
SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Signed: _____

DSL

Signed: _____

Safeguarding Lead Board of Trustees

This policy was reviewed and updated in August 2024
Policy due for review August 2026

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1. Policy Statement: Purpose, Aims and Legal Framework

South Cheshire CLASP works with children and families as part of its activities. These include: counselling service, group work and 1 to 1 support.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect children and young people who receive CLASP's services. This includes the children of adults who use our services
- to provide parents, staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

This policy statement applies to anyone working on behalf of South Cheshire CLASP, including the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, and placement counsellors.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017
- General Data Protection Regulation 2018
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- What to do if a child is being abused: advice for practitioners (2015)

We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other

agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a nominated child protection/safeguarding lead, a deputy child protection/safeguarding lead and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding
- developing child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures which reflect best practice
- using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures
- sharing information about child protection and safeguarding best practice with children, their families, staff and volunteers via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, and training
- implementing a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- recording and storing information professionally and securely.

2. Contacts: Roles and Responsibilities

Everyone is responsible for Safeguarding but the following roles have the specific responsibilities:

Trustees

- A designated Trustee for Safeguarding takes leadership responsibility for all the organisation's safeguarding arrangements. The Chief Executive will communicate any serious concerns to the Trustee Board Lead for Safeguarding, and consult about any arising issues, as and when necessary.
- Trustees will conduct a bi-annual Safeguarding Policy review including an audit with an action plan as required. Actions will be completed and documented.

The Chief Executive

- will report to Trustees issues of safeguarding, record keeping, networking, criminal and record checking procedures and development of good practice, as and when necessary.
- will provide effective management of staff and volunteers through supervision and support.
- will report any themed concerns to the Voluntary Sector representative on the CESCOP
- Will act as the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the organisation
- Will support others within the organisation to recognise the needs of young people, including rescue from possible abuse or neglect.
- Will promote best practice and disseminate current information and learning
- Will ensure that staff and volunteers are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding
- Will promote the welfare of children and creating an environment where staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their Safeguarding role.
- Will ensure safe recruitment practices for staff and volunteers are in place including obtaining references, DBS checks and appropriate risk assessments.

Staff and volunteers

- Staff and volunteers must report any immediate safeguarding concerns to the Designated Lead for Safeguarding, or the deputy if DSL is absent, or the Trustee Lead for safeguarding.
- Concerns must be recorded using the Reporting Concerns Form.
- All Counsellors will have a designated Supervisor with regular supervision as standard. A mandatory part of this process is reflecting on, reviewing and taking action on safeguarding concerns.
- Safeguarding issues will be reviewed at relevant team meetings and staff supervisions. All concerns reported will be followed up appropriately.
- All trustees, employees and volunteers are mandated to attend Level 1 Safeguarding Training which is provided in house or by an external provider. All relevant staff and Counsellors are required to undertake level 2 and level 3 training provided by the CESCOP.
- All Staff and Volunteers should be aware of professional standards and boundaries and work within this code of conduct. Regular refresh will take place at team meetings.

Contact Details:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead – Julia Wood 01270 250629
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer – Sharon Hickson 01270 250629
- Senior Lead for Safeguarding (Trustees) – Graham Bushill 0799 993 2963

3. Child Protection Procedure

This procedure applies to any paid member of staff or volunteer who may be concerned about the safety and protection of a child.

Purpose and aim of this procedure:

We aim to ensure that those children/young people who attend CLASP, and any other child who may come to our attention, receive the protection and support they need if they are at risk of abuse.

Different types of abuse:

Physical abuse is violence causing injury or occurring regularly during childhood. It happens when:

- a child is hurt or injured by being hit, shaken, squeezed, thrown, burned, scalded, bitten or cut
- someone tries to drown or suffocate a child
- someone gives a child poison, alcohol or inappropriate drugs
- someone fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

In some cases the injuries will be caused deliberately. In others they may be accidental but caused by the child being knowingly put at risk.

Sexual abuse occurs when someone uses power or control to involve a child in sexual activity in order to gratify the abuser's own sexual, emotional or financial needs or desires. It may include:

- forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening
- encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- showing children pornographic material or involving them in the production of such material
- involving children in watching other people's sexual activity or in inappropriate discussions about sexual matters.

Emotional abuse is persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment of a child that is likely to cause serious harm to his/her development. It may include:

- persistently denying the child love and affection
- regularly making the child feel frightened by shouts, threats or any other means
- hurting another person or a pet in order to distress a child
- being so over-protective towards the child that he/she is unable to develop or lead a normal life
- exploiting or corrupting a child, eg by involving him/her in illegal behaviour
- conveying to a child the message that he/she is worthless, unlovable, inadequate, or his/her value is to meet the needs of another person. This may or may not include racist, homophobic or other forms of abuse.

