

The Relationships Centre Leicestershire's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

1. Policy statement

The Relationships Centre is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people who engage with our services. We believe that every child and young person has the right to feel safe, protected, valued and respected, regardless of their age, disability, gender identity, race, religion, belief or sexual orientation.

We recognise our responsibility to create and maintain an environment where children and young people are safe from harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation, and discrimination. Safeguarding and child protection are central to our organisations culture.

2. Purpose of the policy

- This policy sets out how The Relationships Centre Leicestershire will manage its commitment to child protection and safeguarding children and young people and the main values which guides it.
- To protect children and young people whether or not they either directly or indirectly are using The Relationships Centre Leicestershire services.
- To give confidence to clients, stakeholders and employees of The Relationships Centre Leicestershire in our response to managing the safety and welfare of a child/ren.
- To ensure the policy is fully implemented across the organisation with all employees and is readily available and accessible to stakeholders and parents/carers.
- It is The Relationships Centre Leicestershire's legal duty to have a readily available, accessible and in date policy to support with best practice across the organisation.

3. Scope of the policy

- This policy applies to all employees and trustees.
- Partner organisations to The Relationships Centre Leicestershire
- Clients (past, present and future) of our services.
- Children and young people under the age of 18 who may or may not come into contact, either directly or indirectly with our services

4. Role and responsibilities

At The Relationships Centre Leicestershire:

- The CEO have overall responsibility for this policy
- Line managers, supervisors and employees are responsible for familiarising themselves with this policy.
- The Clinical Lead is responsible for reviewing this policy once a year with the supervisor team and ensuring it is implemented with the clinical team.
- All staff know and follow this safeguarding policy.

5. Key Principles

As a counselling and psychotherapy service, it is natural that the organisation and its employees will identify things which affect the welfare and safety of children and young people.

1. **We recognise and acknowledge** that on occasion we may be the first person to hear the concerns of children and young people, and it is our duty to act on these concerns extremely seriously.
2. **We recognise and acknowledge** that the welfare of the child is paramount, as preserved in the Children Act 1989.
3. **We recognise and acknowledge** that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that for the organisation to be effective at managing safeguarding, every employee has to be informed and involved to play their part.
4. **We recognise and acknowledge** that we will take a child-centred approach: for services to be effective, children and young people will be involved (where appropriate) in the decision-making process.
5. **We recognise and acknowledge** that we will use inclusive language suitable for the child's age and development.
6. **We recognise and acknowledge** that for the organisation to be truly effective we will need to work with parents, carers and other agencies to ensure an open, supportive and transparent culture. In particular, we will liaise with The Local Authority and follow the Local Area Child Protection Procedures.
7. **We recognise and acknowledge** that all concerns should be shared as soon as practicably possible with an appropriate senior member of staff and recorded and dealt with appropriately.

6. Key Safeguarding Summary and Actions for Charity Trustees:

1. Safeguarding should be a key governance priority for our organisation and will be an agenda item at all board and committee meetings.
2. Ensure the charity has a sufficient safeguarding policy, code of conduct and any other safeguarding procedures.
3. The charity will review its policy annually to ensure it is fit for purpose.
4. Identify possible risks, including risks to service users or to anyone else connected to the charity.
5. Consider how to improve the safeguarding culture within the organisation, ensuring everyone involved knows how to recognise, respond to, report, and record a safeguarding concern.
6. Ensure everyone knows how to raise a safeguarding concern.
7. Regularly evaluate our safeguarding training annually, ensuring it is current and relevant.
8. Ensure all practitioners have an enhanced DBS check (with child and adult barring) from the Disclosure and Barring Service. To review all employees who are not practitioners to ensure they have the relevant level of check in line with the Adult and Barring Service.

