staff and volunteers undertake required Safeguarding CPD and identify CPD needs

#### *All employees and volunteers*

- To be aware of abuse as an issue and keep their own safeguarding knowledge up to date through training and other CPD
- To promote the welfare and safeguarding of children and young people at all times. This includes securing a client's immediate safety when necessary and ensuring immediate medical attention is received if required.
- To ensure their duty to alert overrides any desire to keep a confidence
- To make clear and detailed written records when abuse is disclosed, witnessed, or alleged

## **Training and Supervision**

All staff and volunteers of OTR will complete training and support relevant to their role. The relevant level of safeguarding training must be completed within the probation period and renewed at least every 3 years, or sooner where need is identified by OTR.

Staff and volunteers who deliver direct work with clients or oversee safeguarding such as DSO's and SL's, will receive regular supervision (minimum 6 weekly) with a suitably competent manager. Supervision will include safeguarding and safe practice as a standard agenda item in order to ensure issues or concerns are identified as soon as possible, actioned and monitored.

Regular clinical supervision is provided for therapists.

The DSO and SL will meet every 6 weeks for group supervision and case management. Facilitation will include focus on developing skills such as reflective practice and critical thinking to enhance safeguarding practice.



## Part 2 – Background Information - Safeguarding Children and Young People

### Definitions

<b>Child</b>	Anyone under the age of 18 years
<b>Child in Need</b>	A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. A referral for Child in Need is made under S:17 of the Children Act 1989 and with consent of the parent/carer (and child if over 16)
<b>Child Protection</b>	Child protection is the term used to describe the actions of certain organisations such as Children's Services, the police and Health organisations, in their efforts to make sure children are safe from abuse and neglect.
<b>Significant harm</b>	The impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social, or behavioural development (including that suffered from seeing or hearing another person suffer ill treatment)
<b>Abuse</b>	Child abuse is when a child or young person is intentionally harmed by an adult or another child or young person – it can be over a period of time but can also be a one-off action. It can be physical, sexual or emotional and it can happen in person or online. It can also be a lack of love, care and attention – this is neglect. (NSPCC)
<b>Case Management Group</b>	A group created by an organisation to ensure the organisation carries out its role/s in individual cases of abuse or neglect AND to maintain an overview of the implementation of the organisation's safeguarding functions.
<b>Looked After Child</b>	A child or young person who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours. Looked after children are also often referred to as children in care, a term which many children and young people prefer.
<b>Harm</b>	Damage done to a person's well-being.
<b>MASH</b>	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs are used as a one point of contact/safeguarding referrals in some areas. Where they exist a referral to MASH benefits from the information held by and the expertise of various agencies e.g. Local Authority, Police and Health.
<b>Safeguarding</b>	The action that is taken to promote the welfare of children, young people, and at risk adults to protect them from harm. Safeguarding children is defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>protecting children from abuse and maltreatment</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• preventing harm to children's health or development</li> <li>• ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care</li> <li>• taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes</li> </ul>
<b>Safeguarding Concern</b>	A child or young person is being abused or is at risk of abuse. This concern may arise through what is observed, heard or told (a disclosure).
<b>Children's Social Care</b>	Local authority provision dedicated to the safeguarding of children and young people including child protection procedures
<b>Young Person</b>	Term used to identify older children, usually teenagers up to the age of 18. Often used by organisations and agencies working with this age group and generally preferred by the young people too.

Further information, including thresholds for making a referral can be found on the [Hampshire Safeguarding Children](#) webpages.

### Key Points

- Every local authority should take reasonable steps, through the provision of services, to prevent children and young people within their area suffering ill-treatment or neglect.
- A local authority has a duty to make enquiries where they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child or young person living or found in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. These enquiries should help them decide whether to take any action to safeguard or promote the child or young person's welfare.
- Local authorities have a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people within their area who are in need and so far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children or young people by their families, by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children / young people's needs.
- The safeguarding legislation applies to all forms of abuse
- Legislation and statutory guidance provides a framework for good practice in safeguarding children and young people
- The law provides a framework for organisations to share concerns they have about children or young people's welfare with the local authority.
- The law provides a framework for all organisations to share information and cooperate to protect adults at risk.

### Safeguarding Children Legislation

This Policy and provisions are based on the relevant legislation and government guidance including those listed in this policy

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Children Acts (1989 and 2004)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulations 2018
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Children and Social Work Act 2017

Other relevant legislation, statutory guidance or policies to child and young person safeguarding includes:

- Promoting the Health and Wellbeing of Looked After Children (2015)
- Multi-Agency Policy, Guidance and Toolkit (Hampshire & Isle of Wight, Portsmouth & Southampton Safeguarding Boards) May 2015
- [General Medical Council 2009](#) & [Nursing & Midwifery Council](#) Guidelines on Confidentiality
- [NHS England Prevent Training and Competencies Framework \(2015\)](#)
- [Safeguarding Policy NHS England](#)
- Safeguarding Policy NHS England (2015)
- NICE Guidance Looked After Children (2013)

Many other pieces of legislation also affect child and young person safeguarding. These include legislation about different forms of abuse and those that govern information sharing. For example, legislation dealing with:

Murder/attempted murder	Theft and Fraud
Physical Assault	Modern slavery and Human exploitation
Sexual Offences	Hate crime
Domestic Abuse/Coercive control	Harassment
Forced Marriage	Listing and Barring of those unsuitable to work with children and young people
Female Genital Mutilation	

### ***Abuse and Neglect***

Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by another person or persons. It can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. Any or all of the following types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence, omission, or ignorance.

