

The purpose and scope of this policy

Changing Chances Ltd delivers services including training and coaching for children and young people and for their parents, carers, teachers and other professionals working with children. Within its work, Changing Chances Ltd has a responsibility to promote the wellbeing and safety of all.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To safeguard and promote the wellbeing of the children and vulnerable adults with whom Changing Chances Ltd works.
- To provide parents, carers colleagues and other professionals with the overarching principles that guide the company's approach to child protection.

Changing Chances Ltd recognises its duty to ensure that appropriate action is taken where a child or vulnerable adult is experiencing harm or is at risk of harm. This policy relates to all children up to 18 years of age. It also relates to vulnerable adults who may need to be safeguarded from harm.

This policy statement applies to anyone working on behalf of Changing Chances Ltd, including directors, employed staff and self-employed associates (referred to throughout as colleagues).

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from nspcc.org.uk/childprotection.

We believe that:

- Children, young people and vulnerable adults should never experience abuse of any kind, including neglect.
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and vulnerable adults, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or gender reassignment have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Abuse is a deliberate act of ill-treatment that can harm or is likely to harm a person's safety, wellbeing and development. Abuse can be physical, sexual or emotional.

- Neglect also constitutes abuse and can be defined as failing to provide or secure a child or vulnerable adult with the basic needs required for physical safety and wellbeing.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.
- Adults aged 18 and over have the potential to be vulnerable for a variety of reasons which may be temporary or permanent. An adult may be vulnerable if he/she:
 - Has a learning or physical disability or a reduction in physical or mental capacity.
 - Has a physical or mental illness, including addiction to alcohol or drugs.
 - Is receiving community services or healthcare because of age, health or disability, or is living in sheltered or residential accommodation.
 - Is unable, for any other reason, to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation.

We will seek to keep children and young people and vulnerable adults safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them.
- Appointing a nominated Safeguarding Lead.
- Sharing concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, carers and vulnerable adults appropriately.
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment.
- Sharing information about child protection and safeguarding best practice with children, their families and colleagues via appropriate channels.
- Recruiting colleagues safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Providing effective management for colleagues through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures.
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against colleagues appropriately.
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- Providing a safe physical environment for children, young people, vulnerable adults and colleagues by applying health and safety measures set out in law and regulatory guidance.
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely.

Related policies and procedures

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures, including:

- Privacy policy
- Associate responsibilities, as set out in their contract

Responsibilities

Changing Chances Ltd duties and responsibilities

- Ensure that staff in contact with children and vulnerable adults have the requisite knowledge, skill and qualifications to carry out their jobs safely and effectively.
- Ensure safe practice when working with other organisations, in particular that they have in place adequate safeguarding arrangements.

- Maintain an organisation that is safe for all staff, children and vulnerable adults and an environment where poor practice is challenged.
- Ensure that all colleagues working with children and vulnerable adults are vetted through the DBS scheme where applicable.
- Ensure that all colleagues receive a copy of this safeguarding policy, are appropriately trained and understand their responsibilities.

Lead for safeguarding and child protection

Name: Kit Messenger, Director: Changing Chances Ltd

Phone: 07469 233306

Email: kit@changingchances.co.uk

In the absence of the Safeguarding Lead, any issues or concerns should be raised with:

Name: Alison Rendle, Director: Changing Chances Ltd

Phone: 07972 333229

Email: alison@changingchances.co.uk

Responsibilities of the lead for safeguarding and child protection

The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- Providing support and advice to colleagues on safeguarding matters relating to children and vulnerable adults.
- Ensuring that all colleagues have up to date training on child protection and safeguarding.
- Managing any referrals/cases through to resolution.
- Maintaining an overview of safeguarding issues and monitoring the implementation of this policy, in conjunction with the other directors.
- Deciding whether to refer reported matters to the police or local authority social care services. Where possible, referrals should be made the same working day or within 24 hours. The Safeguarding Lead will decide whether parents/carers should be informed of the referral.
- Following any serious safeguarding incident, the Safeguarding Lead and directors will review what happened and identify any learning to improve practice in future.

All colleagues have a responsibility to:

- Ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults with whom they work.
- Promote good practice, minimise and manage potential risks.
- Follow the guidance in this policy and report any and all safeguarding concerns using the correct procedure.
- Complete appropriate safeguarding training needed for their role.

If a colleague suspects that a child or vulnerable adult is being harmed by experiencing, or already has experienced, abuse or neglect and/or is likely to suffer harm in the future, they must report it to the Safeguarding Lead or company director, at the earliest opportunity.

It is not the responsibility of Changing Chances Ltd to decide whether or not abuse or neglect has taken place. It is the responsibility of colleagues to act if there is cause for concern, so that the appropriate agencies can investigate and take any action necessary.

In an emergency

In an emergency situation where an individual is causing or threatening actual physical self-harm or harm to another, colleagues must seek immediate assistance from the emergency services – Police, Ambulance, Fire Brigade. In all circumstances the colleague should seek to remove themselves from any form of danger to themselves and not attempt to resolve the incident.

