

		Safeguarding Children Policy And Procedure
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Lucy Richards V8	08/04/2024	
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General Policy Statement

CLEAR is committed to promoting children’s rights, notably their right to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation and to be involved in any decisions that directly affect them.

CLEAR has a duty of care to implement effective policies and procedures for safeguarding the emotional wellbeing of children and young people. To achieve this, we will ensure our staff and volunteers are diligently recruited, screened, trained, supported and supervised. We will actively keep up to date with national research and changes to the law relating to the protection of children and young people.

Aims and Principles

Our practice will be non-discriminatory, non-stigmatizing and sensitive to race, culture, faith, gender, language, disability and sexual orientation. In order to make sound and informed judgments about a child’s needs and the carer’s ability to meet those needs, it is important that staff are sensitive to different family patterns, lifestyles and child rearing practices.

The welfare of this child is paramount, and respect should be shown for a child’s rights, wishes and feelings. In all cases the parents, family and child must be treated with honesty, understanding and sympathy. Effective safeguarding systems are child-centred. Failings in safeguarding systems are too often the result of losing sight of the needs and views of the children within them or placing the interests of adults ahead of the needs of children.

We will work in co-operation with families and any other relevant agencies where it is appropriate to do so.

Introduction

Local authorities have overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in their area. They have several statutory functions under the 1989 and 2004 Children Acts which make this clear. Whilst local authorities play a lead role, safeguarding children and protecting them from harm is everyone’s responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has

a role to play. A child is defined as “anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday” (Children Act 2004)

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined by the Children Act 2004 and the Department for Education Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2023) as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children’s Social Care National Framework

Working Together seeks to emphasise that effective safeguarding systems are those where:

- the child’s needs are paramount, and the needs and wishes of each child, be they a baby or infant, or an older child, should be put first, so that every child receives the support they need before a problem escalates;
- all professionals who come into contact with children and families are alert to their needs and any risks of harm that individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children;
- all professionals share appropriate information in a timely way and can discuss any concerns about an individual child with colleagues and local authority children’s social care;
- high quality professionals are able to use their expert judgement to put the child’s needs at the heart of the safeguarding system so that the right solution can be found for each individual child;
- all professionals contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote a child’s welfare and take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the child against specific plans and outcomes;
- LSCBs coordinate the work to safeguard children locally and monitor and challenge the effectiveness of local arrangements;
- When things go wrong Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) are published and transparent about any mistakes which were made so that lessons can be learnt; and
- Local areas innovate and changes are informed by evidence and examination of the data.

Ultimately, effective safeguarding of children can only be achieved by putting children at the centre of the system, and by every individual and agency playing their full part, working together to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children.

Effective safeguarding arrangements in every local area should be underpinned by two key

principles:

- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part; and
- a child-centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

This policy provides guidance to all staff as they work with colleagues to address any safeguarding concerns and promotes effective multi-agency working.

The lead responsibility for establishing and co-ordinating this process within a multi-agency framework lies with the local authority (Social Care Team). However, staff at **CLEAR** will work in partnership with relevant agencies to protect and safeguard individual service users.

Scope

This policy relates to all children and young people age 0-18 years, in accordance with Department of Health Guidance. It demonstrates a commitment to acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child or about the behaviour of an adult, and will work with the appropriate statutory bodies when an investigation into child abuse is necessary.

We will commit to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to them and respecting them
- Adopting safeguarding guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for all staff and volunteers
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, parents, carers, staff and volunteers
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies on a need-to-know basis
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

All CLEAR staff, employed, contracted or volunteers will work to uphold the integrity of this policy and adhere to the protocols set out. Failure to do so will be considered a breach of contract and may lead to disciplinary action and termination of employment.

All new staff will be subject to the Safer Recruitment Checks as set out in the Recruitment Policy.

Purpose

The safeguarding of children and identification of children at risk of harm is the responsibility of everyone. **CLEAR** works with adults, children and their parents/carers' who have experienced trauma, in particular arising from domestic and sexual abuse. It is likely that staff will encounter a child at risk during their normal duties.

CLEAR take its responsibility seriously and has operational standards to assist staff to meet their own personal and professional duty of care to safeguard children and young people.