There are different types and patterns of abuse and neglect and different circumstances in which they may take place. Children and young people can be abused by anyone but it is often someone that is known to them or their family and have a position or relationship of trust and/or power.

There are 4 categories used in child protection

**Physical:** 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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child or young person

**Sexual:** 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. It includes non-contact activities eg looking at or involved in production of child sexual abuse or pornographic images.

Sexual abuse includes sexual harassment and violence from peers. Sexting (the sharing of nude or semi-nude images) of children or young people is a criminal offence.

**Emotional (psychological):** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or young person such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child or young person's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child or young person, though it may occur alone

**Neglect:** 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 or development. Can occur during pregnancy

There are different ways and contexts in which abuse and harm can occur. Be aware that children and young people can be adversely affected, harmed and abused by other's behaviour both inside and outside the family/home context. The information below is not an exhaustive list and you should not limit your actions to safeguard a child or young person. Where you have concerns, you must discuss with the SL or DSO.

You should always be alert to forms of abuse or harm that the parent or carer may be experiencing or exhibiting e.g. self harm or neglect, domestic/relationship abuse, substance misuse and this has an impact on the child or young person and increases risk.

Other examples of abuse and harm include:

- exploitation by gangs or organised crime groups
- trafficking and modern slavery
- domestic abuse
- sexual exploitation
- abuse linked to faith or belief
- bullying
- peer on peer abuse including harmful sexual behaviours
- radicalisation
- female genital mutilation
- discriminatory abuse or hate crime
- forced marriage
- domestic violence
- self harm or neglect

NSPCC provides a comprehensive list of the types of abuse along with specific signs and indicators. All OTR staff and volunteers should ensure they have read and are familiar with these as part of their safeguarding responsibilities and in keeping with OTR's commitment to continuous professional development.

[View NSPCC Types of Abuse and How to Prevent Resource](#)

### ***Signs and Indicators of Abuse and Neglect***

A child or young person may confide to a member of staff, volunteer, or client that they are experiencing abuse inside or outside of our organisation, this is called a disclosure.

Similarly, others may suspect that this is the case.

There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected. There may be other explanations, but they should not be ignored. Below are some of the signs and symptoms to look out for however this list is not exhaustive:

- Unexplained bruises or injuries – or lack of medical attention when an injury is present.
- Going missing from home
- Not attending / no longer enjoying attending or responding to reminders to attend
- Losing or gaining weight / an unkempt appearance, a deterioration in hygiene.
- A change in the behaviour or confidence of a person. For example, looking quiet and withdrawn when a friend or family member comes to collect them in contrast to other people whom they greet with a smile.
- Self-harm.
- A fear of a particular group of people or individual.
- A parent/carer always speaks for the person and doesn't allow them to make their own choices
- They may tell you / another person they are being abused – i.e. a disclosure

In addition, Working Together to Safeguard Children states that practitioners should, in particular, be alert to the potential need for early help for a child or young person who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home<sup>7</sup>
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child or young person, such as drug and
- alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- has returned home to their family from care
- is a privately fostered child or young person
- has a parent/carer in custody

### **Early Help**

Early help, also known as early intervention, is support given to a family when a problem first emerges. It can be provided at any stage in a child or young person's life.

Early help services can be delivered to parents, children/young people, or whole families, but their main focus is to improve outcomes for children and young people. For example, services may help parents who are living in challenging circumstances provide a safe and loving environment for their child. Or, if a child or young person is displaying risk-taking behaviour, early help practitioners might work with the child or young person and their parents to find out the reasons for the child/young person's behaviour and put strategies in place to help keep them safe.

Providing timely support is vital. Addressing a child or young person or family's needs early on can reduce risk factors and increase protective factors in a child or young person's life (Early Intervention Foundation (EIF), 2021).

Protective factors can reduce risk to a child or young person's wellbeing. They include:

- developing strong social and emotional skills
- having a strong social support network for the family – including support for good parental mental health
- income support, benefits and advice
- good community services and facilities

(EIF, 2021; Cleaver, Unell and Aldgate, 2011).

It is more effective to provide early help when problems first arise than to intervene later (DfE, 2018; EIF, 2021).

Early intervention can also prevent further problems from developing – for example, as part of a support plan for a child or young person and their family when a child or young person returns home from care (DfE, 2018).

### *Types of early help*

Early help can take many forms, such as:

- home visiting programmes
- school-based programmes
- mentoring schemes

Early help services should be part of a continuum of support which enables practitioners to respond to the different levels of need children, young people, and families may experience (DfE, 2018).

It's important that early help services are holistic, looking at the wider needs of the family and how to provide appropriate support.

### *Why early help is important*

Early help can offer children and young people the support needed to reach their full potential (EIF, 2021). It can improve the quality of home and family life, enable them to perform better at school and support their mental health (EIF, 2021).

Research suggests that early help can:

- protect children and young people from harm
- reduce the need for a referral to child protection services
- improve children and young people's long-term outcomes

(Haynes et al, 2015).

Early help can also support a child or young person to develop strengths and skills that can prepare them for adult life (EIF, 2021).