

# SAFEGUARDING POLICY

## Statement of Purpose

1. My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC (the **Organisation, we, our** or **us**) is committed to preventing and responding to risks of harm to and promoting the welfare of all children that we work with (i.e. as My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC's clients). These individuals are referred to as the '**Beneficiaries**' of this Safeguarding Policy.
2. We recognise the importance of this commitment to safety and welfare and, further, are committed to safeguarding all Beneficiaries without discrimination due to an individual's age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity leave status, marriage or civil partnership status, or sexual orientation.
3. This Safeguarding Policy is based on the safeguarding laws of England, Wales, and Scotland, including related guidance issued by the UK Government and relevant governmental departments, agencies, and public bodies. If this Policy is at any time inconsistent with this body of law, My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC will act to meet the requirements of up-to-date safeguarding laws in priority to the requirements set out in this Policy.
4. My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC has implemented this Safeguarding Policy in order to meet its obligations as an organisation working with children.
5. Any questions in relation to this Policy should be referred to The Director in the first instance, by emailing [Mychildhasaspeechdelay@gmail.com](mailto:Mychildhasaspeechdelay@gmail.com) or by contacting 07534 398 367.

## Scope of this Safeguarding Policy

6. This Policy explains key aspects of how My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC prevents harm in relation to its Beneficiaries via its practices and its Staff Members' conduct.
7. This Safeguarding Policy covers the organisation and operation of all of My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC's activities involving children (i.e. our **Relevant Activities**). These primarily include:
  - a. Provide an opportunity to network and meet parents and children that have challenges with their speech. A safe and judgement free space for children with additional needs and challenges to play and communicate with each other.
8. This Policy's guidelines and obligations apply to all individuals working for or acting on behalf of My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC in the UK at all levels, including senior managers, officers, employees, consultants, trainees, homeworkers, part-time and fixed-term workers, casual workers, agency workers, volunteers, and interns (collectively '**Staff Members**').
9. This Policy does not form part of any contract of employment or similar and My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC may amend it at any time at our absolute discretion.

## Defining Safeguarding

10. 'Safeguarding' is an umbrella term that refers to work (e.g. practices and procedures) aimed at preventing or responding to harm or risks of harm posed to vulnerable individuals, and at promoting these individuals' wider welfare. Safeguarding is particularly important for children and adults at risk. Most safeguarding legal obligations relate to the care of these groups. This Safeguarding Policy specifically deals with safeguarding children. For safeguarding purposes, children are individuals younger than 18 years old.
11. The commitments and practices contained in this Safeguarding Policy apply to the safeguarding of My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC's Beneficiaries from harm caused by either:

- a. The activities and practices of My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC and any conduct of its Staff Members, or
  - b. People and situations outside of My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC's and its Staff Members' control, where My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC's Staff Members are aware of, ought to be aware of, or reasonably suspect the risks posed by a situation.
12. For the purposes of this Policy, a '**Safeguarding Concern**' is any conduct or situation that is known or reasonably suspected by a Staff Member or another party that risks violating the safeguarding commitments set out above.

## **Key Measures that My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC is Committed to Implementing and Maintaining to Safeguard its Beneficiaries**

- 13.
14. Ensuring that Staff Members are trained to, and encouraged to, report any Safeguarding Concerns that they identify. Staff Members will be encouraged to follow My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC's safeguarding reporting procedures as closely as possible when reporting concerns (set out below under the heading '**Procedures: Reporting**').
15. Ensuring that all Staff Members listen to all safeguarding-related queries and concerns raised by other Staff Members, Beneficiaries, or relevant other parties, with respect and professionalism. Staff Members should be trained how to, and encouraged to, then assist with reporting any such concerns via My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC's regular reporting procedures.
16. Ensuring that all reported Safeguarding Concerns are dealt with by appropriate individuals and teams and in accordance with My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC's relevant procedures (set out below under the heading '**Procedures: Investigation and Response**').
17. Implementing and maintaining comprehensive, accessible, fair, and efficient procedures for Staff Members to use when reporting and dealing with Safeguarding Concerns. These procedures will be made known and easily accessible to all Staff Members.
- a. Procedures will be designed to ensure all safeguarding issues are dealt with fairly and objectively even when allegations are made against one of My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC's Staff Members. Any such allegations will be treated in a manner that takes into account the gravity of the accusations, but which does not vilify or presume the guilt of an accused individual without a fair investigation.
  - b. Any reports that qualify as protected disclosures under whistleblowing law will be treated securely and in a protected manner in line with whistleblowing law.
18. Appointing The Director to hold responsibility for managing safeguarding policies and procedures within My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC.
19. Following appropriate recruitment processes when recruiting new Staff Members, including volunteers. This includes:
- a. Conducting all appropriate pre-employment checks (e.g. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal record checks).
  - b. Ensuring new Staff Members take part in, and understand the content of, all necessary safeguarding training before having any contact with My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC's Beneficiaries.
  - c. Following My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC's policies and procedures on hiring and recruitment.
20. Providing appropriate safeguarding training for all relevant Staff Members. Every Staff Member should be provided with, and required to undertake, training that is appropriate to their role, responsibilities, and degree and type of contact with Beneficiaries. This should, where appropriate, include training on:
- a. How to define and identify potential signs of different types of abuse, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect, and others.

