

RJ WORKING CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of RJ Working is to strengthen and support the children and young people of Cornwall, it follows that our organisation is wholly committed to their safety and welfare.

We are committed to child-centred practice and we seek to understand children's lived experience through listening carefully to children and young people. This commitment is confirmed by the DfE guidance '*Listening to and involving Children and Young People*' (2014).

We promote the safety and welfare of children and young people through our work in schools, and with staff who work in health and education. RJ Working CIC may be in a position to contribute to a culture of co-ordination and co-operation, and support communication and shared learning to promote children's safety and welfare. In particular our work seeks to support practitioners developing lasting and trusting relationships with children and their families. We understand our responsibility to follow the lead of our Local Safeguarding Partnership (between the Local Authority, Health and the Police) in terms of local arrangements for co-ordination and co-operation.

THE SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This Policy applies to all work undertaken of behalf of RJ Working CIC by team members, whether Restorative Practitioners, Trainers, Volunteers and our Board of Directors.

We are committed to following the statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2018) and *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2021), *Our Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly*, and *Information Sharing Advice for Safeguarding Practitioners* (2018).

We recognise our responsibilities as a voluntary / independent sector organisation. We are using the definitions provided in the 2018 and 2021 guidance which we have reproduced at Appendix 1.

RJ Working has adopted the following principles in relation to Child Safeguarding:

- The welfare, safety, and best interests of the child are paramount considerations.
- Anyone under the age of 18 is considered a child for the purpose of this Policy.
- All children – whatever their age, cultures, disability, gender, racial origin, language and/or religious beliefs have the right to protection from abuse.
- All allegations and suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. They will not be ignored.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting the child's welfare.

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Provide protection to the children in contact with RJ Working, including the children of staff, sessional workers and volunteers.
- Provide guidance to all of our organisation's staff, sessional workers and volunteers about what to do if they suspect a child may be experiencing, or be at risk of experiencing, harm.

We will ensure that all those working on behalf of RJ Working CIC:

- Understand their personal responsibility for protecting and safeguarding the wellbeing of children with whom they work.
- Are able to take appropriate action if a child is suffering, or likely to suffer from harm; or is in immediate danger.
- Are informed and able to respond in a helpful manner to children who allege or disclose that abuse is happening.
- Are fully supported where they act in good faith to report a concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.
- Have opportunities to discuss and manage the feelings and emotions that are associated with protecting children.

RJ Working will work to safeguard children by:

- Listening to, valuing and respecting them.
- Acting in their best interests.
- Adopting and enforcing Safeguarding guidelines and procedures and a code of conduct for staff, sessional workers and volunteers.
- Safely recruiting all staff, sessional workers and volunteers, ensuring all necessary checks.
- Ensuring that, where RJ Working works with partners, they have appropriate and effective Child Safeguarding policies and procedures in place.
- Ensuring effective management of staff, sessional workers and volunteers through induction, supervision, support and training, all including child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's safety or welfare
- Distinguishing between i) allegations ii) concerns about quality of care/practice & iii) complaints.
- Ensuring that RJ Working staff, sessional workers, volunteers and directors undertake appropriate Child Safeguarding training within the first year of their involvement with RJ Working, and regularly review their practice to ensure development of skills and expertise.
- Knowing the indicators of abuse and neglect for specific safeguarding issues such as child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation.
- Being vigilant, as multiple safeguarding issues will overlap with one another.
- Being prepared to identify children who may benefit from Early Help.
- Appointing Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Lead members of staff with relevant expertise from RJ Working to respond to concerns, and collate Child Safeguarding data.
- Sharing information about Child Safeguarding and good practice with children, parents, staff, sessional workers and volunteers.
- Ensuring that appropriate recording and monitoring systems are in place & that information about concerns is shared with agencies who need to know, involving parents and children appropriately.
- Ensuring that partners, users and workers are aware of RJ Working policies and procedures, and the role of the Designated Safeguarding Leads.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Deborah Mitchell deborah@rjworking.co.uk 07535656007

Registered Independent Social Worker 120353 BASW member 111888/104949

Deputy Safeguarding Lead is Nicky Abrahams nicky@rjworking.co.uk 07919374434

This Policy is reviewed and updated in October 2021, ratified by the Board of Directors and signed by the Chair Guy Watson.



28th October 2021

Policy Review - This policy will be reviewed annually, or as required by changes in Local Multi-Agency policies and working, by RJ Working CIC, or by further national legislation.

RJ Working Child Safeguarding Process / Procedure

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for RJ Working in a paid or non-paid capacity to decide whether or not abuse of a child has taken place or investigate the matter. However, everyone has a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), our Deputy DSL or the appropriate Local Authority or Police colleagues.

Where there is actual or suspected abuse - report this to the RJ Working Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy. If neither is available, make a referral directly using the referral form you can obtain from the MARU. Follow the guidance accompanying the MARU referral form. Complete the form and send it to The **Multi Agency Referral Unit** (MARU) without delay; keeping a copy.

If the Child Protection matter is urgent telephone the MARU and follow this up by sending a completed referral form without delay. Or call the Police on 101 (*When to Call the Police, NCPP*).