Neglect involves persistently failing to meet a child's physical, psychological or emotional needs. It may include:

- failing to ensure that a child's basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, health care, hygiene and education are met
- failing to provide appropriate supervision to keep a child out of danger. This includes lack of supervision of particular activities or leaving a child alone in the house.

Ways that abuse might be brought to your attention:

- a child might make a direct disclosure about him or herself
- a child might make a direct disclosure about another child
- a child might offer information that is worrying but not a direct disclosure
- a member of staff might be concerned about a child's appearance or behaviour or about the behaviour of a parent/carer towards a child
- a parent or carer might make a disclosure about abuse that a child is suffering or at risk of suffering
- a parent or carer might offer information about a child that is worrying but not a direct disclosure.

Talking to a child who has told you that he/she or another child is being abused:

- reassure the child that telling someone about it was the right thing to do
- tell him/her that you now have to do what you can to keep him/her safe
- let the child know what you are going to do next and who else needs to know about it
- let the child tell his or her whole story. Don't try to investigate or quiz the child, but make sure that you are clear as to what he/she is saying
- ask the child what he/she would like to happen as a result of what he/she has said, but don't make or infer promises you can't keep
- give the child the ChildLine phone number 0800 1111

Helping a child in immediate danger or in need of emergency medical attention:

- if the child is in immediate danger and is with you, remain with him/her and call the police
- if the child is elsewhere, contact the police and explain the situation to them
- if he/she needs emergency medical attention, call an ambulance and, while you are waiting for it to arrive, get help from your first aider
- contact your supervisor/manager to let them know what is happening.

A decision will need to be made about who should inform the child's family and the local authority children's social care team, and when they should be informed. If you have involved the police and/or health services, they should be part of this decision. Consider the welfare of the child in your decision making as the highest priority.

Issues that will need to be taken into account are:

- the child's wishes and feelings
- the parent's right to know (unless this would place the child in danger, or would interfere with a criminal investigation)
- the impact of telling or not telling the parent
- the current assessment of the risk to the child and the source of that risk
- any risk management plans that currently exist.

Once any immediate danger or emergency medical need has been dealt with, follow the steps set out in the flowchart at the end of this document.

Keeping a record of your concerns

Use the Reporting Concerns Form to record the concern and how it is dealt with.

the form should be signed and dated by all those involved in its completion and kept confidentially by the Chief Executive.

Reporting Procedure

member of staff/volunteer has concerns about a child's welfare or safety



member of staff/volunteer makes notes of their concerns using the reporting form and discusses them with Safeguarding Lead/Deputy



If child's family does not know about the concern, the relevant staff member will discuss it with them unless a family member might be responsible for abuse, someone may be put in danger by the family being informed, or informing the family might interfere with a criminal investigation. If this applies, discussions with the family should only take place once agreed with children's social care team.



If there is still uncertainty, the Safeguarding Officer should discuss with ChECS or NSPCC Helpline or Thirtyone-eight, without disclosing the identity of the child



Concerned:

Safeguarding Officer refers to Children's Social Care Team

No longer concerned:

No further action needed. Staff member and Safeguarding Officer may agree to monitor situation or discuss child's needs with other services

Reporting Concerns Form

See appendix for copy of form.

Record Keeping

All records – telephone conversations, decisions, statements, must be recorded on the database on the child's individual record, in the notes section, and marked as 'author only'. This will enable the author and the DSO to see the record.

The DSO will keep the paper copy of the Reporting Concerns Form and will follow up any agreed actions, noting down any decisions taken, or any agreement to monitor a particular situation. This will be updated at least weekly or more frequently if the concern requires it.

E-Safety

This policy applies to all paid staff, the board of trustees, volunteers, placement counsellors or anyone working on behalf of South Cheshire CLASP.

The policy protects children and young people who engage in services and who make use of Information Technology as part of their involvement with us.

We seek to promote E-Safety by:

- supporting and encouraging young people to use the opportunities offered by mobile phone technology and the internet in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others
- supporting and encouraging parents and carers to do what they can to keep their children safe on-line
- informing parents/carers of incidents of concern as appropriate
- ensuring that user names, logins and passwords are used effectively
- using only official email accounts provided via the organisation
- ensuring that the personal information of staff (other than names), volunteers and service users are not published on our website
- ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after written permission has been obtained

4. Safer Workforce

Managing Staff Allegations

All allegations of abuse of children by those who work with children must be taken seriously. Allegations against any person who works with children, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, cover a wide range of circumstances.

This procedure should be applied when there is such an allegation or concern that a person who works with children, has:

- Behaved in a way that 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 that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children.

