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| **Author / reviewer** | Angela Graham / Emily Keller |
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| **Audience** | All staff | **Yes** |
| PAs & At Home staff | **Yes** |
| Volunteers | **Yes** |
| Clients / Beneficiaries | **Yes** |
| All stakeholders | **Yes** |

Registered Charity No. 1114435. Company No. 05706441. Registered in England and Wales

Full registered company name: Possability People Limited

Registered address: Montague House, Montague Place, Brighton, BN2 1JE

**Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure**

1. **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to:

* protect (and therefore prevent abuse, harm or neglect of) any vulnerable children that use our services or participate in our activities or otherwise interact with us;
* inform our members, service users, visitors and the general public of our overarching principles in relation to safeguarding;
* provide all staff, trustees, contractors and volunteers with the overarching principles and procedures that guide our approach to safeguarding; and child protection.

**The term ’child’ in this document refers to any person under the age of 18 years.**

1. **POLICY**

The welfare of children or young people who come in to contact with us by way of using our services or participating in our activities is of paramount importance to us and we will treat any breach of this policy very seriously.

It is everyone’s responsibility to safeguard and promote the protection of children in order to prevent abuse. This policy sets out the responsibilities of:

1. those who work for us, including employees, volunteers and consultants
2. trustees;
3. those who work with us, including external partners, members and visitors with regard to the protection and safeguarding of vulnerable adults.

Possability People recommends that staff and volunteers working with children register themselves with the local pan Sussex Safeguarding Partnership website to ensure they automatically receive any notifications when the Child Protection and Safeguarding policies or procedures are updated or amended. <https://www.bhscp.org.uk/>

All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously, and all members of staff, volunteers, trustees and contractors have a duty to report any suspected abuse.

In all circumstances, we reserve the right to immediately share information about safeguarding concerns with other agencies (e.g. local authority, health and third sector partners, or the Police, and involving children and parents appropriately.

# 3. DEFINITIONS

## 3. 1 Protection

## Protection refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children or young people who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm.

## Safeguarding is broader than protection as it also includes prevention.

## 3.2 Safeguarding has been defined as:

All agencies working with children, young people and their families taking all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to children’s welfare are minimised; and where there are concerns about children and young people’s welfare, all agencies taking appropriate actions to address those concerns, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local agencies*. (Charity Commission March 2009)*

## Therefore all agencies and individuals should aim to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people so that the need for action to protect them from harm is reduced.

## ABUSE

## Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment – a person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and young people may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

## Within this policy the following are regarded as abuse. However, it must be recognised that abuse may take many forms and may not always be obvious:

1. Neglect;
2. Physical abuse;
3. Sexual abuse;
4. Emotional abuse.

## 4.1 Neglect

## Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

* Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
* Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
* Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers);
* Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

## It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs. The following may be possible signs that a child or young person is experiencing neglect:

* Constant tiredness;
* Constant hunger;
* Poor personal hygiene;
* Poor state of clothing;
* Untreated medical conditions;
* Low self-esteem;
* No social relationships;
* Poor physical condition;
* Obsessive/neurotic behaviour;
* Compulsive stealing;

## 4.2 Physical abuse

## Physical abuse 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 the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

## The following may be possible signs that a child is suffering from physical abuse:

* Unexplained injuries or burns (particularly if recurrent)
* Feeble excuses or refusal to explain injuries
* Withdrawal from physical contact
* Abnormally hiding skin from sight
* Self-harm tendencies
* Aggression towards others

## 4.3 Sexual abuse

## Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

## The following may be possible signs that a child is suffering from sexual abuse:

* Extreme fear of a particular person;
* Soreness/bleeding in the throat, genital or anal regions;
* Inappropriately playing out sexual behaviour;
* Talk about a friend who has a problem;
* Deliberately lying and stealing to get caught;
* Irrational changes in behaviour;
* Drawing sexually explicit pictures that indicate abuse;
* Nightmares;
* Wetting or soiling themselves;
* Feelings of being bad, dirty or wicked;
* Acting in a sexually inappropriate way towards adults;
* Hinting about secrets they cannot tell;
* Possessions or money gained as a bribe or reward for sexual favours, or that might indicate that the child or young person is involved in, or being groomed for, prostitution.

## 4.5 Emotional abuse

## Emotional abuse is 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 children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the 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, 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.

## The following may be possible signs that a child is suffering from emotional abuse:

* Over reaction to mistakes
* Fear of new situations
* Self-harm
* Compulsive stealing
* Fear of parents being contacted
* Drug/solvent abuse
* Obsessive/neurotic behaviour
* Irrational changes in behaviour

# SAFER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF POSSABILITY PEOPLE TEAM MEMBERS

Possability People recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and will take all reasonable steps to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children or are otherwise unsuitable to work with them

## These steps include:

* Ensuring that those involved in the recruitment and selection of new staff have received adequate training in Safer Recruitment
* Each applicant will complete a standard application form which includes a chronological employment history and a self-disclosure about any previous criminal record OR where applications are invited by CV and cover letter the advert will clearly state that CVs must include a full chronological employment history
* On receipt of an offer, each applicant will provide two confidential references and these references will be confirmed through telephone contact before a start date can be agreed;
* Each candidate will supply 2 forms of photo identification as proof of their identity. Scans will be made of these and kept on record

All employment with Possability People will be subject to completion of a Disclosure and Barring Service check. This will be enhanced for team members who have contact with children and vulnerable people, and Standard or Basic for office staff (in line with DBS requirements)

Possability People’s commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and protection of children will be explicitly stated in:

* Publicity materials
* Advertisements
* Candidate information packs
* Person specifications
* Job descriptions;
* Induction training

All employees and volunteers will receive a formal induction

* 1. **Job advertisements**

The level of information to be sent to potential applicants in the candidates' information pack will depend on the level of the post. A copy of Possability People’s Safeguarding and Child Projection Policy should always be included in the information pack, as well as the application form, job description and person specification.

The information should also set out clearly the extent of the relationships and contact with children and the degree of responsibility for children that the person will have in the position to be filled. The information will stress that the identity of the candidate, if successful, will need to be checked thoroughly and will refer to the need for a Disclosure and Barring Service check;

**4.2 Job descriptions will state:**

* The main duties and responsibilities of the post including the post-holder's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare and protection of children with whom they have contact or for whom they are responsible.

**4.3 Person specifications will:**

* Include the qualifications and experience, and any other requirements needed to perform the role in relation to working with children;
* Explain that if the applicant is short-listed any relevant issues arising from the references will be taken up at interview;
* All application forms will be assessed equally and scored objectively by each member of the interview panel. Information contained in the application form is cross checked so that any discrepancy can be explored with the candidate at interview;
* Each candidate will be asked the same questions (agreed earlier by the interview panel) with the exception of any specific questions relating to their application, employment history or self-disclosure.

**4.3 Destruction of documents**

## In order to comply with General Data protection Regulations, Possability People will destroy all paper and electronic copies of applications and references for unsuccessful applicants after 6 months. The only exception will be those applicants who ask for their application to be kept on file in case of future vacancies. A time will then be agreed for this retention and deletion scheduled.

## 4.4 Possability People requires:

* All staff to read Possability People’s Safeguarding Policy at induction and have access to this via online shared document system
* All staff with direct delivery duties to attend Safeguarding training in the locality in which they work
* All staff are able to contact Possability People Safeguarding Lead for support at any time
1. **FAILURE TO FOLLOW THIS POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

For those who work or volunteer for us, failure to follow this policy and procedures could lead to disciplinary action, which may ultimately result in your dismissal or termination of your services. For those who work with us, we reserve the right to immediately terminate your contract. For Trustees, this could lead to you being required to immediately cease being a trustee. For visitors we reserve the right to escort you from the premises and refuse entry to any of our premises in the future.

1. **MANDATORY TRAINING**

This policy is in conjunction with the mandatory training that all new employees, volunteers, Trustees and contractors must attend, and should be read in conjunction with the Whistleblowing Policy, Health & Safety Policy and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure and any other relevant policies and procedures that may be issued from time to time.

If you do not receive training within one month of you starting work or volunteering with us then please inform your line manager.

1. **HOW WE SEEK TO KEEP VULNERABLE CHILDREN SAFE**

We seek to keep vulnerable children safe by;

* valuing them, listening to and respecting them
* keeping them at the centre of everything we do
* adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures and policies for staff, volunteers, trustees and contractors
* providing effective management for staff, volunteers and contractors through supervision, support and training
* Safer recruitment of staff, volunteers and contractors, ensuring all necessary checks are made (scrutiny of initial application, interview process, obtaining DBS, obtaining two references)
* having clear sanctions for those people who act outside of these parameters
* sharing information about protection of children and good practice with staff, volunteers, trustees and contractors; along with, parents and carers (i.e. services users and their friends/families/personal assistants)
* taking seriously and responding appropriately to all concerns and allegations of abuse which may require designated safeguarding leads to share concerns with agencies who need to know and, in an emergency, may require referral to the police

**7.1 What you should do to safeguard children**:

* be aware of situations which may present risks to children
* assess, plan and organise your work so as to minimise these risks
* attend training as soon as you start working or volunteering with or for us and every 2 years after that (including any other training as required by us);
* ensure that you register with the Local Pan Sussex Child Protection and website for any updates to safeguarding policies and procedures and ensure you comply with these updates; <https://sussexchildprotection.procedures.org.uk/>
* Immediately report any concerns you have to your line manager or the Safeguarding Lead.

**7.2 Your obligations to report**

The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of children and if medical attention is required this must be sought immediately.

It is the responsibility of everyone to act on suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect. Therefore all staff, volunteers, trustees and contractors are required to act in the following way:

* On suspicion of abuse, harm or neglect, immediately ascertain whether the alleged victim is unsafe
* If you suspect they are unsafe, or at serious risk of physical harm, contact the Police\* immediately and report your concerns, and if necessary seek emergency medical assistance. (See consent for reporting a crime below.)
* Report the suspicion to your line manager in accordance with the procedure set out below. If your line manager is unavailable you must report your suspicions to the Safeguarding Lead.
* Ensure you have recorded accurately details of the events, as these documents will provide crucial data for the investigating Local Authority, once a referral has been made.
* Under no circumstances must you conduct your own investigation – this is the responsibility of the investigation lead the Local Authority or Police
* You may be required to provide information, and assist in an ‘inquiry’ and you will be supported to do so by the Safeguarding Lead.
* In every case where a referral is made, it is necessary to complete an internal [‘Safeguarding Alert Record](file:///S%3A%5CSafeguarding%5CSafeguarding%20Alert%20Record%20TEMPLATE.docx)’ – this will enable concerns, contacts, actions taken, and conclusions to be recorded. This must be sent to the Safeguarding Lead.
1. **DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING ROLES**

The following people have particular responsibilities for safeguarding within Possability People

* Safeguarding Lead: Angela Graham

email: angela@possabilitypeople.org.uk Tel: 07921 453 183

* Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Katharine Russell

email katharine@possabiitypeople.org.uk Tel: 07458 305 258

The Chief Officer is the senior member of the team, involved directly with supporting Safeguarding matters arising. The Board meet annually, to review and discuss referrals, alerts and other matters relating to Safeguarding.

The Safeguarding Lead or, if applicable, the Trustee with Responsibility for Safeguarding will assess the issue reported to them and ensure that when necessary they share concerns with agencies who need to know and, in an emergency, may need to refer such concerns to the police.

**8.1 Safeguarding Lead**

The Safeguarding Lead is the person designated as such in this policy. They are the organisation’s lead for any matters relating to safeguarding concerns. You are expected to discuss any concerns you have, no matter how minor, with them in order to establish proportionate level of risk and concern. They will then advise on the appropriate action to take, and support the formal referral process, should this be necessary.

The responsibility of the Safeguarding Lead will be to support staff, volunteers and contractors. They will advise, and will support necessary referrals to the appropriate Local Authority team. It is ***not*** the responsibility of the Safeguarding Lead to investigate or implement any actions, unless advised by the Local Authority.

The Safeguarding Lead will ensure full co-operation is given to the Local Authority.

In the event that the Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, please contact the Deputy Safeguarding Lead (details above).

**8.2 Safeguarding Monitoring**

The organisation monitors and discusses safeguarding at the quarterly Project Leads Meeting where Project Leads and relevant members of the Senior Leadership Team meet to discuss relevant information, local and national policy, share case studies and scenarios, reflect on practice, and make suggestions to improve the local support network.

1. **THE REPORTING PROCESS**

Allegations of abuse or significant risk of harm from any source will be taken seriously and will be fully and openly investigated by the organisation. The objectives of the investigation will be to:

* Establish facts;
* Discuss interim concerns with the organisation’s Safeguarding Lead who will support and advise on further action;
* Assess the needs of the child for protection, support and redress;
* Make decisions regarding what follow-up actions should be taken with respect to the perpetrator (and the service or its management if they have been culpable, ineffective or negligent);
* Report issues to appropriate Local Authority

# 9.1 Allegations against Adults who work with Children

## If you have information which suggests an adult who works with children (in a paid or unpaid capacity) has:

* Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child
* Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child
* Behaved towards a child/ren in a way that indicated s/he is unsuitable to work with children they would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children

## These procedures may also be used where concerns arise about:

* The person's behaviour with regard to his/her own children;
* The behaviour in the private or community life of a partner, member of the family or other household member;
* A person's behaviour in their personal life, which may impact upon the safety of children to whom they owe a duty of care.

**9.2 Allegations about a member of Possability People staff (either employee or volunteer)**

## Where there is a complaint against a paid member of staff or volunteer there may be three types of investigation:

1. A criminal investigation
2. A child protection investigation
3. A disciplinary or misconduct investigation

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

# 9.3 Abuse reported by a third party

## In responding to an allegation of abuse reported by a third party:

* Listen carefully to the information given and record and date it on the child’s case notes.
* If the informer is an adult (parent, relative, non-professional), advise them to offer them the telephone numbers contact numbers <https://www.bhscp.org.uk/preventing-abuse-and-neglect/reporting-concerns/>
* The professional involved should confirm with duty team that a referral has been made;
* If the informer is a child, support the child in the process of contacting Children's Social Care Department First Response Team;
* If the informer is another professional, request that they make a direct referral following their agency’s procedures;

On an annual basis the Safeguarding Lead will prepare and present a report for the Trustee Board setting out the number of concerns reported, the nature of the concerns, the project area, the outcome and any potential improvements to processes and procedures that can be made.

**9.4 Escalating Concerns**

It is important to note that if you raise a safeguarding concern or pass on an allegation, you have a duty to ensure your concern is addressed to your satisfaction. Therefore, if you feel that your concern has not been addressed (and that the vulnerable adult has not been protected) you should escalate the matter to Chief Officer.

If you are still not satisfied you should escalate the matter to the Trustee with Responsibility for Safeguarding.

# 9.5 Sharing information and confidentiality

## Possability People is committed to making information about the organisation, its activities and policies easily accessible to volunteers, parents, organisations and anyone else in contact with the charity.

## Possability People staff should ensure that any records made in relation to a referral are kept confidentially and in a secure place within the child’s / family file at their place of work (following the procedures of that place of work).

## Information in relation to child protection concerns should be shared on a “need to know” basis.

**9.6 Involving the Child**

See Guidelines for work with Children**.**

Please be assured that the protection of children is paramount and must take precedence over other legal rights. As long as information is shared in an appropriate manner and in good faith, the law will protect you. You should ensure that the information you share is;

1. necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it;
2. is shared only with those individuals who need to have it;
3. is accurate; and
4. shared promptly.

For further guidance see the manual of Sussex Children Protection and Safeguarding Procedures. This guidance covers the areas served by the Brighton & Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex

<https://sussexchildprotection.procedures.org.uk/page/quickguide#contact_us>

**Safeguarding Alert Process**

**Do not discuss with alleged perpetrator**

**Staff Member**

**SLT Member**

**Chief Officer**

Copy email to Safeguarding Lead

Email alert to Adult Social Care

Call 999 and alert Police

Record details on Safeguarding Alert Form. Email to Chief Officer. Do **NOT** save in shared folders

Yes

No

**Inform client you are making an alert.**

**Does alert involve a Staff Member, SLT Member**

**or Chief Officer?**

Discuss with colleague or Safeguarding Lead, then answer question again

Immediately contact Safeguarding Trustee

Copy email to Safeguarding Trustee

Email alert to Adult Social Care

Copy email to Safeguarding Lead

Email alert to Adult Social Care

Discuss immediately with Chief Officer

Discuss immediately with Safeguarding Lead/Deputy

Safeguarding Lead will discuss with Line Manager immediate action required and alert mode

Email alert to Adult Social Care

Copy email to Safeguarding Lead

Record details on Safeguarding Alert Form. Email to Safeguarding Lead. Do **NOT** save in shared folders

Record details on Safeguarding Alert Form. Email to Trustee. **Do NOT** save in shared folders

Complete Safeguarding Record and email copy to safeguarding lead

Yes

Yes

No

**Is there immediate risk?**

Not sure

No further action

No

**Is client at risk of harm? (by self of others)**