

Safeguarding Procedures and Child Protection Policy

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We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children.

Aim

The purpose of New Routes' safeguarding policy is to ensure every child at our organisation is safe and protected from harm.

This means we will always work to:

- protect children from maltreatment
- prevent impairment of children's health or development
- ensure that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- take action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

This policy will give clear direction to staff, volunteers, visitors and parents about the expected behaviour and our legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children at our organisation.

Introduction

Our organisation fully recognises the contribution it can make to protecting children from harm and supporting and promoting the welfare of all children. The elements of our policy are prevention, protection and support.

Our policy applies to all children, volunteers, visitors and staff.

A child is someone under the age of 18 years old.

Definitions (for the purposes of this policy)

- **Sex** refers to a person's biological sex, as recognised in the Equality Act 2010 and the Supreme Court Judgement 2025.
- **Gender Identity** is a person's internal sense of their gender, which may or may not align with their biological sex.
- **Transgender Person** is someone whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC)** is a legal document that allows someone to be legally recognised in their acquired gender under the Gender Recognition Act 2004 (this is only applicable to adults, over 18 years of age).

Legal Compliance

This policy is compliant with the Children Act 1989 and 2004, the Equality Act 2010, the Gender Recognition Act 2004, and the Supreme Court Judgement 2025, and relevant case law including *For Women Scotland v The Scottish Ministers* (UK Supreme Court, 2025).

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- We recognise that under the Equality Act 2010 and the Supreme Court Judgement 2025, the protected characteristic of “sex” refers to **biological sex**. Where the charity provides or supports **single-sex spaces or services**, this will be applied in line with the law and will consider both safeguarding requirements and inclusion.

Our Ethos

Our organisation will establish and maintain an ethos where our children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, are listened to and are safe. Children will be able to talk freely to any member of staff, volunteer or regular visitor to our organisation if they are worried or concerned about something.

All staff, volunteers and regular visitors will, either through training or induction, know how to recognise a disclosure from a child and will know how to manage this. We will not make promises to any child and we will not keep secrets. Every child will know what the adult will do with whatever they have been told.

We will provide activities and opportunities that will equip our children with the skills they need to stay safe.

At all times we will work in partnership and try to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers and colleagues from other agencies and organisations.

General Procedures

When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join our organisation they will be informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place. They will be given a copy of our organisation’s safeguarding policy and told who our Designated Safeguarding Lead is. They will also be shown the recording format, given information on how to complete it and who to pass it to.

Every new member of staff or volunteer will have an induction period of 3 months that will include essential safeguarding information. This programme will include safeguarding training through the Safer Programme relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a child, how to record and issues of confidentiality. The induction will also remind staff and volunteers of their responsibility to safeguard all children and the remit of the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

All staff and volunteers will be asked to read this policy yearly after it has been reviewed and updated if necessary. They will sign to say they have read and understood the policy.

We will display the reporting and referral flowchart when our organisation is operating.

All regular visitors and volunteers to our organisation will be told where our policy is kept, they will be given a set of safeguarding procedures, they will be told who our Designated Safeguarding Lead and alternate staff members are and what the recording and reporting system is.

All parents and carers will be asked to sign a distribution list confirming they have seen and read our safeguarding policy. Parents and carers will be informed of our legal duty to assist our colleagues in

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other agencies with child protection enquiries and what happens should we have cause to make a referral to Children's Services.

Parents will sign a consent form at the start of their child's involvement with the organisation, which gives permission for the child to attend New Routes activities and includes any vital health or otherwise notable information. Permission is also requested for data storage. It also requests permission for photographs to be taken for promotional purposes only. This will also include a statement making parents/carers aware by signing they consent to us sharing information with the relevant authorities, such as schools and early help organisations if we have concerns about the welfare of their child/children, but that we do not have to seek consent if there are serious concerns about harm or likely harm to their child/children. In the event of serious concerns we would notify Children's Services.

Responding to an Allegation

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The nominated member of staff shall telephone and report the matter to the appropriate local adult social services duty social worker. A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report must be confirmed in writing to the relevant local authority adult social services department within 24 hours.

In the event of an incident or disclosure:

DO

- Make sure the individual is safe
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- Listen carefully and non-judgmentally
- Offer support and reassurance
- Ascertain and establish the basic facts
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them
- Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Follow correct procedure
- Explain areas of confidentiality; immediately speak to your manager for
- Support and guidance
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation
- Remember the need for ongoing support
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead

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DON'T

- Promise Confidentiality
- Confront the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion
- Be dismissive of the concern
- Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation
- Ask leading questions
- Assume Information
- Make promises
- Ignore the allegation
- Elaborate in your notes
- Panic

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. This is a task for the professional adult protection agencies, following a referral from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Safeguarding Training

Safeguarding training includes awareness of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and the Supreme Court Judgement 2025, including sex and gender reassignment, and the implications of single-sex service provision under current UK case law.

Every member of staff and volunteer working with children and/or young people, will undertake appropriate safeguarding training through the NSCB Safer Programme every three years.

We actively encourage all of our staff to keep up to date with the most recent local and national safeguarding advice and guidance. This can be accessed via www.norfolkscb.org

The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be used as a first point of contact for concerns and queries regarding any safeguarding concern in our organisation.

Safer Staff and Volunteers

All adults who come into contact with our children have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. There is a legal duty placed upon us to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of our children are competent, confident and safe to do so.

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We ensure we adhere to the principles of safer recruitment as per our policy and also the guidance from Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board.

We ensure that we:

- Carefully consider the job description and person specification
- Circulate all vacancies widely
- Prepare an information pack
- Ask for a written application form
- Define our selection criteria
- Ask for a written declaration with regards to criminal convictions, spent or otherwise
- Ask for identification
- Ask for originals of any qualifications
- Conduct interviews with at least two people present
- Ask for at least two references, including the last employer
- Gain enhanced DBS checks where current Government guidance requires us to
- Organise a comprehensive induction period which includes familiarisation with our safeguarding policies, procedures and safeguarding training through the Safer Programme.

Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the wellbeing and very best outcomes for our children. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.

Allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children.

We will take all possible steps to safeguard our children and to ensure that the adults in our organisation are safe to work with our children. We will always ensure that the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board's procedures are followed.

All adults who come into contact with children will be made aware of the steps that will be taken if an allegation is made. We will seek appropriate advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours of a concern or allegation being made. The LADO can be contacted via the referral/consultation forms under 'how to make a referral' at www.norfolkscb.org or a message left on **01603 223473**.

Staff will not investigate these matters. We will seek and work with the advice that is provided. Should an allegation be made against the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy, this will be reported by the staff member or volunteer raising the concern directly to the LADO.

There are sensible steps that every adult should take in their daily professional conduct with children. This can be found in the NSCB **Safer Programme Safer Working Practice** (this guidance is on the NSCB

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website and also included in our procedures).

Records and Confidentiality

If we are concerned about the welfare or safety of any child in our organisation we will record our concerns immediately on the agreed report form and give this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Any information recorded will be kept in a separate named file, in a secure cabinet and not with the child's file. These files will be the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and information will only be shared within the organisation on a need to know basis for the protection of the child.

Any safeguarding information will be kept in the file and will be added to. Copies of referrals will be stored in the file.

All information is confidential, however if there is a safeguarding or child protection concern about a child, then information can be shared with other agencies, namely the Police or Children's Services.

Reports of a concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be made in writing and signed and dated by the person with the concern.

Roles and Responsibilities

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead will liaise with Children's Services and other agencies where necessary, and make referrals to Children's Services using the procedure below.

Any concern for a child's safety or welfare will be recorded in writing and given to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will be responsible for ensuring that all staff members and volunteers are aware of our policy and the procedure they need to follow.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that all staff, volunteers and regular/repeat visitors have received appropriate child protection information during induction and have been trained by the Safer Programme.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that our safeguarding policy is in place and is reviewed annually. The content of our policy has been written following consultation with the Safer Programme.

At all times the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that safer recruitment practices are followed.

Our organisation undertakes to remedy without delay any weakness in regard to our safeguarding arrangements that are brought to their attention.

Single Sex Inclusion and Provision

Where services or activities are delivered as **women-only or single-sex spaces**, these will be delivered in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the Supreme Court Judgement 2025 and case law which permits

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the exclusion of individuals of the opposite biological sex if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim—such as maintaining participant safety, dignity, or trauma-informed care.

Where exclusion is deemed appropriate (e.g. in gender-specific support groups), it will be risk-assessed and alternative support will be offered to ensure equity of access without unlawful discrimination.

Procedures for Handling Disclosures

A child may decide to disclose information that may indicate they are suffering from abuse or neglect. A child chooses to speak to an adult because they feel that they will listen and that they can trust them. The adult needs to listen to what the child has to say, and be very careful not to ‘lead’ the child or influence in any way what they say.

It is important that the adult remembers to:

- Stay calm
- Listen and be supportive
- Not ask any leading questions, interrogate the child, or put ideas in the child’s head, or jump to conclusions
- Not stop or interrupt a child who is recalling significant events
- Never promise the child confidentiality – it must be explained that information will need to be passed on to help keep them safe
- Avoid criticising the alleged perpetrator
- Tell the child what must be done next (the safeguarding process must be followed)
- Record what was said immediately as close to what was said as possible. Also record what was happening immediately before the child disclosed. Be sure to sign and date the record in ink.
- Contact the designated person immediately
- Seek support

We are clear that the Local Authority and Police must lead any investigation in to any allegation regarding safeguarding.