CLEAR is fully committed to implementing the multi-agency procedures and guidance published by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (now named Our Safeguarding Children Partnership) by:

- Ensuring that there is a consistent and effective response to any concerns, allegations or disclosure of abuse.
- Supporting staff in reporting and investigating incidents of child abuse.
- Ensure that all relevant staff have sufficient knowledge and up to date training to successfully implement these procedures. This includes all CYP therapists being trained in Level 3 Safeguarding Children, Young People or Adults at Risk.
- Contribute towards any multi-agency strategy meetings, child protection investigations, case conferences and child protection plans.
- Holding monthly safeguarding supervision meetings for the safeguarding lead and safeguarding officers to discuss key themes, issues and any concerns raised.
- A monthly safeguarding audit on any exited clients, to ensure safeguarding alerts are no longer active, whilst monitoring that correct procedures were followed for any safeguarding concerns that were active.
- Contribute to raising awareness of child abuse and give clear messages that it is everyone's responsibility and that protecting a child at risk is everyone's paramount concern.
- All staff have an ethical and professional duty of care to act if they:
 - Witness abuse
 - Receive information about abuse, suspected abuse or concerns about the care or treatment of a child at risk
 - Have concerns or suspicions about possible abuse or inappropriate care.

NAMED PERSONS AND DUTIES

It is good practice for all organisations, however small, to identify at least one person to be responsible for dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse against a child. This person is known as the designated person. In the absence of these named persons the chair of the charity Sue Brown should be contacted. Please note if a child is believed to be in immediate danger of significant harm and the above-named persons are uncontactable then a team member should make the referral to the Safeguarding Unit (MARU) using the agreed form and process.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Alison Clayton: Childrens Clinical Lead
a.clayton@clearsupport.net

Designated Safeguarding Officers

Alison Clayton: Childrens Clinical Lead
a.clayton@clearsupport.net

Nicola Henderson: Evaluation and Quality Lead:

n.henderson@clearsupport.net

Mobile: 0748 395 6515

Lottie Blackledge: Child and Young Person Therapist

l.blackledge@clearsupport.net

Safeguarding Trustee

Sue Brown: Chair of Trustees

Suecbrown2008@hotmail.co.uk

The role of the designated person(s) is to:

- Ensure updated information and advice is provided to staff and volunteers on safeguarding children issues. Also, to ensure that procedures are implemented, followed and in particular, to inform social work/health of relevant concerns regarding children at risk.
- Be aware of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (Our Safeguarding Children Partnership) safeguarding children procedures.
- Ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, under confidential cover as quickly as possible (ie. within 24 hours)
- Liaise with children's service authorities and other agencies, as appropriate.
- Where an allegation has been made against a member of staff the Service Manager and Chief Executive must be informed immediately and follow the *Managing Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy*
- Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by CLEAR, communication between other agencies and the outcome of the case.
- Play a key role to ensuring that all staff have been trained to Safeguarding Level 3 within CLEAR by monitoring the training needs of staff.
- Provide a de-brief session following any incidents within Clear.

All Other Staff

All members of CLEAR, trustees, staff (contracted and employed) and volunteers will work to uphold the integrity of this policy and adhere to the protocols set out. Volunteers do not work directly with CLEAR clients but may need to follow safeguarding procedures as part of fundraising activity or work in the CLEAR shop.

Staff and volunteers should:

- Understand what abuse is and know what to do if there are any concerns
- Listen actively to service users and be observant.
- Record and report any concerns using the Safeguarding Children procedures.
- Know that concerns may be low-level and minor, but cumulatively may add up to something serious.
- Understand what the whistle-blowing policy is and what to do if concerns are not dealt with.

- Contribute views and opinions about the service, and how it could be improved.
- Undertake appropriate training and commit to Continuous Professional Development (CPD). CLEAR requires all Children’s therapists to have a L3 Qualification in Safeguarding and to evidence CPD on an annual basis.

All Clear staff, contracted, employed or volunteers will work to uphold the integrity of this policy and adhere to the protocols set out. Failure to do so will be considered a breach of contract and may lead to disciplinary action and termination of employment.

THE PROCESS

There is a monthly safeguarding rota sent to all members of the CLEAR team, naming the safeguarding officer and contact details, for every day that CLEAR’s therapy services are operational.

If they are not available, then another member of the Safeguarding team should be contacted. Absences of the named person or the chair of the charity should not prevent a team member from making a referral if the child is in imminent danger from significant harm. Every member of the CLEAR team has undertaken Level 3 Safeguarding and are aware of how to refer to the Local Safeguarding Board in the absence of a Safeguarding officer or Chair of the Charity.