Supporting and supervising colleagues

Changing Chances Ltd will provide supervision and support for colleagues in their work with children, young people and vulnerable adults, and for areas directly linked to the content of our programmes.

Coaches or psychologists working as associates for Changing Chances Ltd are expected to maintain their own arrangements for supervision to develop and maintain their individual skill set.

We recognise that involvement in situations where there is risk or actual harm can be stressful for colleagues. Colleagues who have initiated safeguarding concerns will be contacted by a company director within 72 hours to debrief the situation and identify any further support they may require.

Professional boundaries and code of conduct

Colleagues must not:

- Meet or travel with a child or vulnerable adult on their own.
- Ask overly personal questions (unless specifically related to a work project, in which case it must be documented).
- Send/give out material that could be considered offensive.
- Suggest or imply a personal relationship could develop.
- Have physical contact.
- Sell to or buy items from children or vulnerable adults.
- Offer or accept personal gifts.
- Engage in social media contact or private contact with children or vulnerable adults.

If professional boundaries and/or policies are breached this could result in disciplinary procedures.

Online safety for clients and colleagues

Staff should take care when communicating with others online, particularly when identifying themselves as Changing Chances Ltd staff or associates and when in contact with children and vulnerable adults.

Electronic communication is an easy way to communicate with young people. However, colleagues should be aware of the dangers which can be associated with it. Electronic communication is often extremely informal which can create the potential for communication to be misunderstood. Because of its informal style, it's easy to accidentally or purposely cross appropriate boundaries.

Electronic communication with children, young people and vulnerable adults should only be used:

- With children whose parents/carers have given explicit consent in writing on the Changing Chances Ltd consent form.
- By those who have DBS clearance.

When communicating with clients between training and coaching sessions, colleagues must abide by the following principles:

- Electronic communication must be made from an account authorised by Changing Chances Ltd, not from a personal account.
- Any electronic communication with a young person should be copied to the parent.
- Communication should be made in clear, unambiguous language (rather than abbreviations and 'text language').
- Electronic communication (including texts) should be used for information-giving purposes only.
- The blind copy [bcc] function should be used when sending e-mails to multiple recipients, unless you have permission from the whole group to share e-mail addresses.

Under no circumstances should colleagues:

- Use electronic communication with primary school age children. In these instances, the communication should be sent to the parent/carer for them to pass on.
- Share any personal information with children or vulnerable adults.
- Request or respond to any personal information from the child or vulnerable adult other than that which is necessary and appropriate for the work in hand.
- Use electronic communication with young people between the hours of 21:30 and 08:00 unless in an emergency.
- Take images or videos of children or young people or make a video call without the specific written permission of parents/carers and a Director of Changing Chances Ltd.
- Carry out 'text conversations' (a series of text messages sent to and from between mobiles).
- Ask children to reveal personal email addresses or mobile phone numbers.
- Use language which could be deemed as flirtatious, sexual or showing favouritism.
- Initiate or accept friend requests from under 18s or vulnerable adults using a personal profile.

Allegations management

Changing Chances Ltd recognises its duty to report concerns or allegations against its staff within the organisation or by a professional from another organisation.

The process for raising and dealing with allegations is as follows:

- Any member of staff or associate of Changing Chances Ltd is required to report any concerns or suspicions of abuse, harm or neglect in the first instance to the Safeguarding Lead. A written record of the concern will be completed and reviewed by the company directors.
- Concerns will be investigated by the Safeguarding Lead to conclusion.
- Concerns about staff will be treated with the same rigour as other concerns.

Confidentiality and managing information

Information will be gathered, recorded and stored in accordance with the Privacy Policy.

All staff must be aware that they have a professional duty to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. The need to safeguard children and vulnerable adults may override confidentiality interests. However, information will be shared on a need to know basis only, as judged by the Safeguarding Lead.

In any work with children and/or vulnerable adults it is important to be clear about confidentiality and about the limits of confidentiality. This should be discussed with children and/or vulnerable adults at the beginning of any piece of work and reminders and information given from time to time, to ensure that they understand the processes and what responsibilities members of staff have.

All colleagues must be aware that they cannot promise service users or their families/carers that they will keep secrets.

While personal information held by professionals and agencies is subject to a legal duty of confidence and should not normally be disclosed without the subject's consent, Changing Chances Ltd has a clear responsibility for protecting children and vulnerable adults. This means that, where necessary to protect welfare, it will breach confidentiality to raise concerns.

Confidential record keeping

Records must be kept securely and access must be restricted. The Safeguarding Lead and directors have a particular responsibility in maintaining the confidentiality of these records and must ensure that the records, or any information they contain, are made available only to relevant parties. The transfer of information - verbally, through the mail or electronically should be managed in such a way that confidentiality is maintained.

Policy review

Changing Chances Ltd is committed to reviewing our policy and good practice regularly.

This policy was last reviewed on: 31st May 2020

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline (24 hours)

To report or discuss concerns about a child's welfare. Tel: 0808 800 5000 or textphone: 0800 056 0566 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk