



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SERVICE

Safeguarding Children Policy Version 1

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding refers to the actions that are taken to promote the health, welfare and human rights of all individuals, and enable them to live free from abuse, harm, and neglect, whatever their background. Next Steps through its statement on difference and diversity, its complaints process, and whistleblowing policy, ensures that all those involved in the service have an opportunity to take action that will lead to **general safeguarding** being protected and promoted.

The safeguarding policies of Next Steps deal with the protection of **vulnerable adults and all children**, and follow the principles enshrined within the Care Act 2014 - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted> and the following acts have been referred to as importance to our policy:

- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018
- Information Sharing 2018
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015

Vulnerable adults and children are two sections of society which are particularly vulnerable to abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and who require particular actions and policies to protect them. A vulnerable adult is someone aged 18 or above who is likely to receive health and care services for poor mental health, disability, age, or illness. They will struggle to adequately care for and protect themselves, and as a consequence be more susceptible to harm, neglect or exploitation from others.

Any child or young person under the age of 18 can be considered to be at risk of harm or abuse, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, or religion. It is the responsibility of everyone who comes into contact with vulnerable adults and all children to ensure their wellbeing is being promoted and that they are protected from harm.

Next Steps staff and volunteers have a responsibility to recognise a safeguarding concern about a vulnerable adult or child when a disclosure of abuse, harm or neglect has been made; respond with reassurance to the individual making the disclosure; ask what they would like to happen and explain how Next Steps will act; record the disclosure; report the disclosure to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (Victoria Heath).

Next Steps staff and volunteers can refer for further information and advice on safeguarding to the Social Care Institute for Excellence -

<https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults>

1. Policy Principles

- All children regardless of age, gender, culture, language, race, ability, sexual identity or religion have equal rights to protection, safeguarding and opportunities.

- We recognise that all adults, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm and have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm.

2. Policy Aims

- To raise the awareness of all staff and volunteers of the need to safeguard children and adults and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To provide an environment in which children, young people and adults feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident to, and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties, believing they will be effectively listened to.
- To demonstrate the Next Steps commitment with regard to safeguarding.
- To ensure the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) and all staff will give full consideration to the use of appropriate assessments, resources and agency support when identifying the factors present in a child's or adult's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. (Familial or contextual.)
- To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff and parents and carers.
- To develop a structured procedure within Next Steps which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
- Following safe recruitment procedures which ensure that staff are carefully selected, vetted, and have the relevant qualifications and experience.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the organisation's Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- Working in partnership with external organisations and professionals to ensure that children are protected.

3. Confidentiality

- Next Steps recognises that in order to effectively meet a child's needs, safeguard their welfare and protect them from harm they must contribute to inter-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and share information between professionals and agencies where there are concerns.
- Next Steps must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and that the Data Protection Act 2018⁸ is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would place a child at risk of harm.
- Next Steps must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing. However, we also recognise that all matters relating to child protection are personal to children and families. Therefore, in this respect they are confidential and the relevant people will be informed.
- Next Steps will always undertake to share their intention to refer a child to MASH with their parents /carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm

or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will contact the MASH consultation line.

4. Child safeguarding

Next Steps is committed to promoting the welfare and protection of children and young people from harm. It is possible that during the course of therapeutic sessions and/or during supervision of practice that Next Steps Therapist become aware of the abuse or possible abuse of children. This might be through the therapist observing behaviours from the child/ young person or the child/young person disclosing a situation.

Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday is regarded as a child. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.

Next Steps believes it is everyone's responsibility to be aware of the need to safeguard them and their right to access appropriate services. Any concerns that the rights of children and young people are being infringed should be immediately reported to the **Next Steps Designated Safeguarding Officer and should contact their supervisor.**

Reporting any concerns will follow the same procedure as the adults policy and in Appendix 1 a body map is included, if there are signs of physical abuse.

Abuse of children and young people can take the following form:

If a volunteer becomes aware that any of the forms of abuse detailed below are being committed by Next Steps then they should **automatically contact the Next Steps Designated Safeguarding Officer and their supervisor.**

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 the 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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition (e.g. being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain). In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

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. Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing, and protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger. A child requires adequate supervision and care, and they should have access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Neglect of a child also includes unresponsiveness to basic emotional needs.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is a serious form of child abuse and violence against women and girls, and a violation of human rights. It has been illegal in this country since 1985 and there is a statutory duty to safeguard children and protect and promote the welfare of all women and girls. People guilty of allowing FGM to take place are punished by fines and up to fourteen years in prison.

FGM is defined by the World Health Organisation as "all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons". It can leave women and girls traumatised as well as in severe

pain, cause difficulties in childbirth, and in some rare cases it can lead to death. There is no cultural or religious justification for FGM.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. This power imbalance could be due to age, gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and /or access to economic or other resources. The abuse could be linked to an exchange for something the victim perceives that they need or want and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increase status) of the perpetrator or facilitator.

Victims can be exploited even when the activity appears consensual, and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online. The experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different from boys, the indicators may not be the same and both boys and girls that are criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence. CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex.

Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities cannot) consent to the marriage but are coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse.

Forced marriage is an appalling and indefensible practice and is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights. Since June 2014 forcing someone to marry has become a criminal offence in England and Wales under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage which is common in several cultures. The families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

Honour-based Abuse

Honour based abuse (HBV) can be described as a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.

Honour based abuse might be committed against people who;

- become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion;

- want to get out of an arranged marriage;
- want to get out of a forced marriage;
- wear clothes or take part in activities that might not be considered traditional within a particular culture.

It is a violation of human rights and may be a form of domestic and/or sexual abuse. There is no, and cannot be, honour or justification for abusing the human rights of others.

Useful resources for Next Steps staff/volunteers

NSPCC: <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

Childline: <http://www.childline.org.uk/pages/home.aspx>

Anti-Bullying Alliance: <http://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>

Beat Bullying: <http://www.beatbullying.org/>

Childnet International –making the internet a great and safe place for children. Includes resources for professionals and parents <http://www.childnet.com/>

Thinkuknow (includes resources for professionals and parents)
<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Safer Internet Centre <http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>

Transgender <http://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk/>

It is important to emphasize that everybody in whatever role working with children and young people has a duty to safeguard children and to report concerns about their safety and wellbeing. If you have any concerns that a child may be being abused, maltreated or neglected please email the Designated Safeguarding Officer at info@next-steps.org.uk. It is recommended that you also contact your supervisor. They will be able to advise on what action, if any needs to be taken. If your concern is out of hours, then please contact your **local council 24-hour support service** for advice.

Revision History

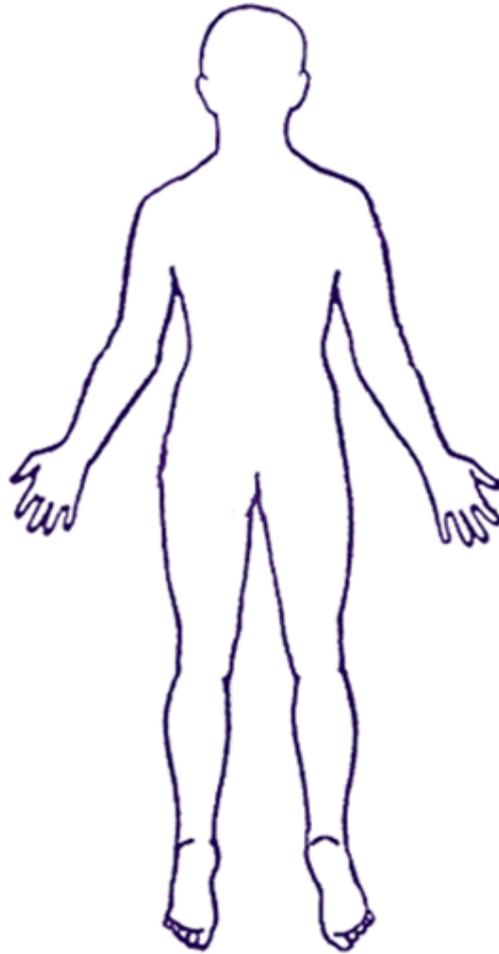
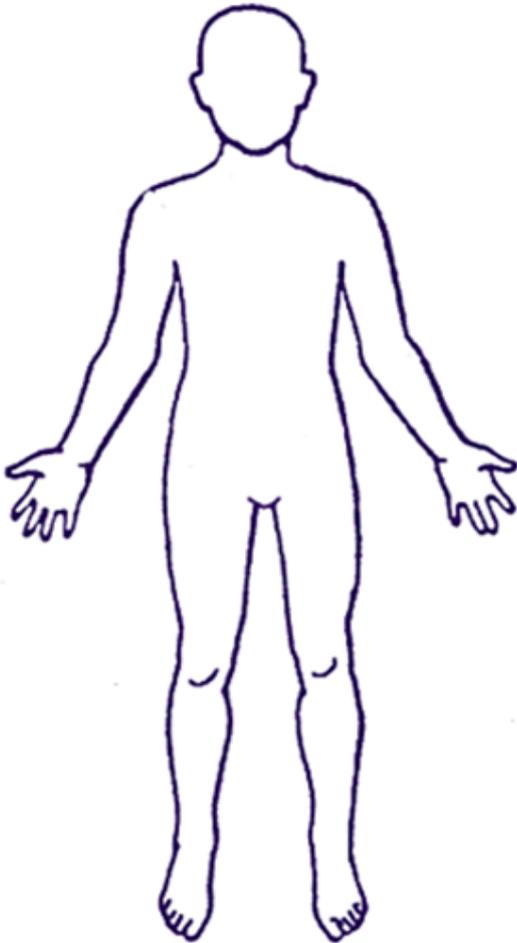
Revision Date	Summary of Changes	Other Comments

APPENDIX 1: BODY MAP

Name of Adult at Risk:		Sex:	
Date:		Time:	

Front

Back



Concerns

1.	
2.	
3.	

Your Name	Job Title
Responsible Manager	Job Title