It is important that all members of staff with concerns about a particular child should discuss these concerns with the safeguarding officer covering that day. All concerns, observations or information should be noted on a Safeguarding Alert on CLEAR’s database. This alert will automatically be emailed to all safeguarding officers and create a red flag both on the dashboard and the client’s individual file on CLEAR’s database. This alert must be created at the time of discussing the concern with the safeguarding officer, on the day that the concern is raised.

Following a discussion with the safeguarding officer, a plan is agreed with the therapist. This plan will be shared with the Child/young person/carer/guardian if it is safe to do so. This plan and a full explanation of the concern will be documented directly onto a safeguarding notification form on the CLEAR database. If the plan involves contacting the Duty Safeguarding Lead at Children’s Services (MARU), then this should be done, by the therapist, on the same day that the concern is raised. This may or may not include submitting an inter – agency referral form directly onto the MARU website.

- Information on the process of reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse, who to call and their contact details can be found in Appendix 1.
- Guidance is provided by the LSCB for reporting suspected abuse and what should be provided can be found in in Appendix 2.
- A Notification sheet for all staff to use if a disclosure is being made can be found in Appendix 3.

SAFER RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Protecting children from abuse is an integral part of the organisation's recruitment and training policies.

- All staff and volunteers are required to provide references before they are permitted to work with CLEAR. A DBS check will be required at the earliest opportunity and no lone working will be permitted until the DBS check has been received and found to be clear.
- All staff and volunteers will have had prior training on trauma and abuse awareness and will be asked to attend at least every 2 years safeguarding training appropriate to their work. Our expectation is that everyone working or volunteering with CLEAR will undertake our L3 Safeguarding course that provides a recognised qualification. All Children's therapists are required to hold this qualification.
- At least two Trustees will have undertaken up to date Safeguarding training.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Children **cannot** be offered confidentiality concerning allegations of abuse and must be made aware of this at time of disclosure.

All other information and discussions concerning children will remain confidential within the team, or where additional support is needed by outside agencies will only be disclosed on a need-to-know basis.

MANAGING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST STAFF

The Chief Executive has responsibility for the provision of services designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The board of trustees are ultimately responsible for the services that CLEAR provides. On a daily basis this is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer. Both the CEO and Board members are qualified to Level 3 Safeguarding to equip them to take leadership responsibility for CLEAR's safeguarding arrangements.

Any allegation that a member of staff has behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child, possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to a child, behaved in a way that indicates he/she may pose a risk of harm to children or has behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, **must** be reported immediately to the CEO who will inform the Chair of Trustees. The CEO, or designated trustee will report all allegations to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) of the local Safeguarding Children's Board within one working day. (www.cornwall.gov.uk, 2022 LADO guide for VCSE and Private Sector who work with children, Page 2).

This process is described on the <https://swcpp.trixonline.co.uk/> website and in the Managing Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy

PLEASE NOTE: That CLEAR adheres to the SW Safeguarding policies which are available on the following website:

<https://swcpp-cornwallscilly.trixonline.co.uk/>

Appendix 1: CLEAR CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

What to do if you are concerned a child is being abused

If you suspect that a child is being abused, seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Officer. They will work with you to decide what further actions should be taken.

What to do if you have concerns about a child's welfare:

- All Staff- Raise a safeguarding alert on the database.
- Discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Officer,
- If needed Designated Safeguarding Officer will discuss with Safeguarding Lead
- If it is agreed that concerns are appropriate, refer to Multi Agency Referral Unit, and/or Police (see Appendix 2 for contact numbers).
- Notification form to be completed within 24 hours and uploaded to the database.
- If a MARU referral was deemed appropriate, then an inter-agency referral form should be completed within 48 hours. MARU should acknowledge receipt of referral and decide on course of action within one working day
- MARU should feedback to referrer on next course of action.
- *If you are concerned by the decision of MARU you must discuss this with the named Designated Safeguarding Lead as a priority.*
- If you have no further child protection action you need to ensure a record of concerns is kept.