Child protection and safeguarding referrals should be made to the Children’s Advice and Duty Service (CADS) Norfolk County Council and followed up in writing within 24 hours.

Telephone **0344 800 8021**. Ask for CADS.

For a child in immediate danger, a call should be made to the police on 999.

If we are unsure of whether to make a referral we can request a professional consultations via the CADS team on 0344 800 8021. Any consultation must have the parents/carers consent, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm.

Any concern, referral or consultation with the CADS or Police must take place immediately, it is

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important we do not delay.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

What is abuse and neglect?

A form of maltreatment of a child. 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 others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical abuse

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing 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.

Emotional abuse

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 a child 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 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. These may include interactions that are beyond a 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 (including cyber 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

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 is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by 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 in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child 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 other children.

FGM

There is a mandatory duty for regulated health and social care professionals and teachers to report known cases of FGM in under 18s to the police (under the Serious Crime Act 2015).

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a collective term for procedures, which include the removal of part or all of the external female genitalia for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life. The age at which girls undergo FGM varies enormously according to the community however it is typically performed on girls aged between 5 and 8, but in some cases it is performed on new-born infants or on young women before marriage or pregnancy.

FGM is much more common than is generally realised both worldwide and in the UK. It is deeply embedded into the culture of communities and intervention by statutory agencies may be resented.

FGM cannot be left to personal preference or cultural custom as it is an extremely harmful practice which violates basic human rights.

FGM is illegal in the UK The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 makes it an offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to carry out FGM abroad, or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad, even in countries where the practice is legal.

What to do if you are concerned about someone who is at risk of FGM

Talk to them about your concerns, but use simple language and straightforward questions. Be sensitive and let them know that they can talk to you again.

A child at risk of forced marriage or FGM may also be at risk of honour based abuse. Extreme caution should be taken in sharing information with any family members or those with influence within the community as this may alert them to your concerns and may place the child in danger.

If you have concerns that a child is at risk you should contact Children's Services and/or Norfolk Constabulary without delay:

Children's Services: 0344 800 8020

Norfolk Constabulary: 101 or in urgent cases dial 999

The Children's Social Care Services team in partnership with the Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit will liaise with the Paediatric services where it is believed that FGM has already taken place to ensure that a Medical Assessment takes place.

It should be remembered that this is a one-off act of abuse to a child, although it will have lifelong consequences, and can be highly dangerous at the time of the procedure and afterwards.

Neglect

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 or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

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

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

Defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection

Part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Relevant Guidance and Legislation

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused 2015
- Children Act 2004
- Children Act 1989
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families

Other Relevant Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our organisation and our intent to ensure our children/young people are appropriately safeguarded the following policies are also included under our safeguarding umbrella:

Code of Conduct

Health and Safety Policy

Complaints and Compliments Policy

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy



Useful Contacts

Norfolk Adults Safeguarding0344 800 8020

Children's Services 24 hours0344 800 8020

Norfolk Police.....101

In an emergency999

Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) Team 01603 223473

There is always someone available during normal working hours

Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB)www.norfolkscb.org

Safer Programme01603 228966

Named Designated Safeguarding Lead

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Gee Cook - Telephone number: 01603 662648 / 07886274948

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Ammar Saleh - Telephone number: 01603 662648 /
07988098229

Trustee Safeguarding Lead: Mehrdad Moghaddas - Email: mehrdadmoghaddas@newroutes.org.uk

Policy Review

We will always make any changes immediately to our procedures in line with Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board's guidance on **www.norfolkscb.org**

Raising and Escalating Concerns

All staff, volunteers and trustees have a responsibility to raise any concerns about service user safety and care, and to take appropriate action. You 'raise a concern' when you are worried about an issue that affects the people you are caring for and you are acting to protect them.

Allegations against Members of Staff

All allegations against any staff member, volunteer or trustee are taken seriously and investigated.

APPENDIX 1

Raising and Escalating Concerns Form

Name of person at risk of harm _____

Date of Incident/Concern (<i>if appropriate</i>)
Location of Incident/Concern
Summary of Incident/Concern
Action Taken (including reporting this as per local protocols, seeking medical treatment, discussion in supervision, etc)



Action Log by Designated Safeguarding Lead	
DATE	ACTION
Conclusion/sign off	
<input type="checkbox"/> Board notified	
<input type="checkbox"/> Participant notified	
<input type="checkbox"/> Logged on to Lamplight	
<input type="checkbox"/> No further action	
Any further comments:	
Signed by Board Lead:	
Name:	
Date:	