



A COUNSELLING SERVICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE and Parents

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Policy Name

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Date reviewed by Policy Action Committee:

January 2025

Date approved by Trustees:

March 2025

Version Number:

Version 4.0

Next Review: March 2026

If any changes are made to these policies, the Board of Trustees will be notified that the policy has been amended.

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Key Contact list for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Time to Talk West Berkshire

Contacts At Time to Talk

Designated Persons	Davina Nicholson
Deputy Designated Persons	Steve Vardy Kate Adams
Nominated Trustee	Rosemary Lilley

For Key Contacts within the Local Authority refer to Appendix 1 of this document.

Our Aims:

To promote the mental health and emotional wellbeing of young people resident, in education, training, working or registered with a GP in West Berkshire, in particular, but not exclusively, by establishing, maintaining and developing a service to provide counselling, information, advice and other support, to undertake research into young people's mental and emotional wellbeing, and to promote awareness of, and do such other things as may combat, the underlying causes of the need for such counselling.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To protect children and young people who receive Time to Talk's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services
- To provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection. This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Time to Talk including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, and students.

Legal Framework:

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

Supporting documents:

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents:

Child Protection and Risk Assessment Procedure
Role Profile - Trustee responsible for Policies and Safeguarding
Whistleblowing policy
Code of conduct policy
Communication with Clients policy/Contact with parents policy
Confidentiality policy
Data protection & GDPR policy
Disciplinary policy
Grievance policy
Health and Safety policy
Staff induction and training policy
Employee recruitment policy
Dealing with Potentially Dangerous or Violent Situations policy

Where a counsellor is operating in a school or other institution this policy should be used in conjunction with the safeguarding policy for that particular setting.

We Believe:

- 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 children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare. All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to 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
- Extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse.
- Children and Young People face many risks online including exposure to harmful content, cyberbullying, fraud and sexting. Time to Talk's counsellors and staff are alert for signs of online abuse (see risk assessment and child protection policy and procedure).
- Protecting children and young adults from the risk of radicalisation is seen as part of Time to Talk's wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse. As with other

safeguarding risks, counsellors and staff should be alert for signs of radicalisation (please see risk assessment and child protection procedure and policy)

- The following website also offers useful guidance:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>.
- The Prevent duty builds on existing local partnership arrangements held within the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership (formerly LSCB)
- The Prevent guidance refers to the importance of Prevent awareness training to equip staff to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas. This training is included in our Safeguarding training.
- We recognise that clients who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. The organisation may be among the few secure and predictable elements in the lives of clients at risk. The organisation will endeavour to support the client through:
 - Supporting clients through counselling sessions.
 - Offer a positive, supportive and secure environment and give clients a sense of being valued.
- Through the counselling the organisation will ensure clients know some behaviour is unacceptable, but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- When, and if appropriate, liaise and work with other agencies that support the client such as Family Support Worker, Children's Services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, Education Welfare Service and Psychology Service.

We will:

Seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently, recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Recording and storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions
- Making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- Using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns

and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately

- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers 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
- 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
- Building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

Follow the procedures set out by the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education to:

- Ensure we have a designated suitably trained senior person for safeguarding and child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role, and a nominated Deputy to act in the Lead Persons absence.
- Ensure we have a nominated suitably trained trustee responsible for safeguarding and child protection.
- Ensure every member of staff, volunteer and trustee has access to training and knows who the designated person responsible for safeguarding and child protection is and their role.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated person responsible for safeguarding and child protection
- Ensure safe recruitment and selection practices are always followed.

Procedures:

For Time to Talk's Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures please refer to the separate Procedure document.

This policy is in line with guidance from the following sources:

Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership:

- <https://www.berkshirewestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp>
- <https://www.berkshirewestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp/west-berks/concerned-about-a-child-in-west-berkshire>

Pan- Berkshire Safeguarding Children Procedures:

- <https://proceduresonline.com/berks/>

Government Guidance (see Appendix 2)

Staff and volunteers are kept informed about safeguarding and child protection responsibilities and procedures through induction, briefings and awareness training. The Clinical Director will ensure they are aware of the organisation's policy and the identity of the Designated Child Protection Person.

Any member of staff, volunteer, Trustee or visitor to the organisation who receives a disclosure of abuse, an allegation or suspects that abuse may have occurred or could occur must report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding and Child Protection Person (see Appendix 1) or in their absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding and Child Protection Person (see Appendix 1). In the absence of either of the above, the matter should be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff or the designated trustee.

The Designated Safeguarding and Child Protection Person or their Deputy will immediately refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the Duty Social Worker, Contact Advice and Assessment Service (See Appendix 1)

Essential information to be provided will include the client's name, date of birth, the reason for the referral, whether the client's parents/ guardians are aware of the referral, the name of person who initially received the disclosure plus any advice given. A telephone referral to the Referral and Assessment Team – in cases where there are immediate safeguarding concerns - should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours. This written confirmation must be signed and dated by the referrer.