7. Our approach

- We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:
- Liaising and working with our Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and ensure the effectiveness of, work to protect, and promote the welfare of children. Each local board includes local authorities, health bodies, the police and others, including the voluntary and independent sectors. The LSCBs are responsible for local child protection policy, procedure and guidance, which each The Relationships Centre service will have subscribed to.
- In all instances of concern regarding the safety and welfare of a child/ren, every effort will be made to work alongside our Local Safeguarding Children Boards.
- The Relationships Centre Leicestershire will have arrangements in place which address the following areas:
- A clear line of internal accountability designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- A designated Board member to take leadership responsibility for the organisation's safeguarding arrangements, but it does remain the overall responsibility of the whole Board of Trustees. The responsibility of Trustees is that they are expected to take responsibility to ensure things are put right if things go wrong.
- A culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and the development of services.
- Clear whistleblowing procedures.
- Arrangements which set out clearly the processes for sharing information, with other professionals and with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).
- A designated safeguarding lead to support staff working across The Relationships Centre Leicestershire to recognise the needs of children, including rescue from possible abuse or neglect. This role is specifically defined in their job description. They will be given sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their child welfare and safeguarding responsibilities effectively.
- Safer recruitment practices for individuals we permit to work regularly with children, including policies on when to obtain a criminal record check.
- Appropriate supervision and support for staff, including undertaking annual safeguarding training.
- Ensuring that our staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and creating an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role.
- Giving our staff a mandatory robust induction, which includes familiarisation with child protection and young people's safeguarding responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's safety or welfare.
- Regularly review all staff practice to ensure they improve over time.
- Have clear policies in line with those from the LSCB for dealing with allegations against people who work with children. Such policies should make a clear distinction between an allegation, a concern about the quality of care or practice or a complaint. An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who 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; or
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

19.To ensure this policy is properly implemented we will have an associated action plan for use across the organisation and reviewed at regular intervals.

8. Relevant Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on 13 laws as they apply in England and Wales, and guidance which aims to protect children, in particular:

Children Act 1989

- Children Act 2004
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2004 & Protection of Children From Sexual Offences Act 2012
- General Data Protection Regulation 2018
- Charities Commission guidance on Safeguarding and protecting people for Charities and Trustees (updated June 2022)
- Information Sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (HM Government 2018)
- Working together to safeguarding children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (HM Government 2018, updates made 2019, 2020 and 2022.
- Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act (2014)

9.Types of Harm

There are various forms of harm, these include:

- Physical harm
- Neglect
- Emotional harm
- Sexual harm
- Financial and material harm
- Discriminatory harm
- Radicalisation or extremism

10. Reporting Concerns

Anyone working for or with The Relationships Centre who has a safeguarding concern must:

1. **Respond** calmly and listen carefully. Do not promise confidentiality.
2. **Record** the concern using the organisation's Safeguarding Form.
3. **Report** the concern immediately to the DSL/DSO and Risk Case Management.
4. **Refer** – If the DSL/DSO is unavailable and the risk is immediate, contact the local authority adult safeguarding team or the police.

Local Authority Safeguarding Contact:

Leicester City Council Adults Safeguarding Board

Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board (LRSAB)

Police (non-emergency): 101

In emergencies: 999

11. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

We recognise that confidentiality is important, but safeguarding takes precedence. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis in line with GDPR and safeguarding legislation.

12. Clinical Supervision

- Safeguarding is a standard discussion item in supervision.
- Concerns raised in supervision must still be reported per procedure.

13. Whistleblowing

- Clear whistleblowing policy in place.
- Staff may raise concerns anonymously without fear of retribution.

14. Equality statement

We will make sure that all children and young people have equal protection regardless of age, disability, race, religion, gender identity or sexual orientation.

We recognise and acknowledge that for any of these considerations, we may need to adapt our approach accordingly.

15. Training and Awareness

- All staff and volunteers must complete safeguarding training during their induction and continue to complete this annually.
- The DSL/DSO will undertake advanced safeguarding training appropriate to their role.

16. Safer Recruitment

We follow safer recruitment procedures to ensure that all those who work with us are suitable and appropriate. This includes:

- DBS checks where applicable.
- References.
- Interview screening for safeguarding attitudes.

17. Definitions

- **Safeguarding:** Proactive measures to protect children from abuse, neglect, and harm.
- **Child Protection:** Actions taken when there is a specific concern about a child being at risk.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead/Officer (DSL/DSO):** Staff member with overall responsibility for safeguarding concerns.
- **Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB's):** working closely with our local board including local authorities, health bodies, the police and others, including the voluntary and independent sectors.
- **Disclosure:** When a child or third party reports abuse.

18. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- There is a change in legislation or guidance.
- There is a safeguarding incident or concern.
- New best practices emerge.

19. Contacts and Resources

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** The Relationships Centre, Leicestershire CEO
- **Local Safeguarding Adults Board:**
Leicester City Council Adults Safeguarding Board.
Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board (LRSAB)
- **NSPCC Helpline:** 0808 800 5000
- **Local Mental Health Advise line for urgent support (CAP – Central Access Point):** 111 Option 2