

# Safeguarding

Information for small community groups about safeguarding policies and practices

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## What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding means making sure your group is run in a way that actively prevents harm, harassment, bullying, abuse and neglect. This includes:

- Keeping people safe whilst they are taking part in your activities; and
- Knowing how to recognise when someone in your group is affected by abuse or neglect, wherever it is happening, and knowing how to respond appropriately so you can help them speak up and take action.

## Who needs to think about safeguarding?

Every group has a responsibility to think about safeguarding. The time and effort you will need to spend on safeguarding depends on the level of risk involved in the activities your group does. If your group works with children, or with adults at risk, you should have written safeguarding policies and clear procedures. A child is defined as any person who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. An adult at risk is defined as:

An individual aged 18 years or over who:

- (a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) AND;
- (b) is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, AND;
- (c) as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

Both children and adults at risk need safeguarding, but there are different approaches to take for each. This is because:

- Children and adults at risk can experience different types of harm and abuse.
- The way abuse is reported for children and adults at risk is not the same and the legislation for managing each is different.
- All adults, including adults at risk, have a right to make unwise decisions - including the choice not to take action to protect themselves. This is different for children, where their safety is the primary concern - although listening to their views is still important.

For groups that work with both children and adults at risk, it is probably easiest to have two separate policies. There are two sample policies at the end of this information sheet, one for safeguarding children and one for safeguarding adults at risk.

## Designated safeguarding leads

For any group, it can be a good idea to appoint a specific person to take a lead on safeguarding. If you are a charity, the Charity Commission requires you to appoint a designated safeguarding lead<sup>1</sup>. This person holds the main responsibility for responding to and reporting safeguarding concerns appropriately and legally. They might also take a lead in talking to members and training volunteers about the group's safeguarding practices.

It is important to remember though, that the whole group is responsible for safeguarding overall. You should think about ways to make sure the safeguarding lead is supported by the rest of the group – particularly in any situations that might be difficult or stressful.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) has a very thorough handbook for safeguarding leads<sup>2</sup> that is freely available online.

## Safeguarding policies and practices

A safeguarding policy is a document that describes what your group will do to help keep the people in and around your group safe from harm, harassment, bullying, abuse and neglect. You need to think about all the people that come into contact

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>

<sup>2</sup> <https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/safeguarding/checklists-training-and-other-support/specialist-guides/a-designated-safeguarding-leads-handbook>

with your group, including: group members, relatives of members, people who use your services or attend your events, volunteers, trustees, and staff.

The amount of detail your safeguarding policy needs, and how often you review it, depends on what your group does, where it works, and who with. Your policy should cover all the key risks for the people you work with and the activities you do. The most important thing is to have a policy that outlines practices that make sense to your group and that you will be able to implement. You should aim to write a policy that will help your group to: understand the safeguarding risks that are relevant to you; know what to do if you are concerned about the safety of anyone linked with your group; and be aware of your legal responsibilities.

To be thorough, a safeguarding policy for a small community group should include at least the following 11 sections. The sample policies below give detailed examples of what each of these sections might look like.

**1. Purpose of the policy:** describes the overall aim of keeping people safe, and outlines what the policy will help the group to achieve.

**2. Code of conduct:** sets out the values of the group and how you expect your members, volunteers, trustees etc to behave

**3. Legislation:** cites all the relevant safeguarding legislation

**4. Definitions:** includes definitions of who the policy is talking about (e.g. adults at risk), and the types of harm, abuse, and neglect the policy is referring to

**5. Recognising safeguarding concerns:** describes the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect that the group should look out for

**6. Responding to concerns:** describes the procedures that should be taken by any member of the group if they recognise a safeguarding concern, and the specific procedures that the safeguarding lead will follow to respond to and report the concern. You can ask your local authority safeguarding team if you need help developing these procedures.

**7. Keeping records:** sets out how and where records will be kept of any safeguarding concerns that arise in the group, which details will be recorded, and who will be responsible for recording them.

**8. Confidentiality, consent and information sharing:** describes how and in what circumstances confidential information might be shared with other organisations or individuals, in order to respond appropriately and legally to a safeguarding concern.

**9. Recruiting and training staff and/or volunteers:** describes any DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks that your group needs to do, and how your group will make sure your staff/volunteers know about your safeguarding policy and procedures. Our information sheet *Using the disclosure and barring service (DBS)* has details of which checks your group will need, depending on the types of activities you do.

**10. Reviewing policy and procedures:** states how often this policy and its procedures will be updated.

**11. Key contacts:** lists all the important contacts for safeguarding, including contact details for the group's designated safeguarding lead, the local authority safeguarding team and how to report a safeguarding concern to them, the local police non-emergency number, and any other organisations that might offer useful support.

## Sample policy: Safeguarding adults at risk

This sample policy is aimed at small, volunteer-led community groups. Your group may decide to include more detail in some sections, or have different procedures, principles, etc. It is important that the policy you write is relevant for your group, the activities you do, and the people you work with. The last section of this information sheet, Useful Resources, lists some good online resources to refer to if you need help thinking through particular parts of your safeguarding practices or policy.

### 1. Purpose of the policy

Anytown Community Group is committed to safeguarding practices that help ensure the safety of adults at risk whilst taking part in our group activities and in the wider community. This policy helps everyone involved in our group:

- be aware of our legal responsibilities
- understand the safeguarding risks in Anytown Community Group
- know what to do if they have a concern about the wellbeing or welfare of any adult at risk that comes into contact with our group.

This safeguarding policy, and associated procedures, applies to all individuals involved in Anytown Community Group, including: trustees, members, volunteers, and staff. The policy applies to all concerns about the safety of adults at risk while taking part in our group and the activities we run, or while in the wider community.

### 2. Code of conduct

When working with vulnerable adults we are acting in a position of trust. We recognise that keeping our group safe is everyone's responsibility, and we expect our members, volunteers, staff and trustees to behave according to the following values:

- All adults at risk have an equal right to protection from abuse and to be kept safe from harm regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

- We recognise some adults are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- We listen to and respect everyone in the group.
- We use language that is appropriate for age and ability, and not offensive or discriminatory.
- We encourage a culture of honesty, where everyone feels comfortable to point out attitudes or behaviours they do not like.
- We know it isn't always easy to be vocal about concerns – for ourselves or for other people.
- All allegations and suspicions of neglect and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

This means when working with adults at risk, we will never:

- Promise to keep secrets – safeguarding relies on sharing concerns appropriately with other agencies.
- Allow suspicions or allegations of abuse or neglect to go unreported
- Act in a way that is threatening, abusive or bullying
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- Enter into a sexual or intimate relationship with an adult at risk

### 3. Legislation

Anytown Community Group recognises that the local authority has the main legal duty to safeguard adults at risk, and we are committed to working with them and our local Safeguarding Adults Boards.

This policy, and the practices within it, are based on the relevant legislation and government guidance, including:

- The Care Act 2014; and
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (which protects people's right to make their own decisions in any situation where they are able to do so).

We base our practices on the principles laid out in the Care Act 2014 i.e.

- Empowerment - People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- Prevention – It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- Proportionality – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- Protection – Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- Partnership – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- Accountability – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

### 4. Definitions

According to the Care Act 2014 (applicable in England):

An **adult at risk** is an individual aged 18 years and over who:

- (a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) AND;
- (b) is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, AND;
- (c) as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

**Abuse** is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. It can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. Any or all of the following types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence, omission or ignorance. Often the perpetrator of abuse is known to the adult and may be in a position of trust and power.

The types of abuse we need to be aware of are:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional/Psychological/Mental
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Financial or material abuse
- Discriminatory
- Organisational / institutional
- Self-neglect
- Domestic abuse (including coercive control)
- Modern slavery

## 5. Recognising safeguarding concerns

There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is experiencing abuse or neglect. There may be other explanations too, but Anytown Community Group will not ignore any of these signs if they are apparent.

An adult may confide (disclose) to a trustee, volunteer, or other member of Anytown Community Group that they are experiencing abuse, inside or outside the activities of the group. Or someone else may notice signs in a particular individual. The signs we will look out for include:

- Unexplained bruises or injuries
- Belongings or money going missing from the person
- The person no longer attending or enjoying Anytown Community Group's activities, or responding to contact from other members of the group
- A change in confidence or behaviour of a person e.g. if they are withdrawn and quiet around a particular person or people, when usually they are outgoing and confident.
- A change in appearance of the person e.g. losing or gaining weight, deterioration in personal hygiene or way of dressing.

- Someone else (e.g. a parent, carer or family member) always speaking for the person and not allowing them to make their own choices
- The person showing fear of, or not wanting to be around, a particular individual or group of people

## 6. Responding to concerns

Anytown Community Group has a designated safeguarding lead whose contact details are in section 11.

