

Safeguarding Minors Policy



Definitions

Alterer: The person who notifies the Safeguarding Manager in the Organisation.

Befriender: Staff member responsible for practical support and help in the community for each Participant.

Key Worker: Staff member with primary responsibility of a Participant, in particular where the mentoring and befriending roles are split, or where they may still be training.

Mentor: Staff member(s) assigned with responsibility for bringing about attitudinal or behavioural change in a Participant.

Named Person: Person responsible for dealing with any safeguarding issues that might arise (Safeguarding Manager), with a deputy available in their absence.

Organisation: In2Out.

Participant(s): Person(s) engaged with the Programme.

Programme: Mentoring and support services supplied by the Organisation.

Referrer: The person who notifies an appropriate Authority – usually the Safeguarding Manager.

Safeguarding Manager: Staff member responsible for dealing with any concerns about safeguarding.

Staff: Any person paid or unpaid who might be in a position of trust on behalf of the Organisation including project director, trustees, directors, managers, employees, mentors, befrienders, contractors providing mentoring and befriending services volunteers and support workers.

Trustees: Persons having the general control and responsibility for upholding the constitution of the Organisation.

Purpose of the Policy

To outline the approach required to protect from abuse all Participants under 18 years of age using the Programme, and to provide appropriate support to Staff if accused of abuse. In UK law someone is a minor until they are 18 years old.

To whom the policy applies

This Policy applies to all Staff working on behalf of the Organisation. It is especially relevant to Staff who interact in any way with Participants and, in particular, who come directly into contact with minors (Participants or others) and their parents/carers, and/or other Staff within the Organisation.

Policy

The Organisation is committed to keeping the Participants it supports safe. These may be minors or may have siblings, offspring or other contacts who are under 18 or vulnerable in some other way.

The Organisation is also committed to upholding the general principle of English Law that a person is innocent until proven guilty, therefore will provide appropriate support to members of Staff if accused of abuse in performing their work.

The Organisation works to prevent and minimise abuse, and to ensure that Staff know what to do in the event of abuse and can act to prevent further abuse. The Organisation similarly acknowledges its duty to act appropriately upon any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse.

It is acknowledged that significant numbers of vulnerable people are abused. There is an established set of definitions and descriptions of forms of abuse which are given at the end of this Policy.

The legal principle that “the welfare of the child is paramount” means that taking action to safeguard minors is most important. It is a legal requirement for Staff to share information with the Safeguarding Manager if they are concerned about the safety of a minor.

Confidentiality should only be breached on a “need to know” basis and should continue to be respected and not discussed with third parties. This ensures any subsequent actions can be taken in a sensitive and proportionate way and without prejudicing any investigations.

All staff will be required to have been trained in safeguarding as appropriate for their role, and to undergo refresher training every year.

Other relevant policies

This Policy should be read in conjunction with other the Organisation's other policies such as:

Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedure, Professional Boundaries Policy, Personal Safety Policy and Procedure, Confidentiality Policy, Feedback Policy, Risk Management Policy, Raising Concerns Policy and Procedure.

Contacts

The Appendix to the associated Procedure contains a list of the Safeguarding Manager, all local authority safeguarding officers and police contacts.

Service principles

The Organisation is committed to zero tolerance of abuse and neglect within the Organisation and its services. This Policy and its associated Procedure have been drawn up in order to enable it to:

- Implement processes which enable it to meet the requirements of Local Authority Multi-agency Safeguarding policies relating to a person aged 18 years or under.
- Promote good practice and work in a way that can prevent harm, abuse and coercion occurring.
- Ensure that any allegations, disclosures of abuse or suspicions are dealt with appropriately and the person experiencing abuse is supported.
- Stop abuse occurring.

In order to implement this Policy the Organisation will work to:

- Manage services in a way which promotes safety and prevents abuse.
- Promote the freedom and dignity of the person who has experienced or is experiencing abuse.
- Promote the rights of all people to live free from abuse and coercion.
- Ensure the safety and well being of people who do not have the capacity to decide how they want to respond to abuse that they are experiencing.

Procedures

The associated Procedure for this Policy is specified in the In2Out Safeguarding Minors Procedure.

Definitions and types of abuse

It is important that Staff are familiar with generally agreed definitions of types of abuse so that appropriate decisions are made about whether information received constitutes abuse. No Secrets (Department of Health, 2000, paragraph 2.5) defines abuse in the following terms:

“Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by other person or persons. Abuse may consist of single or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm or exploitation of the person subjected to it.”

Of particular relevance are the following descriptions of the forms that abuse may take:

- **Physical abuse**, including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.

- **Sexual abuse**, including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the minor has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into giving consent.
- **Psychological abuse**, including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse**, including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Neglect and acts of omission**, including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health care, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- **Discriminatory abuse**, including racist, sexist and that based on a person's disability as well as and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.
- **Institutional abuse**, when the rituals and routines in use force residents or service users to sacrifice their own needs, wishes or preferred lifestyle to the needs of the institution or service provider.

The above are the categories which are used by the Children's Social Care Services of most County Councils in classifying abuse and are therefore also accepted as appropriate categories by the Organisation. In addition there can be **stranger abuse** in which minors are targeted by strangers and where the form of abuse can include financial, physical, or emotional abuse. It is important to note that certain acts or omissions incorporated within the above descriptions may also be criminal offences that need to be drawn to the attention of the police.

In September 2012, the Government definition of domestic violence was widened to include those aged 16-17 and wording changed to reflect **coercive control**.

The Government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: "Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between *those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality*. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

"Controlling behaviour" is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and / or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour".

"Coercive behaviour" is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim".

It has been widely understood for some time that coercive control is a core part of domestic violence. As such the extension does not represent a fundamental change in the definition. However it does highlight the importance of recognising coercive control as a complex pattern of overlapping and repeated abuse perpetrated within a context of power and control.

Key Workers, Mentors and Befrienders will be given training during induction on safeguarding and indicators of possible abuse.

Reviewing Policy

The Organisation will review and update this Policy on a regular basis, to ensure that it reflects changes in law and/or good practice. A review should take place annually by the Trustees on the advice of the Safeguarding Manager. The Safeguarding Manager will also ensure that any changes are clearly communicated to Staff in writing electronically as soon as practicable and in person at the next available opportunity. Information for Participants will be similarly updated directly.

Document Control & History

Version	Date	Author	Reviewer	Summary of Changes	Issue Date
1.2	15/7/14	P Gibson	T Wilcox	Definitions	15/7/14
1.3	1/4/16	P Gibson	T Wilcox	Inclusion of section on coercive control	1/4/16
1.4	26/4/16	P Gibson	T Wilcox	Inclusion of references to the Organisation supporting members of Staff is accused of abuse	26/4/16
1.5	9/3/17	P Gibson	T Wilcox	Inclusion of statement regarding staff refresher training	9/3/17
1.6	2/5/19		A Hunt	Review & logo update	2/5/19
1.7	1/06/21		M Screeton	Refresher training now given annually	01/06/21
1.8	15/05/23		M Screeton	Review – no changes	15/05/23
1.9	20/05/24		M Screeton	Review – no changes	20/05/24
Staff Handbook					
This Policy features in the Staff Handbook. When changes are made to this Policy, ensure the Handbook is amended as appropriate.					