Multi Agency Referral Unit 3 North, New County Hall, Truro. TR1 3AY
Telephone 0300 1231 116 multiagencyreferralunit@cornwall.gov.uk Out of Hours 01208 251300

Remember to:

- Listen carefully to any disclosure and take it seriously.
- Reassure victims they will be supported and kept safe. They shouldn't be made to feel ashamed for making a report or given the impression they are creating a problem.
- Do not touch or clear away any evidence.
- Do not agree to keep any secret.
- Do not ask leading questions.
- Do not contact any alleged abuser.
- Do not talk to anyone else (outside the alert process) about information shared with you.
- Keep a record that is factual, use the words given to you; describe the circumstances and anyone else who was there at the time.

Where there is a complaint about a member of staff, sessional worker or volunteer there may be:
a)Criminal investigation b)Child Protection investigation c)Internal disciplinary / misconduct investigation. All available information will be used to reach decisions and removal of a paid or voluntary individual because the person poses a risk of harm to children will trigger a DBS referral.

For further information please see the following documents online:

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for Practitioners 2015

Preventing and Tackling Bullying updated 2017

When to call the Police

Information Sharing Advice for Safeguarding Practitioners (2018)

Serious harm is defined as potentially life-threatening injury

OR serious or likely long-term impairment of physical or mental health or physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

Safeguarding Children Policy Appendix 1 Definitions

We note that the definitions and signs of abuse described in *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)* have been updated in the 2018 Statutory Guidance glossary and the most relevant items are reproduced here:

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

Defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- a. protecting children from maltreatment
- b. preventing impairment of children's health or development
- c. ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- d. 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.

Abuse

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. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children 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 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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and

technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

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

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

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

Extremism

Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.

Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 as the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist.

County Lines

As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Child criminal exploitation

As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

We note that Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 also defines:

Peer on peer abuse (child on child)

Peer on peer abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Domestic abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduces the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members. The definition captures a range of different abusive behaviours, including physical, emotional and economic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour. Both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be “personally connected” (as defined in section 2 of the 2021 Act).

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. The government will issue statutory guidance to provide further information for those working with domestic abuse victims and perpetrators, including the impact on children.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of peer on peer abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support. The Act's provisions, including the new definition, will be commenced over the coming months.

So-called 'honour'-based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)

So-called 'honour'-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices as a way to coerce a person into marriage.

Modern Slavery

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including: sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs.

Safeguarding Children Appendix 2: RJ Working Whistleblowing Policy

RJ Working recognises the 2018 requirement for Safeguarding organisations to have a Whistleblowing Policy based on Sir Robert Francis 'Freedom to Speak Up Review' 2015.

We have identified 12 of the 20 Principles proposed for the NHS relevant to RJ Working as a small, independent sector organisation. We will develop a 2019 Policy reflecting these principles.

Principle 1 Culture of safety: Safeguarding organisations should actively foster a culture of safety and learning, in which all staff feel safe to raise concerns.

Principle 2 Culture of raising concerns: Raising concerns should be part of the normal routine business of any well led organisation.

Principle 3 Culture free from bullying: Freedom to speak up about concerns depends on staff being able to work in a culture which is free from bullying and other oppressive behaviours.

Principle 4 Culture of visible leadership: Employers should demonstrate, through visible leadership, that they welcome and encourage the raising of concerns by staff.

Principle 5 Culture of valuing staff: Employers should show that they value staff who raise concerns, and celebrate benefits and improvements made in response to the issues identified.

Principle 6 Culture of reflective practice: There should be opportunities for all staff to engage in regular reflection of concerns in their work.

Principle 7 Raising and reporting concerns: Organisations should have structures to facilitate both informal and formal raising and resolution of concerns. Staff should be encouraged to raise concerns informally and work together with colleagues to find solutions. Organisations should have a clear process for recording all formal reports of incidents and concerns, and for sharing that record with the person who reported the matter.

Principle 8 Investigations: When a formal concern has been raised, there should be prompt, swift, proportionate, fair and blame-free investigations to establish the facts. Organisations should devise and implement systems which enable such investigations to be undertaken,

Principle 9 Mediation and dispute resolution: Consideration should be given at an early stage to the use of expert interventions to resolve conflicts, rebuild trust or support staff who have raised concerns. Organisations should have access to resources to deploy alternative dispute resolution techniques, including mediation and reconciliation to:

- address unresolved disputes between staff or between staff and management as a result of or associated with a report raising a concern
- repair trust and build constructive relationships.

Principle 10 Training: Every member of staff should receive training in their organisation's approach to raising concerns and in receiving and acting on them.

Principle 11 Support: Organisations should ensure that there is a range of persons to whom concerns can be reported easily and without formality. They should provide staff who raise concerns with ready access to mentoring, advocacy, advice and counselling.

Principle 14 Accountability: Everyone should expect to be held accountable for adopting fair, honest and open behaviours and practices when raising or receiving and handling concerns. There should be personal and organisational accountability for:

- poor practice in relation to encouraging the raising of concerns and responding to them
- the victimisation of workers for making public interest disclosures
- raising false concerns in bad faith or for personal benefit
- acting with disrespect or other unreasonable behaviour when raising or responding to concerns
- inappropriate use of confidentiality clauses.