Anytown Community Group recognises that it can be difficult for many reasons to speak up if you think someone is being abused or neglected. However, we expect our volunteers, trustees, and staff to take action in response to any concerns. Our safeguarding lead will support the person raising the concerns, as well as the person being abused.

If anyone in the group notices any signs of abuse or neglect in another person, they should bring these concerns to the safeguarding lead.

If someone discloses to anyone else in the group that they are being abused, the response should be as follows:

- Always make sure the person speaking up feels they are being listened to and supported
- Don't promise to keep information confidential between you and them
- Tell the designated safeguarding lead about the concerns (unless the safeguarding lead is implicated in causing the harm or perpetrating the abuse. In this situation, information should be shared with a trusted committee member/trustee and they will be responsible for taking further action instead of the safeguarding lead)
- Ask for the person's consent to share the information. If they refuse and you are still worried that they or someone else is at immediate risk of harm, you cannot wait for this consent. You must share this information with the safeguarding lead.
- Write a clear statement of what you have been told, seen, or heard

The **designated safeguarding lead (DSL)** is responsible for taking further action once concerns have been raised with them. Throughout the process, the safeguarding lead will record all the information they are given, the actions they take, and why. The procedures they will follow are:

### 6.1 Initial assessment

As soon as information is shared with the safeguarding lead, they will make an initial assessment of the concern. They will, if possible, talk to the person reporting the concern and gather as much information as possible from them.

Key questions to ask:

- What type of concern has been reported? Different actions are required depending on what type of concern it is (see below)
- What action has already been taken?

- Is anyone else in the organisation affected by this situation (e.g. other volunteers or those you work with)? Are there any attitudes or emotions that you may have to be aware of?
- How might this concern affect what the organisation delivers in the short term?
- Who else might need to be informed?
- What other actions now need to be taken?

## 6.2 Immediate actions depending on what type of concern has been raised

**(a) Emergency incidents:** this is when there's a life-threatening situation where there's imminent danger and harm to an adult, young person or child.

- Immediately contact the emergency services if they haven't been called already.
- Make sure the current situation is safe.
- Establish how others are coping – do they need any immediate support?
- Inform the senior people in the group

**(b) Protection concerns:** This is when an adult who you believe is unable to protect themselves is at current risk of, or has experienced, abuse or harm.

- If the person is in immediate danger, call the police.
- If they're not in immediate danger, you must contact the local authority safeguarding team within 24 hours and make a referral (contact details are in section 10).
- Be guided by the safeguarding team or police on any further actions required of you.

**(c) Allegations concerning staff or volunteers:** this is when someone has alleged that staff or volunteers from your organisation have harmed or abused an adult at risk.

- Contact the local authority safeguarding team as soon as possible within 24 hours.
- Be guided by them on any further actions required of you.

**(d) Welfare concerns:** This is when no one has been harmed in any way, but a person shows signs of being in need. It's when you have concerns for their health, wellbeing or safety if they don't get help.

- Within 7 days you, or someone in your organisation, should speak with the person. When it is appropriate you should also speak with their family or carer. You must explain your concerns and make sure they have the support they need.
- Depending on the conversation, the safeguarding lead may then also:
  - Help the person or their family access services or give them the information they need to do this themselves.
  - Speak to another professional who is already working with the person or family, such as a social worker, about their needs.

**(e) Concerns about other organisations:** This is a situation where the safeguarding concern is about another organisation, their staff, volunteers or the people they work with.

- As soon as possible within 24 hours contact the designated safeguarding lead of the organisation in question and pass on your concerns, if this has not already happened.
- In some circumstances you may decide to follow up with the organisation to confirm they have acted on the issue.
- If at any point you think the organisation has not acted and someone is at risk, you should contact the local safeguarding team yourself.

**(f) Responding to historic or non-recent concerns:** You may become aware or be told about a concern from an adult relating to an incident which took place in the past, including when they were a child. Historical allegations of abuse should be taken as seriously as contemporary allegations.

- Remember that it's never too late to report abuse. An individual can make a formal complaint to the police about non-recent abuse, ideally in the geographic area in which the abuse is reported to have taken place.
- Establish if the person alleged to have caused the harm works with children or adults at risk. Try to find out their recent or current whereabouts and any contact they have with children or adults at risk. A referral should be made to social services, with the consent of the person who experienced the abuse if possible.
- Consider what consent the person has given for information to be shared. How, when and to whom they share this information should usually be with their consent.
- Signpost the person who experienced the abuse to relevant support groups that can help them.

**(g) Supporting those who share a concern with you:** Your primary concern should be the best interests of the person who is at risk of harm. However, the person sharing this concern with you may also be distressed by the situation, even if they are reporting on behalf of someone else. Everyone can respond to worries about another differently. If someone has previously experienced trauma they can find it especially upsetting.

- Thank them for bringing this concern to your attention and that they have fulfilled their key responsibility
- Explain that you will now take responsibility in leading management of this concern and any contact with statutory agencies
- Highlight that there may be limited updates that you have or can give them on the situation; that does not mean that it was not important for them to share their concern
- Remind them of the importance of confidentiality and not sharing this information further
- Ensure they have your contact details in case they think of anything else they have not yet shared that they think may be relevant
- Discuss with them what additional support they may require. Consider contacting them later to check in on how they are doing

## 7. Keeping records

Anytown Community Group recognises that it is vital to record and store details about any safeguarding concerns that arise. We will record information, even if the concerns have not been shared with the police or the local authority safeguarding team. These records are extremely sensitive and will be kept in a locked cabinet or drawer (if hard copy) and/or password protected and stored on a computer with protection against hackers and viruses (if electronic).

It is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead to ensure that the following information is recorded about every safeguarding concern:

- The date and time of the incident/disclosure/concern
- The date and time of the report
- The name and role of the person to whom the concern was originally reported and their contact details
- The name and role of the person making the report (if this is different to the above) and their contact details
- The names of all parties who were involved in the incident, including any witnesses
- The name and any other relevant information about the adult who is the subject of the concern (including information about their care and support needs)
- What was said or done and by whom
- Any action taken to look into the matter
- Any further action taken (such as a referral being made)
- The reasons why the organisation decided not to refer those concerns to a statutory agency (if relevant)

Each record will be signed and dated by the person making the report.

## 8. Confidentiality, consent and information sharing

Timely information sharing is key to keeping people safe and responding appropriately to concerns about their welfare. In general, Anytown Community Group expects all committee members, volunteers and staff to maintain confidentiality and act in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

We will share information within the group (e.g. with other volunteers) in situations where this is necessary in order to deal effectively with safeguarding concerns or to provide continuity of support. We will share information with other organisations in order to keep a person safe.

Whenever confidential information is shared, we will follow the principles below. We will:

- Have a clear and legitimate purpose
- Keep clear records of why we chose to share the information

- Ensure we are not putting the person at risk by sharing information
- Be as factual as possible
- Seek consent. If the adult refuses consent, we may share information **only** if:
  - We think they are at serious risk of harm or abuse, including harming themselves;
  - Information indicates that a serious crime has been or is going to be committed;
  - We think the person lacks the mental capacity to decide for themselves and we believe it would be in the individual's best interests;
  - We are required by law e.g. if we suspect FGM, forced marriage, or a possible terrorist threat.

## 9. Recruiting and training volunteers

Anytown Community Group volunteers that work with adults at risk will be given an induction which covers the safeguarding policy and procedures of the group. They will be trained in: our code of conduct; definitions of abuse and harm; recognising signs of abuse; and how to respond to concerns and disclosures. All volunteers will know who is the designated safeguarding lead, and that they should go to them with any concerns.

The designated safeguarding lead will be offered further training to ensure they are clear about their role, and what action to take in response to different concerns.

We will apply for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all volunteers for whom we are legally required to do so.

## 10. Reviewing policy and procedures

This policy and its procedures will be reviewed every 2 years. They were last reviewed and updated on [date].

## 11. Key contacts

### Anytown Community Group's Designated Safeguarding Lead

Name:

Contact details:

### Brighton & Hove City Council Safeguarding Hub

This is the safeguarding team to contact to make a referral about an adult at risk.

9am-5pm Monday-Friday: phone 01273 29 55 55 or email  
[hascsafeguardinghub@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:hascsafeguardinghub@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Complete the online form to report abuse: <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/adult-social-care/adult-abuse-form-members-public>

### Sussex Police

Non-emergency, phone: 101

### **Elder Abuse UK Helpline**

Phone for advice: 080 8808 8141

<https://wearehourglass.org/>

### **National Domestic Violence Helpline**

Freephone, 24 hours a day, for advice: 0808 2000 247

<http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk>

### **Brighton & Hove Domestic Abuse support services**

#### **Victim Support**

Monday-Friday 9am-5pm: phone 0300 323 9985 or email [b&hdass@victimsupport.org.uk](mailto:b&hdass@victimsupport.org.uk)

Out of hours: 08 08 16 89 111

Live chat (24 hours): <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help/support-near-you/live-chat/>

#### **RISE Helpline**

Tuesday and Wednesday 9.30am-12noon, or Wednesday 5pm-7pm: phone 01273 622 822 or email [helpline@riseuk.org.uk](mailto:helpline@riseuk.org.uk)

LGBT+ specialist caseworker, Monday 5pm-7pm: phone 01273 622822 or email [lgbt@riseuk.org.uk](mailto:lgbt@riseuk.org.uk)

### **Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Adults Board**

[www.bhsab.org.uk](http://www.bhsab.org.uk)

[accesspoint@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:accesspoint@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

# Sample policy: Safeguarding children

This sample policy is aimed at small, volunteer-led community groups. Your group may decide to include more detail in some sections, or have different procedures, principles, etc. It is important that the policy you write is relevant for your group, the activities you do, and the people you work with. The last section of this information sheet, Useful Resources, lists some good online resources to refer to if you need help thinking through particular parts of your safeguarding practices or policy.

## 1. Purpose of the policy

Anytown Community Group is committed to safeguarding practices that help ensure the safety of children whilst taking part in our group activities and in the wider community. This policy helps everyone involved in our group:

- be aware of our legal responsibilities
- understand the safeguarding risks in Any Group
- know what to do if they have a concern about the wellbeing or welfare of any child that comes into contact with our group.

This safeguarding policy, and associated procedures, apply to all individuals involved in Anytown Community Group, including: trustees, members, volunteers, and staff. The policy applies to all concerns about the safety of children while taking part in our group and the activities we run, or while in the wider community.

## 2. Code of conduct

When working with children we are acting in a position of trust. We recognise that keeping our group safe is everyone's responsibility, and we expect our members, volunteers, staff and trustees to behave according to the following values:

- All children have an equal right to protection from abuse and to be kept safe from harm regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- We recognise some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- We listen to and respect everyone in the group.
- We use language that is appropriate for age and ability, and not offensive or discriminatory.
- We encourage a culture of honesty, where everyone feels comfortable to point out attitudes or behaviours they do not like.
- We know it isn't always easy to be vocal about concerns – for ourselves or for other people.
- We ensure that whenever possible there is more than one adult present during activities with children or, if this isn't possible, that we are within sight or hearing of other adults.
- All allegations and suspicions of neglect and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

This means when working with children, we will never:

- Promise to keep secrets – safeguarding relies on sharing concerns appropriately with other agencies.
- Allow suspicions or allegations of abuse or neglect to go unreported
- Act in a way that is threatening, abusive or bullying
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- Enter into a sexual or intimate relationship with a child

### 3. Legislation

Anytown Community Group recognises the importance of Working Together to Safeguard Children. We are committed to working with our local authorities and the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

This policy, and the practices within it, are based on the relevant legislation and guidance seeking to protect children, including:

- The Children Acts 1989 and 2004;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

### 4. Definitions

The Children Act 1989 defines a child as: anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, even if they are living independently, are a member of the armed forces or are in hospital.

**Child abuse** happens when a person harms a child. Children may be abused by: family members; friends; people working or volunteering in organisational or community settings; people they know; or strangers.

The types of abuse we need to be aware of are:

- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Emotional abuse
- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child criminal exploitation
- Child trafficking
- Domestic abuse
- Female genital mutilation
- Grooming
- Historical abuse
- Online abuse
- Radicalisation

## 5. Recognising safeguarding concerns

There are many signs and indicators that may suggest a child is experiencing abuse or neglect. There may be other explanations too, but Anytown Community Group will not ignore any of these signs if they are apparent.

A child may confide (disclose) to a trustee, volunteer, or other member of Anytown Community Group that they are experiencing abuse, inside or outside the activities of the group. Or someone else may notice signs in a particular child.

Different forms of abuse and neglect may have different signs. We will look out for all those listed below.

### Physical Abuse

#### Visible signs

- Injuries to any part of the body
- Children who find it painful to walk, sit down, move their jaws or exhibit other signs of pain
- Injuries which are not typical of the bumps and bruises associated with children's activities
- The regular occurrence of unexplained injuries
- The child who is frequently injured where even apparently reasonable reasons are given

#### Behavioural signs

- Furtive or secretive behaviour
- Uncharacteristic aggression or withdrawn behaviour
- Compulsive eating or sudden loss of appetite
- The child who suddenly becomes ill co-ordinated
- The child who finds it difficult to stay awake
- The child who is repeatedly absent

#### What to listen for

- Confused or conflicting explanations about how injuries were sustained
- Evaluate carefully what is said and preferably document it verbatim
- Consider if the explanation is in keeping with the nature and site of the injury

#### Consider

- What you know about the family?
- Is there a history of known or suspected abuse?
- Has the family been under stress recently?
- Do you have concerns about the family?

### Emotional Abuse

#### Watch for parent/carer behaviours

- Poor attachment with the child
- Unresponsive or neglectful behaviour towards the child's emotional needs

- Persistent negative comments about the child
- Inappropriate or inconsistent developmental expectations of the child
- Parental problems that supersede the needs of the child
- Dysfunctional family relationships, including domestic violence

#### Watch for child behaviours

- Signs of low self-esteem, unhappiness, fear, distress, anxiety
- Attention seeking, opposing, withdrawn, insecure
- Failure to thrive/faltering growth, delay in achieving developmental, cognitive or educational milestones

### Sexual Abuse

There may be no obvious signs of sexual abuse, but the following may be signs that a child is, or has been, sexually abused:

#### Physical signs

- Signs of blood or discharge on the child's under clothes
- Awkwardness in walking or sitting down
- Tummy pains
- Regression into bed-wetting
- Tiredness

#### Behavioural signs

- Extreme variations in behaviour (e.g. anxiety or withdrawal)
- Sexually provocative behaviour or knowledge that is incompatible with the child's age or understanding
- Drawings and/or writing that is sexually explicit (this can be an indirect disclosure)
- Direct disclosure; it is important to recognise that young children have neither the experience nor the understanding to be able to make up stories about sexual assault.

### Neglect

#### Physical signs

- Abnormal growth including failure to thrive
- Underweight or obesity
- Recurrent infection
- Unkempt, dirty appearance
- Smelly
- Inadequate/unwashed clothes
- Hunger
- Listlessness

#### Behavioural signs

- Attachment disorders
- Indiscriminate friendliness

- Poor social relationships
- Poor concentration
- Developmental delays
- Low self-esteem

#### Environmental signs

- Insufficient food, heating and ventilation at home
- Risk from animals in the household
- Inappropriate sleeping arrangements and inadequate bedding
- Dangerous or hazardous environment

### Radicalisation

#### Behavioural signs

- Becoming isolated from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- Being unwilling to discuss opinions
- A hostile attitude towards others
- Increased levels of anger
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use

### Bullying / Cyberbullying

#### Physical signs

- Belongings getting lost or damaged
- Coming home with physical injuries, like unexplained bruises
- Torn clothes

#### Behavioural signs

- Being afraid to go to school
- Being mysteriously 'ill' each morning
- Skipping school
- Doing less well at school
- Being nervous or losing confidence
- Becoming quiet and withdrawn
- Asking for or stealing money (to give to bullies)
- Problems eating or sleeping
- Bullying other children

### FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)

#### Signs that FGM might happen

- A special occasion or ceremony is going to take place where a girl 'becomes a woman' or is 'prepared for marriage'
- A relative or someone known as a 'cutter' is visiting from abroad
- A girl has an unexpected or long absence from school/regular activities
- A girl runs away – or plans to run away – from home

Behavioural/physical signs that FGM might have taken place

- Difficulty or discomfort walking, standing or sitting
- Complaints of pain between legs
- Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet (due to difficulties urinating)
- Appearing quiet, anxious, or depressed
- Trying to get out of physical education or sporting activities
- Mentioning that someone did something to them that they are not allowed to talk about
- Reluctant to go to the doctors or have routine medical examinations
- Asking for help, but possibly avoiding being explicit about the problem because they're scared or embarrassed
- Acting differently after an absence (e.g. acting withdrawn or bleeding, discharge, urinary infections, clutching their body)

## 6. Responding to concerns

Anytown Community Group has a designated safeguarding lead whose contact details are in section 11.

Anytown Community Group recognises that it can be difficult for many reasons to speak up if you think a child is being abused or neglected. However, we expect our members, volunteers, trustees, and staff to take action in response to any concerns. Our safeguarding lead will support the person raising the concerns, as well as the child at risk of/experiencing abuse.

If anyone in the group notices any signs of abuse or neglect in a child, they should bring these concerns to the safeguarding lead.

If a child discloses to any adult in the group that they are being abused, the response should be as follows:

- Always make sure the child speaking up feels they are being listened to and supported
- Reassure the child they have done the right thing by telling you
- Emphasise that abuse is never their fault
- Take time, be patient, and let the child go at their own pace
- Don't promise to keep information confidential between you and them. Explain that you need to share the information with someone who will be able to help.
- Tell the designated safeguarding lead about the concerns (unless the safeguarding lead is implicated in causing the harm or perpetrating the abuse. In this situation, information should be shared with a trusted committee member and they will be responsible for taking further action instead of the safeguarding lead)
- Write a clear statement of what you have been told, seen, or heard
- Do not talk to the alleged perpetrator about the child's disclosure, this could make it a lot worse for the child

**The designated safeguarding lead** is responsible for taking further action once concerns have been raised with them. Throughout the process, the safeguarding lead will record all the information they are given, the actions they take, and why (also see section 7). The procedures they will follow are:

### 6.1 Initial assessment

As soon as information is shared with the safeguarding lead, they will make an initial assessment of the concern. They will, if possible, talk to the person reporting the concern and gather as much information as possible from them.

If the concern is being raised based on a direct disclosure from a child, the safeguarding lead **will not** question the child or ask them to repeat any details. They may, however, tell the child that they have heard the concerns, reassure the child again that they have done the right thing in disclosing, and tell them what the next steps will be.

Key questions for the safeguarding lead to consider:

- What type of concern has been reported? Different actions are required depending on what type of concern it is (see below)
- What action has already been taken?
- Is anyone else in the organisation affected by this situation (e.g. other volunteers or those you work with)? Are there any attitudes or emotions that you may have to be aware of?
- How might this concern affect what the organisation delivers in the short term?
- Who else might need to be informed?
- What other actions now need to be taken?

### 6.2 Immediate actions depending on what type of concern has been raised

**(a) Emergency incidents:** these are when there's a life-threatening situation where there's imminent danger and harm to a child.

- Immediately contact the emergency services if they haven't been called already.
- Make sure the current situation is safe.
- Establish how others are coping – do they need any immediate support?
- Inform the senior people in the group

**(b) Protection and welfare concerns:** these are when there are suspicions or disclosures that a child is at current risk of, or is experiencing, abuse or harm.

- If the child is at immediate risk, call the police.
- If they are not in immediate danger, but there has been a disclosure from the child, you should make a referral to the local authority safeguarding team (Front Door for Families, contact details are in section 11) within 24 hours
- If the child is showing signs (see section 5) but there has not been a direct disclosure, you can consult with the NSPCC Helpline (contact details in section 11) and be guided by them on any further actions

**(c) Allegations concerning staff or volunteers:** this is when someone has alleged that staff or volunteers from your organisation have harmed or abused a child.

- Contact the local authority safeguarding team (Front Door for Families, contact details are in section 11) as soon as possible within 24 hours.
- Be guided by them on any further actions required of you.

**(d) Concerns about other organisations:** This is a situation where the safeguarding concern is about another organisation, their staff, volunteers or the people they work with.

- As soon as possible within 24 hours contact the designated safeguarding lead of the organisation in question and pass on your concerns, if this has not already happened.
- In some circumstances you may decide to follow up with the organisation to confirm they have acted on the issue.
- If at any point you think the organisation has not acted and someone is at risk, you should contact the local authority safeguarding team yourself.

**(e) Supporting those who share a concern with you:** Your primary concern should be the best interests of the child who is at risk of harm. However, the person sharing this concern with you may also be distressed by the situation, even if they are reporting on behalf of someone else. Everyone can respond to worries about another differently. If someone has previously experienced trauma they can find it especially upsetting.

- Thank them for bringing this concern to your attention and that they have fulfilled their key responsibility
- Explain that you will now take responsibility in leading management of this concern and any contact with statutory agencies
- Highlight that there may be limited updates that you have or can give them on the situation; that does not mean that it was not important for them to share their concern
- Remind them of the importance of confidentiality and not sharing this information further
- Ensure they have your contact details in case they think of anything else they have not yet shared that they think may be relevant
- Discuss with them what additional support they may require. This may include informing their supervisor that they have dealt with a difficult situation, contacting any employee assistance programme or, if necessary, supporting them to access additional support
- Consider contacting them later to check in on how they are doing

## 7. Keeping records

Anytown Community Group recognises that it is vital to record and store details about any child protection concerns that arise. We will record information, even if the concerns have not been shared with the police or the local authority safeguarding team. These records are extremely sensitive and will be kept in a locked cabinet or drawer (if hard copy) and/or password protected and stored on a computer with protection against hackers and viruses (if electronic).

It is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead to ensure that the following information is recorded about every safeguarding concern:

- The date and time of the incident/disclosure/concern
- The date and time of the report
- The name and role of the person to whom the concern was originally reported and their contact details
- The name and role of the person making the report (if this is different to the above) and their contact details
- The names of all parties who were involved in the incident, including any witnesses
- The name, age and any other relevant information about the child who is the subject of the concern (including information about their parents or carers and any siblings)
- That was said or done and by whom
- Any action taken to look into the matter
- Any further action taken (such as a referral being made)
- The reasons why the organisation decided not to refer those concerns to a statutory agency (if relevant)

Each record will be signed and dated by the person making the report.

## 8. Confidentiality, consent and information sharing

Timely information sharing is key to keeping children safe and responding appropriately to concerns about their welfare. In general, Anytown Community Group expects all committee members, volunteers and staff to maintain confidentiality and act in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Parents/carers are normally the first point of contact for any concerns about a child. If there is a disclosure or suspicion of abuse, however, we will take guidance from the NSPCC Helpline and/or local authority safeguarding team as to whether we should make parents/carers aware of it or whether it should be left to other authorities to speak with the parent/carers.

Whenever Anytown Community Group shares information about a child with any other organisation, we will follow the principles below. We will:

- Have a clear and legitimate purpose
- Keep clear records of why we chose to share the information
- Ensure we are not putting the child at risk by sharing information
- Be as factual as possible
- Seek consent. If the child is deemed old and capable enough, consent should come from them. If not, we will ask their parent/carer, unless doing so would put the child at risk of harm. In any situation where consent is refused, but we believe the information needs to be shared in order to protect the child from significant harm or to promote their welfare, we will seek advice from the NSPCC Helpline. If

advised, we will share information with the police and/or local authority safeguarding team without consent.

## 9. Recruiting and training volunteers

Anytown Community Group volunteers that work with children will be given an induction which covers the safeguarding policy and procedures of the group. They will be trained in: our code of conduct; definitions of abuse and harm; recognising signs of abuse; and how to respond to concerns and disclosures. All volunteers will know who is the designated safeguarding lead, and that they should go to them with any concerns.

The designated safeguarding lead will be offered further training to ensure they are clear about their role, and what action to take in response to different concerns.

We will apply for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all volunteers for whom we are legally required to do so.

## 10. Reviewing policy and procedures

This policy and its procedures will be reviewed every 2 years. They were last reviewed and updated on [date].

## 11. Key contacts

### **Anytown Community Group's Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Name:

Contact details:

### **Brighton & Hove Front Door for Families**

This is the local authority safeguarding team to contact to make a referral about a child.

Between 9am and 5pm Mondays to Fridays:

Phone: 01273 290 400

Email: [FrontDoorforFamilies@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:FrontDoorforFamilies@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Outside of working hours, you can contact the Emergency Duty Service on:

01273 335 905 or 01273 335 906

Complete the online form to report concerns or request advice:

<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/families-children-and-learning/tell-us-if-you-are-worried-about-child>

### **NSPCC Helpline**

For adults to call for support or advice about child safeguarding concerns

0808 800 5000

[help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

### **Childline**

For children to call for support

0800 1111

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

### **Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership**

<https://www.bhscp.org.uk/>

### **Designated professionals in Brighton & Hove**

Designated Doctor Safeguarding Children: 01273 238 703

Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children: 01273 238 703 / 07770 381 421

Brighton & Hove Police Child Protection Team: 101 (and ask for Brighton Safeguarding Investigation Unit, SIU)

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 01273 295 643, [darrel.clews@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:darrel.clews@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

## **Useful resources**

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) has very thorough guidance on all aspects of safeguarding for voluntary and community groups:

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/safeguarding/what-is-safeguarding>

For child safeguarding guidance, the NSPCC has a comprehensive range of guides and tools: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/voluntary-community-groups>

For safeguarding adults, the Ann Craft Trust has a comprehensive range of guides and tools: <https://www.anncrafttrust.org/resources/a-guide-to-safeguarding-adults/>

The Charity Commission has guidance on safeguarding for charities and trustees: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>

Safety Net offers training and support around child safeguarding. Based in Brighton: <https://www.safety-net.org.uk/>