In such circumstances South Cheshire CLASP will report all matters to the Local Authority Designated Officer who will advise on recording of the allegation.

Behaviour Code for Working with Children

This Behaviour Code outlines the conduct expected of staff and volunteers from South Cheshire CLASP, and staff from other organisations who engage with children and young people through CLASP and its activities.

Purpose:

Following this code will help to protect children from abuse and inappropriate behaviour from adults. It will also help staff and volunteers to maintain the standard of behaviour expected of them and will reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations of abuse being made against them.

The role of staff and volunteers:

When working with children and young people for CLASP all staff and volunteers are acting in a position of trust. It is important that staff and volunteers are aware that they may be seen as role models and must act in an appropriate manner at all times.

It is important to:

- follow the child safeguarding policy and e-safety policy at all times
- listen to and respect children at all times
- avoid favouritism
- treat children and young people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination
- ensure equipment is used safely
- provide examples of good conduct you wish children and young people to follow
- challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all suspicions of abuse

- ensure that whenever possible there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people (except for counselling sessions)
- be close to where others are working. If a child requests private time with you, ensure other staff know where you are
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy
- encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people.

You must not:

- patronise or treat children and young people as if they are silly
- allow allegations to go unreported
- develop inappropriate relationships with children and young people (including those of a sexual nature)
- let children and young people have your personal contact details
- make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children and young people
- act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- make inappropriate promises to children and young people
- jump to conclusions without checking facts
- either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues

The role of parents and carers:

South Cheshire CLASP welcomes and encourages parental involvement. Parents and carers are regarded as valuable partners in promoting positive behaviour and will be involved as appropriate.

In the event of their child becoming the subject of behaviour sanctions, parents/carers will be informed and involved.

Training and Development

All new members of staff will undertake an induction process that includes basic child protection training on how to recognise signs of abuse, how to respond to any concerns, the behaviour policy, e-safety and familiarisation with the safeguarding and child protection policy, staff code of conduct. The induction will be proportionate to staff members' roles and responsibilities.

All staff members and volunteers will undergo level 1 safeguarding and child protection training every other year.

Additionally, all staff will be encouraged to participate in level 2 and 3 training provided by the local authority/LSCP.

Staff members, Volunteers and Trustees who miss the annual training will be required to access the level 1 training from another source, e.g. CVSCE.

5. Confidentiality, Consent and Information Sharing

The best assessment of the child or young person's needs and the risks they may be exposed to, requires useful information to be gathered in order to analyse and plan the support services. In order to share and access information from the relevant professionals the child, young person's or parent's consent will be needed. Consent will be recorded on a consent form.

Professional judgement must be exercised to determine whether a child or young person in a particular situation is competent to consent or to refuse consent to sharing information. Consideration should include the child's chronological age, mental and emotional maturity, intelligence, vulnerability and comprehension of the issues. A child at serious risk of self-harm may lack emotional understanding and comprehension and the Fraser guidelines should be used. Advice should be sought from a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist if use of the mental health act may be necessary to keep the young person safe.

Informed consent to share information should be sought if the child or young person is competent unless:

- The situation is urgent and delaying in order to seek consent may result in serious harm to the young person;
- Seeking consent is likely to cause serious harm to someone or prejudice the prevention or detection of serious crime.

If consent to information sharing is refused, or can/should not be sought, information should still be shared in the following circumstances:

- There is reason to believe that not sharing information is likely to result in serious harm to the young person or someone else or is likely to prejudice the prevention or detection of serious crime; and
- The risk is sufficiently great to outweigh the harm or the prejudice to anyone which may be caused by the sharing; and
- There is a pressing need to share the information.

Professionals should keep parents informed and involve them in the information sharing decision even if a child is competent or over 16. However, if a competent child wants to limit the information given to their parents or does not want them to know it at all; the child's wishes should be respected, unless the conditions for sharing without consent apply.

Where a child is not competent, a parent with parental responsibility should give consent unless the circumstances for sharing without consent apply.

6. Whistleblowing and Complaints

We are committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity, however, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time. CLASP encourages a culture of openness and accountability in order to prevent such situations occurring or to address them when they do. We encourage staff and volunteers to report any concerns as soon as possible so that they may be addressed. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

When concerns related to potential wrong doing or criminal activity are raised this is often referred to as “Whistle blowing”. This may include criminal activity, dangers to health and safety; damage to the environment, failure to comply with any legal obligation or the deliberate concealment of any wrongdoing. A **whistle blower** is a person who raises a genuine concern in good faith related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any work related activities.

Raising a concern

In the first instance you should raise any concerns with the Chief Executive who will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concerns and to try to agree a way of resolving your concern quickly and effectively.

You may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation. We will take minutes of what is discussed at the meeting and provide you with a copy after the meeting. We will also aim to give you an indication of how we propose to deal with the matter.

We hope that employees will feel able to voice any concerns openly under this policy. However, if you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret. If it is necessary for anyone investigating your concern to know your identity, we will discuss this with you.

We do not encourage employees to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if we cannot obtain further information from you. If you have any concerns about any possible repercussions you can seek advice from Public Concern at Work, the independent whistle blowing charity, who offer a confidential helpline. Their contact details are provided below.

External disclosures

We aim to provide an internal means for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. However we recognise that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. The independent whistle blowing charity, Public Concern at Work, operates a confidential helpline. They also have a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern. Their contact details are provided below.

Whistle blowing concerns usually relate to the conduct of our employees, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party. The law allows you to raise a concern in good faith with a third party, where you reasonably believe it relates mainly to their actions or something that is legally their responsibility. However, we encourage you to report such concerns internally to the Chief Executive first.

Investigation and outcome

Once you have raised a concern, we will carry out an initial assessment. We will inform you of the outcome of our assessment. You may be asked to attend additional meetings in order to provide further information.

We will aim to keep you informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent us giving you specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. You should treat any information about the investigation as confidential.

If we find that an employee has made false allegations maliciously, in bad faith or with a view to personal gain, they may be subject to disciplinary action.

Protection and support for whistle blowers

It is understandable that whistleblowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support employees who raise genuine concerns in good faith under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken. If you believe that you have been subject to any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a concern (such as dismissal, disciplinary action or threats) you should raise it formally using the Grievance Procedure.

Employees must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. Anyone involved in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action.

Public Concern at Work

Telephone

Whistle blowing Advice Line: 0800 028 0285 (NSPCC)

Email

UK advice line: [email: help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

South Cheshire CLASP Complaints Procedure

We take complaints very seriously and we treat them as an opportunity to develop. This is why we are always very grateful to hear from people who are willing to take the time to help us improve.

If you would like to tell us about your complaint:

Please get in touch in one of the following ways:

- You can call us on 01270 250629
- You can email us at julia@southcheshireclasp.org.uk
- Or you can write to us at:

South Cheshire CLASP, Mill House, Brook St, Crewe CW2 7DE

Please include your name, address and contact telephone number in your email or letter so that we can get back in touch with you easily.

How long will it take?

We endeavour to respond fully and conclusively to all complaints within ten working days. However, you will receive an acknowledgement of your complaint within the first 5 days of receipt..

In more complex situations where an immediate response is not possible, we will investigate the matter and get back to you as quickly as we can. We will record your complaint and between us we can agree on the best way and time to get back in contact with you.

What we will do:

We will try to fix problems, correct mistakes and address concerns in a way that pleases you. Please feel free when contacting us about a complaint, to let us know how you think it could be resolved.

We will always treat you with courtesy and respect, listen to what you say, keep you informed about our progress, provide you with a prompt response and tell you who to go to if you want to escalate your complaint further.

There may be rare occasions when we chose not to respond to a complaint at all. These include:

- When a complainant is being abusive, prejudiced or offensive in their manner.
- When a complainant is harassing a staff member.
- When a complaint is incoherent or illegible.
- When a complaint is made anonymously.

If your complaint is related to another area of our work and you do not feel completely satisfied by our response then you can contact The Charity Commission at the website address below.

www.charity-commission.gov.uk

7. Quality Assurance

We will ensure that systems are in place to monitor the implementation of and compliance with this policy and accompanying procedures. This will include periodic audits of child protection files and records by the DSL and Trustee Safeguarding Lead.

Additional Information:

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures, including:

- Safer recruitment policy and procedures
- Anti-bullying policy and procedures
- Photography and image sharing guidance
- Child protection records retention and storage policy (GDPR policy)
- Risk Assessments
- Health & Safety Policy
- DBS Procedure

Reporting Concerns Form 2024

Name of child:		
Gender:	Age:	Date of birth:
Ethnicity:	Language:	Additional needs:
Name/s of parent(s)/carer		
Child's home address and address of parent/carers (if different from child):		

Your name:	Your position:	Date and time of incident: (if applicable)
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Please provide details of the incident or concerns, including dates, times, description of injuries or any other details:
The child's account/perspective. Please include what you said to the child about confidentiality and consent to share, and their response:
Please provide details of anyone alleged to have caused the incident or to be the source of concerns:
Please provide details of anyone who has witnessed the incident or shares the concerns:

Summary of discussion with Safeguarding Officer:

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Inform authorities? If not, why not? Police? Children's Social Care? CAMHS?	
Outcome of informing authorities:	

Further action for CLASP or other agencies to support the child and the family:	
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Signed	Date and time	Name and position