- b. How to listen to and respond to concerns or disclosures about safeguarding issues during an initial conversation (e.g. how to explain when information can and cannot be kept confidential).
  - c. How to use My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC's safeguarding reporting procedures and when doing so is appropriate.
  - d. Which additional resources (e.g. policies, other supporting documents, or external educational resources) are available to ensure Staff Members remain informed about safeguarding.
21. Ensuring that all information related to Safeguarding Concerns, including the content of reported concerns as well as the personal data of anybody involved, is handled safely and securely. This involves:
- a. Following the requirements set out by the UK's data protection laws, including The UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.
  - b. Following My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC's data protection policies and procedures.
  - c. Providing Staff Members with training on data protection and privacy, where appropriate.
  - d. Ensuring Staff Members always have an identifiable point of contact for questions or concerns about data protection and privacy. This is currently The Director, who can be contacted by emailing [Mychildhasaspeechdelay@gmail.com](mailto:Mychildhasaspeechdelay@gmail.com) or at 07534 398 367.
  - e. Only sharing information about a Safeguarding Concern internally as far as is necessary to manage the concern for the relevant Beneficiary's benefit.
22. Ensuring transparency and awareness regarding safeguarding information and procedures. For example, by:
- a. Providing information to Beneficiaries about our safeguarding procedures so that they are aware of how to raise any concerns.
  - b. Ensuring all Staff Members are aware of safeguarding laws, My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC's safeguarding commitments and procedures, and Staff Members' responsibilities in relation to these.
23. Regularly reviewing all safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that they are up-to-date with safeguarding law and that they remain suitable for My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC's Relevant Activities and workforce, and meeting any review and evaluation requirements specific to My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC's industry and organisation type.

## **Staff Members' Responsibilities**

24. All Staff Members have a responsibility to promote the safety and wellbeing of all of My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC's Beneficiaries. This means that all of My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC's policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding and all UK laws relevant to safeguarding must be followed at all times. Specifically:
25. All Staff Members must contribute to upholding the key measures that My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC has committed to taking to safeguard its Beneficiaries (set out above) to an extent that is appropriate for their role, responsibilities, and degree and type of contact with Beneficiaries. Specific ways that Staff Members should do this will be clarified during training. If a Staff Member is uncertain as to their responsibilities, it is their responsibility to raise this with The Director.
26. Staff Members must actively participate in all safeguarding training they are assigned and, if they do not understand any aspects of their training, must raise this with The Director.
27. Staff Members must never do anything to actively risk the safety or wellbeing of any of My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC's Beneficiaries. This includes, but is not limited to:
- a. Subjecting them to or facilitating abuse of any sort.
  - b. Engaging in any sexual activity with children (i.e. anybody under the age of 18).

- c. Participating in or facilitating any activities that may commercially exploit Beneficiaries. For example, failing to report suspected child labour or trafficking.
28. Staff Members must report all Safeguarding Concerns that they have regarding Beneficiaries, regardless of whether the concerns relate to potential wrongdoing of other Staff Members, other Beneficiaries, or external parties (e.g. parents, teachers, other organisations, or members of the public).

## **Procedures: Reporting**

29. Staff Members will receive safeguarding training that should enable them to identify Safeguarding Concerns (e.g. suspected abuse, neglect, or threats to wellbeing) relevant to My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC's Beneficiaries.
30. If a Staff Member identifies a Safeguarding Concern, to report it they should:
- a. It is essential to advocate for those who are unable to advocate for themselves. Speaking out when you suspect someone is causing harm or abuse is always the correct action. It differs from 'snitching' or 'informing on someone.' People may fear that reporting someone for wrongdoing will harm that individual. However, not taking action could potentially harm others even more. Many individuals may feel uneasy or fearful about reporting suspicions of abuse, which is understandable. It is important to address these concerns in order to assist others. Our organization will support and safeguard you if you speak out, ensuring you are not harmed or criticized for doing so. Please record and report your safeguarding concerns, disclosures or allegations to the Director as soon as possible.
31. If a Staff Member feels unable to follow the above steps, they should report their Safeguarding Concern in a reasonable alternative manner. This may be the case if, for example:
- a. Following the above procedure would require disclosing the concern to somebody who is implicated in the Safeguarding Concern or who the Staff Member is otherwise uncomfortable contacting about this concern, or
  - b. The matter is time sensitive and involves a risk of serious harm to somebody, in which case contacting an external agency (e.g. the police, the ambulance service, or a mental health crisis line) or a more senior member of My Child Has A Speech Delay CIC's staff first may be more appropriate.

## **Procedures: Investigation and Response**

32. Reported Safeguarding Concerns will be dealt with promptly according to the following process:

a.

### Overview

Our first step is to make an initial assessment of the concern as soon as information is shared with us. If possible, talk to the person reporting the concern, and gather as much information from them as we can.

### Key questions to ask:

- What action has already been taken?
- Is anyone else in the organisation affected by this situation (e.g. other volunteers or those we work with)? Are there any attitudes or emotions that we 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 we must decide when you receive information:

- What type of concern has been reported to us.
- What actions need to be taken.

At this point, we will need to start recording all the information we are given, the actions we take and why.

#### Emergency incidents

This is when there's a life-threatening situation where there's imminent danger and harm to a child, young person or adult.

What we do:

- 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?
- Initiate the emergency response protocol or inform the senior person in your organisation.

#### Child or adult protection concerns

This is when a child, young person or adult (who we believe is unable to protect themselves) is at current risk of, or has experienced, abuse or harm.

What we do:

- If the person is in immediate danger, or the abuse has happened where they live, immediately call the local authority safeguarding team or the police.
- If they're not in immediate danger, we must call the local authority safeguarding team within 24 hours and make a telephone referral.
- Be guided by the safeguarding team or police on any further actions required of you. Always follow up our call with a written referral.

Where there is an allegation that a child or young person is at risk of harm from another child or young person, read below NSPCC Learning's guide to managing allegations of abuse made against a child.

#### How to deal with allegations of abuse

If allegations that a staff member, volunteer, child or young person may have caused harm to a child – or you have concerns they may cause risk of harm to a child – it's essential that you respond appropriately. All allegations and concerns must be taken seriously and dealt with promptly, no matter where the alleged incident took place.

If a child is in immediate danger, call the police on 999.

If a child is not in immediate danger:

- follow your organisation's safeguarding policies and procedures as soon as possible

- contact your local child protection services
- contact the police
- contact the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or by emailing [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

#### Allegations concerning staff or volunteers

Someone has alleged that staff or volunteers from our organisation have harmed or abused another person.

What we do if the allegation involves a child or adult at risk:

- We must contact the local authority safeguarding team as soon as possible within 24 hours.
- Be guided by them on any further actions required of us.
- If our allegation involves harm to a child, we will read NSPCC Learning's guide to managing allegations of abuse (above).

#### Welfare concerns

This is when no one has been harmed in any way, but a child, young person or adult shows signs of being in need. It's when we have concerns for their health, wellbeing or safety if they don't get help.

Within seven days someone in our organisation, should speak with the person. When it is appropriate we should also speak with their family or carer. We must explain our concerns and make sure they have the support they need.

Other things we may need to do

- Help the person or their family access services or give them the information they need to do this themselves.
- If the concern is about a child or young person, we may need to refer them to social services as a 'child in need'. They can then assess what help they may need. Learn more about reporting concerns on NSPCC Learning.
- If the person or family already has a lead professional, for example a social worker, we could speak to them about their needs.

#### 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.

What we do:

- As soon as possible within 24 hours contact the Senior Lead of the organisation in question and pass on your concerns, if this has not already happened.
- In some circumstances we may decide to follow up with the organisation to confirm they have acted on the issue.
- If at any point we think the organisation has not acted and someone is at risk, we should contact the local safeguarding team yourself.
- If our concern relates to a child and we want support, we can call the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000.

- If our concern relates to an older person we want support, we can call the Hourglass helpline on 0808 808 8141 (available 09.00 – 17.00, Monday to Friday).

#### Responding to historic or non recent concerns

We 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.

Some additional actions to consider:

- 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.

#### Supporting those who share a concern with us

Our primary concern will be the best interests of the person who is at risk of harm. However, the person sharing this concern with us 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.

We will:

- Thank them for bringing this concern to our attention and that they have fulfilled their key responsibility.
- Explain that we will now take responsibility in leading management of this concern and any contact with statutory agencies.
- Highlight that there may be limited updates that we have or can give them on the situation; that does not mean that it was not important for them to share this.
- Remind them of the importance of confidentiality and not sharing this information further.
- Ensure they have our 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.

#### Ongoing actions

Whatever the concern, once we have assessed it, our next task is to monitor and log any new information or actions as they arise. If possible, we will also let people who have reported know we have acted on their concern.

We may not give all the details, but want to ensure they know action has been taken, so they are more likely to report in future.

- Liaison with other agencies. If other agencies are involved, we will maintain regular contact with them. Where possible, agree when updates will be given and follow up if we do not hear back.
- Gather additional information. Additional, relevant information may need to be gathered. This should be recorded and passed on to key safeguarding agencies if requested.
- 'Check in' with those involved. We may need to contact those involved in the concern to keep them informed of progress and establish how they're coping. We will then assess if there are any additional support needs.
- Monitoring. There may be a need to continually monitor the situation internally, to make sure actions are being taken and the situation does not get worse.
- Work with the communications team. If a safeguarding concern is in the public, we need to talk with the communications team about how to best respond.
- Internal briefing. Staff and volunteers may need a simple briefing about what's happened. This will detail whether they can talk to the media or other people about what's happened.
- Internal investigation. Internal investigations are only appropriate when an allegation is not investigated by social services or the police. An investigation is a fact-finding exercise to collect all the relevant information on a matter. If there's evidence of a policy breach, action will be taken in line with our organisations processes.
- Reporting to regulators. There are some regulators that we may need to report to if we're managing a safeguarding concern.

#### Likely outcomes

There are a range of outcomes from a concern depending on the circumstances. Where we are managing an allegation about the behaviour of a member of staff or volunteer the three likely outcomes are:

- Misunderstanding. The person reporting didn't have the full information and when this was investigated, there was no wrongdoing found. In this situation, it is important to give the volunteer full feedback to reassure them an investigation has taken place.
- Malpractice. The person was justified in their concerns. Where possible, any action taken (including learning from the incident) should be fed back to the volunteer so they are reassured the organisation has managed the situation.
- Malicious. Occasionally, people may raise false concerns. This may be especially true for anonymous allegations. If we believe this is the case after investigation, we will should refer to our volunteers or disciplinary procedures for employees.

Once we close the safeguarding concern, we will complete a final report. The purpose of the report is to be a historical record of the concern.

The report should include:

a clear and concise summary of the concern

details of how the concern was followed up any actions taken and outcomes



any lessons learnt from the case

any recommendations for changes to policy or working practices.

It's helpful to summarise concerns or share reports regularly with our team. If we do share the report with others in our organisation, we will remember not to include personal details.

#### Closing a case

We are responsible for deciding when a safeguarding concern is 'closed'. Each concern will be different. Some may be closed the same day; others may take several months.

All safeguarding concerns should be closed once it's been agreed that we no longer have any ongoing role or any actions left to complete.

If the police or social services are involved, they will inform us of the outcome of an investigation or tell us when there are no further actions required from you.

Anyone involved in the safeguarding concern should be informed that it has been closed and we will complete any safeguarding records and file them securely.

If anyone is leaving the organisation as a result of the concern there are additional things we must consider as we end their employment or volunteering relationship.

- Notification. We will always confirm to someone in writing that role has come to an end and provide reasons why.
- Referrals. Depending on the severity of the case, we may need to make a referral to statutory agencies. We must do this even if an employee resigns and disappears or a volunteer leaves before we can notify them.
- Internal communications. We will inform staff, volunteers and others in contact with our organisation as necessary. We must think about confidentiality for the person and make a careful judgement about what information we share
- Partners. We will check whether there are other organisations that the person was involved with on behalf of our organisation, which should be informed.
- Closure. We must stress that they should not seek to represent us as an employee or volunteer or have access to staff/volunteer only spaces
- External communication. We will prepare for media interest and particularly, notify people managing your social media in case the person decides to criticise the organisation
- Insurance. Depending on our policy and the reason for ending the relationship we may need to inform insurers.
- Future references. We will plan ahead how we will deal with a request so that we are not put on the spot.
- Ongoing duty of care. We still have a duty to the person even when we end the role.

#### Final report

Once we close the safeguarding concern, we will complete a final report. The purpose of the report is to be a historical record of the concern.

The report should include:

- a clear and concise summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up any actions taken and outcomes
- any lessons learnt from the case
- any recommendations for changes to policy or working practices.

It's helpful to summarise concerns or share reports regularly with our team. If we do share the report with others in our organisation, we will remember not to include personal details.

33. Staff Members who report a Safeguarding Concern will be kept informed about the progression of the matter they reported to an appropriate degree. Note that, depending on the nature of the concern and consequent investigations, some information about matters may be kept confidential and not shared with the reporter.
34. If a Staff Member is found to be in breach of this Safeguarding Policy or safeguarding law in general, they will be treated fairly and will only be dismissed if appropriate in the circumstances and in accordance with employment law.
35. Referrals or notifications to external organisations (e.g. police services, local authorities, or regulatory bodies) will be made when, and only when, this is appropriate, and will always be made in accordance with the law (e.g. data protection law).

## **Attribution**

36. This Safeguarding Policy was created using a document from Rocket Lawyer (<https://www.rocketlawyer.com/gb/en>).