The organisation will always undertake to share our intention to refer a client to the Contact Advice and Assessment Team with the parents or carers unless to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On these occasions advice will be taken from the Contact Advice and Assessment Team.

Training and Support

The Clinical Director and all other staff and volunteers who work with clients will undertake appropriate child protection awareness training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively, that is kept up to date by refresher training at three yearly intervals as set out in Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education DfES2006.

All staff/counsellors, volunteers and Trustees will undertake safeguarding training when first appointed. Staff/counsellors and volunteers working directly with clients will update this every three years. All staff/counsellors, volunteers and Trustees will read Part 1 of KCSIE (Keeping Children Safe in Education) when first appointed and whenever revised by government.

The organisation will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding and Child Protection Person also undertakes training in inter-agency working and refresher training at two yearly intervals to keep knowledge and skills up to date. Volunteers who work with clients in the organisation will be made aware of the organisation's arrangements for

safeguarding and child protection and their responsibilities.

Support will be available for staff and volunteers from the Clinical Director in the first instance. All staff and volunteers will have access to advice and guidance on the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct – see the Code of Conduct.

Professional Confidentiality

Issues of confidentiality are dealt with under our Confidentiality Policy.

Records and Monitoring

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our organisation is clear about the need to record any concern held about a client using our service, the status of such records and when these records should be passed over to other agencies.

Any member of staff/volunteer receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, must make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen, putting the event in context, and giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken.

These file notes are kept in a confidential file, which is separate to other files, and stored in a lockable filing cabinet. The safeguarding log is kept securely on the T2T network, only accessible to the safeguarding team.

Supporting Clients at Risk

Our organisation recognises that clients who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth or view the world as a positive place. This organisation may be one of the few secure and predictable contacts in the lives. This organisation will endeavour to support all clients through times of disclosure.

Allegations Against Staff Procedure

It is essential that the high standards of concern and professional responsibility adopted with regard to alleged child abuse by parents/carers/others are similarly displayed when members of staff are accused of abuse.

Only authorised agencies may investigate child abuse allegations (Social Care Services, the Police or in some areas, the NSPCC). Whilst it is permissible to ask the child simple, non-leading questions to ascertain the facts of the allegation, formal interviews and the taking of statements is not.

The organisation will follow the West Berkshire procedures in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff as set out by Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership (berks.proceduresonline.com)

The Clinical Director or another Senior Manager should in the first instance contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Through discussion and consultation, a decision will be made whether to hold an Allegation Strategy Meeting. Where the allegation is against the Senior Manager the Chair of Trustees will take this action.

If for any reason it is decided that an Allegations Strategy Meeting is not appropriate, it may be necessary to address matters in accordance with the organisation's disciplinary procedures.

Whistleblowing

This is dealt with under our Whistleblowing Policy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Implementation and day to day working of this policy will be monitored by the Designated Person who will liaise with the Trustees and bring to their attention any concerns that the Policy is not being adhered to, or any changes required arising from changes to statutory guidance.

Legislation relating to this policy:

The main legislation in England is:

- the Children Act 1989,
- the Children Act 2004 (section 11)
- the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Appendix 1

Key Contact list for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Time to Talk West Berkshire

Contacts At Time to Talk

Designated Persons	Davina Nicholson
Deputy Designated Persons	Steve Vardy Kate Adams
Nominated Trustee	Rosemary Lilley

Key Contacts within the Local Authority

	Name	Address	Telephone contact	Email
Contact, Advice & Assessment Service (CAAS)	Duty Social worker	Council Offices Market Street Newbury Berkshire RG14 5LD	Professionals only contact number: 01635 503190 Parents only Contact number: 01635 503090 Social Care - Emergency Duty Team (outside of office hours): 01344 351999 Safeguarding – Emergency Duty Team (outside of office hours): 01344 786512 Fax: 01344 786535	child@westberks.gov.uk adultcare@westberks.gov.uk
Prevent Officer Thames Valley Police	Prevent Officer	Reading Police Station, Castle Street, Reading RG1 7TH	07800 702319 0118 953 6000 Prevent advice line (National) - 0800 011 3764	preventreferralswestberkshire@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk
Local Authority Delegated Officer (LADO)	Fiona Goussard	Council Offices Market Street Newbury Berkshire RG14 5LD	via CAAS on 01635 503190	cpadmin@westberks.gov.uk or

	Name	Address	Telephone contact	Email
Contact can be made via CAAS				LADO.LADO@westberks.gov.uk
Senior Education Welfare Officer	Sally-Ann Looker	Council Offices Market Street Newbury Berkshire RG14 5LD	01635 519788	sal.looker@westberks.gov.uk

Appendix 2: Links to government guidance

- Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2024

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d7301b9084b18b95709f75/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf

- Working Together to Safeguard Children – 2023

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/669e7501ab418ab055592a7b/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023.pdf

- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a80597640f0b62302692fa1/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf