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# Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

## Accessibility of this document

This document is hosted on our website for public viewing. It can also be emailed to clients who use our services on request.

Should anyone wish to raise concerns about abuse with us, there is a clear means to do so via our assessment team 'in house'. Alternatively, should anyone contact us by phone or contact one of our therapists or our admin team directly, they are trained to point your concern to the Safeguarding Officer.

## Statement of intent

Preface: in this document, any reference to the safeguarding of children also refers to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults.

At Sphere Autism Service we work with adults, children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of children and to give them the very best possible start in life. In relation to children, young people and vulnerable adults, safeguarding and promoting their welfare is defined in 'Working together to safeguard children' as:

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

## Aim of the policy

Our overall aim is to ensure children and vulnerable adults in our care are kept safe from harm through implementing this policy and promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by:

Creating an environment that encourages children & vulnerable adults to develop a positive self image, which includes their heritage arising from their colour and ethnicity, their languages spoken at home, their religious beliefs, cultural traditions and home background.

Encouraging children & vulnerable adults to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.

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Enabling children & vulnerable adults to have the self-confidence and the age-appropriate vocabulary to keep themselves safe.

Helping children & vulnerable adults to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults.

Working with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the principles of safeguarding all our children.

Being alert to any issues for concern in the child or vulnerable adult's life at home or elsewhere.

This Policy is included in our induction pack and highlighted to parents when they register their children at our practice. Sphere Autism Service's Safeguarding Procedure is available for customers and practitioners on request.

## Liaison with other bodies/safeguarding documents

We work within the NSPCC's safeguarding guidelines.

We have regard to the Government's statutory guidance:

'Working together to Safeguard Children 2018'

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/722305/Working\\_Together\\_to\\_Safeguard\\_Children\\_-\\_Guide.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/722305/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children_-_Guide.pdf)

And:

'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019'

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/836144/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_part\\_1\\_2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/836144/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_part_1_2019.pdf)

And:

'Guidance for Safer Working Practice 2019'

<https://www.saferrecruitmentconsortium.org/GSWP%20Sept%202019.pdf>

If we believe a child or vulnerable adult is at immediate risk of harm or danger, we will call the police immediately.

If we have concerns about children's safety or welfare, we will notify our Designated Safeguarding Practitioner (DSP) Dr Proscovia Kabanda-Iga within 24 hours. They will request a 'Record of Concern' form to be filled out. Following this, a plan will be devised and an Early Health Assessment (EHA), referral to Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) may be necessary.

We usually follow Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Procedure – The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board [www.safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk](http://www.safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk), but it is your responsibility while working for Sphere Autism Service to check any local relevant Safeguarding information for instance, if you work in Northamptonshire within a school, follow the relevant procedure for that establishment. Each therapist must adhere to the safeguarding procedure of the location where they work.

## Staffing and volunteering

Our designated practitioner takes the lead responsibility for safeguarding children in the setting. Our designated practitioner is Dr Proscovia Kabanda-Iga

The designated practitioner is responsible for liaising with the local Safeguarding team.

The designated practitioner will provide support, advice and guidance to any other staff on an ongoing basis, and on any specific safeguarding issue within the centre as required.

The designated practitioner will undertake the appropriate level of child protection training to equip them to identify, understand and respond appropriately to signs of possible abuse and neglect and take the lead in responding to safeguarding concerns. This will be kept up to date.

We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children. All staff associated with Sphere Autism Service are recruited through Safer Recruitment.

Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the Disclosure Baring Service (DBS) before posts can be confirmed.

We abide by our therapists' governing bodies requirements in respect of references, Criminal records checks through the Disclosure and Baring Service and other suitability checks for staff, volunteers, students and others to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children & vulnerable adults.

We inform staff, volunteers, students and others of their requirement to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children & vulnerable adults (whether received before or during their employment at the setting). A reminder of this requirement is within their regular 1:1 or Supervision cycle.

If we become aware of relevant information which may lead to disqualification of an employee, we will take appropriate action to ensure the safety of the children.

We will not employ or continue to employ a person who has a disqualification.

We do not allow people whose suitability has not been checked, including a criminal-records check through the Disclosure Baring Service to have unsupervised contact with children being cared for.

Should students be employed on a paid placement, they will follow the same safer recruitment process we use

We abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern and will make a referral to the Disclosure and Baring team if the two main conditions of referral have been met.

We will notify the appropriate governing body of any significant event which is likely to affect the suitability of any person who is in regular contact with children on the premises where childcare is provided. The disqualification of an employee could be an instance of a significant event.

We will give the appropriate governing body of the individual, details relating to disqualification laid out in section 3.17 of the Early Years Foundation Stage, Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements.