Contact Details for named persons:

Alison Clayton

Mobile; 07483392100

a.clayton@clearsupport.net

Nicola Henderson

Mobile: 0748 395 6515

n.henderson@clearsupport.net

Lottie Blackledge

Mobile: 07736 148221

l.blackledgae@clearsupport.net

Chair of Trustees

Sue Brown

Landline: 01872 260442

Suecbrown2008@hotmail.co.uk

1. Referral to MARU: The OSCP has agreed that all contacts with the Multi-Agency Referral Unit (MARU) within Cornwall should be made using the inter-agency referral form which can be accessed via this page:

<https://ciossafeguarding.org.uk/scp/p/our-policies-and-procedures/referral-forms>

To contact the MARU in hours phone 0300 1231 116 and out of hours 01208 251300 (after 5pm and at weekends).

2. Complete your initial reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse on the Clear Notification Form (see Appendix 3.)

REMEMBER: It is important that everyone in the organisation is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding if abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies following a referral to them of concern about a child.

APPENDIX 2

Our Safeguarding Children Partnership

for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

Inter-agency referral to Local Authority Children's Social Care Guidance Notes

The Our Safeguarding Children Partnership for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly has agreed that all contacts with the Multi Agency Referral Unit (MARU) within Cornwall should be made using the inter-agency referral form. The form is in line with the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children and local procedures for sharing information when you have concerns about the welfare or development of a child including Child Sexual exploitation. The following guidance is designed to explain when and how to use the form. There are additional guidance notes to support referrals in respect of Child Sexual Exploitation on the OSCP website alongside this form.

1. Please complete the form as fully as possible. The quality of information provided at the point of contact with specialist social work services is critical to safeguarding vulnerable children effectively. It is very important that full details of names, dates of birth, addresses and ethnicity are completed. Please indicate who has parental responsibility under the Children Act 1989. Ensure that you record the name of the social worker and details of all discussions, including any agreed actions in your own agency record.
2. To avoid delay if we need to contact you, please be specific about your contact details (including email address), especially if you work part-time or work from different locations at different times.
3. Wherever possible, the permission of parents/carers/children/young people (as appropriate to age and understanding) should have been sought before contacting the Multi Agency Referral Unit (MARU) and before a social worker discusses your concerns with any other agency. However, "this should only be done where such discussion and agreement seeking will not place a child at further risk of significant harm or prejudice enquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, or a police investigation". Where possible you may wish to fill in the form whilst with the family and obtain their signatures before sharing the information with the MARU. If parental permission is refused and you consider the child to be at risk of significant harm, the interests of the child must come first and therefore the referral must go ahead. Please ensure that you document the reasons for your actions. If you are making the referral without the knowledge of the family, the MARU will need to discuss the situation with you before taking any further action.
4. By completing this referral form as comprehensively as possible, you will be helping the MARU to make an informed decision on further action within the requirements

of Working Together and in line with the time scales set by the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000). You will also help determine whether the level of need meets the threshold for statutory social work intervention. In particular, details of any work you have already done with the family, when you last saw them, and the child or young person, and specific information about what might need to change to help safeguard the child's welfare and development are essential. Whilst undertaking a CAF is not a prerequisite for making a referral (particularly when there is a risk of significant harm) this is best practice and if a CAF has already been undertaken it should be used and attached to support the referral to the MARU.

5. If you are making a referral because of child protection concerns, you will need to telephone the MARU without delay, (see details below) following up with this referral form, as soon as possible, but no later than within 48 hours (Working Together).
6. On receipt and consideration of your referral, the MARU will give you feedback, confirmed in writing within two working days about the decision and within the limits of confidentiality, the actions being undertaken. If the referrer has not received an acknowledgement within three working days they should contact the local authority children social care again. Please note that wherever possible specialist social work services will use the information you share as a significant part of the initial assessment and therefore they may contact you to clarify the information you have provided.
7. If you are not sure about what action to take or have any difficulties or queries, please do not hesitate to contact your own Child Protection Advisor, such as a designated teacher, named or designate practitioner or the MARU advice line.
8. To contact the MARU in hours phone 0300 1231 116 and out of hours 01208 251300.

John Clements

Independent Chair

Our Safeguarding Children Partnership for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

APPENDIX 3



Emotional Trauma & Therapy Specialists

CLEAR

Notification form

CLIENT NUMBER If appropriate	
REFERRER	
DATE	
THERAPIST/COUNSELLOR/YOUTH WORKER/FACILITATOR	
Safeguarding Lead informed:	
Information	
Recommendation	

Please upload completed form to the client record on the CLEAR database.