All staff will be required to read this policy. They will be required to read and confirm understanding of the contents of the above documents annually.

Our staff know how to make a complaint and understand policies on whistleblowing and allegations against staff.

## Responding to suspicions of abuse

We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.

When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play.

Where such evidence is apparent, the child or vulnerable adult's therapist makes a dated record of the details on the 'Record of Concern' proforma and discusses what to do with the Sphere's DSP. The practitioner will follow Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board's recommendations.

Staff must take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or by asking questions of children.

Safeguarding action may be needed to protect children & vulnerable adults from:

- neglect
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- bullying, including online bullying and prejudice-based bullying
- racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse or prejudice to the family
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls
- radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour
- child sexual exploitation and trafficking
- issues that may be specific to a local area or population
- domestic violence
- female genital mutilation
- fabricated or induced illness
- poor parenting, particularly in relation to babies and young children
- other issues not listed here but that pose a risk to children

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm, neglect and failure to act. It relates to broader aspects of care, including:

- Children's health and safety and well-being
- meeting the needs of children with medical conditions
- providing first aid

## Sexualised behaviour

Whilst every family has its own set of names for parts of the body, at Sphere Autism Service we will use the terminology 'private parts' when referring to the areas covered by underwear and will be reinforced as part of keeping children & vulnerable adults safe at our setting.

We use the Brook 'Traffic Light System' to determine age-expected sexual behaviour.

<http://www.brook.org.uk/old/index.php/traffic-light-tool-0-to-5>

Any observations of sexual behaviour that isn't age-expected will be recorded and followed up in the same way as other suspicions of abuse.

## Allegations against staff

We ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff, including an allegation of abuse.

We follow the guidance of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child.

We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff may have taken place, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any alleged incident.

We co-operate entirely with any investigation that needs to be carried out.

Our policy is to suspend the member of staff on full pay for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place but is to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process.

Where a member of staff is dismissed from the setting or internally disciplined because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify their governing body as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at least within 14 days of the incident.

## Training

The DSP will attend local authority recognised child protection training, this will include updates every three years.

All staff who have direct contact with vulnerable adults or children are trained by NSPCC (or equivalent) to understand and implement our safeguarding policy and procedures to level 3, every 3 years. Admin support staff will be trained to level 2, every 3 years.

The training will enable staff to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity, and to respond in a timely and appropriate way. This will also include inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children. For example, inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images.

All training will be kept up to date.

Safeguarding will be a mandatory discussion point on team meeting and supervision agendas.

Staff have to sign to say they've read the Safeguarding policy every year.

## Disclosures

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff:

- offers reassurance to the child
- listens to the child
- if appropriate, gives reassurance that she or he will take action
- if necessary, to ask the child any questions the 'TED' (tell, explain, describe) model will be used

## Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff will make a record of their concern using the Record of Concern sheet indicating:

- the child's name
- the child's address
- the age of the child
- the date and time of the observation or the disclosure
- an objective record of the observation or disclosure
- the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible
- the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time
- the names of any other person present at the time
- action taken and by whom

These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file.

Written records are made in a timely way and are held securely.

## Making a referral to the local authority Referral and assessment Team

We report our concerns to the Safeguarding Board of the county where that patient lives.

If a referral is to be made to the Children Social Care Referral and Assessment Team within their local authority, we act within Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Procedure in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.

## Informing parents

Parents are normally the first point of contact.

If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership does not allow this.

This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases, the investigating officers will inform parents.

## Confidentiality

Sharing information is an intrinsic part of any practitioner's role.

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership .

## Support to families

Sphere Autism Service believes in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers.

The setting makes clear to parents its role and responsibilities in relation to Child Protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the children's social care department.

The setting continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.

We may be asked to participate further in assessment of the child through an early help assessment (EHA), a child in need assessment or a child protection enquiry. We will actively contribute to this process which will be led by a Social Worker

Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

## Prevent Duty

We at Sphere Autism Service see the prevent duty as an integral part of the safeguarding process and keeping children safe. We are alert to any reason for concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere. This includes awareness of the expression of extremist view.

Protecting children from radicalisation is seen as part of our wider safeguarding duties.

Prevent training will take place every 3 years - <https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu/screen1.html>.

All safeguarding concerns will be documented including any that may be relating to radicalisation and our full Safeguarding process will be followed.

## Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

We are aware of the mandatory reporting duty for girls who are believed to have received or be at risk of FGM. It is possible that this may be highlighted to us through the behaviour of the child or family or highlighted verbally. We would never examine a child. FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long lasting harmful consequences. If we believe this has taken place, we follow the information provided in the document 'Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information'.