

# Safeguarding Policy

Last updated: November 2024

## **Interpretation and Definitions:**

For the purposes of this Safeguarding Policy:

- **Company:** referred to as either "Focusing Minds" "the Company", "We", Us "Our" in this Policy refers to Focusing Minds Mental Health, Wellbeing & Education Services Ltd – Vulcan House, Brighouse HD6 1LT
- **You/Service User:** or equivalents including "Your", means the individual accessing or using the service, or a company, or any legal entity on behalf of which such individual is accessing or using Our services or website, as applicable.
- **Organisation:** relates to any setting outside of Focusing Minds, including schools, colleges or other education providers/settings.
- **Child/young person:** relates to any individual under the age of 18.

## **Purpose:**

The purpose of this Safeguarding Policy explains Our procedures to ensure all who We encounter and conduct work with are adequately protected and safeguarded.

## **What is safeguarding?**

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

In Our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, particularly children and young people, from harm. This harm may arise from staff or volunteers of Focusing Minds or be delivered via a child or young person's disclosure.

Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across our services and staff. It requires proactively identifying, preventing and guarding against all risks of significant harm, exploitation and abuse and having mature, accountable and transparent systems for response, reporting and learning when risks materialise. Those systems must be survivor-centred and also protect those accused until proven guilty.

## **Scope**

This policy refers to all staff employed or contracted by Focusing Minds. This also includes any volunteers who undertake work on Our behalf.

This policy does not refer to other organisations or individuals employed outside of Focusing Minds but who use the same facilities at Vulcan House, Brighouse, HD6 1LT or Seemore Business Centre, Towngate, Ossett, WF5 9BL.

**Policy statement:**

We believe everyone has the responsibility to promote the welfare of all young people and to practice in a way that protects them. We give equal priority to keeping all children, young people and other service users safe regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion, belief or sexual orientation.

**1. How we aim to meet our commitment to keeping children safe**

We aim to protect Our service users by:

- Listening to children/young people and respecting them.
- Making sure all staff and volunteers understand and follow the safeguarding and child protection procedures in place.
- Ensuring all services users, particularly children and young people, are aware of the safeguarding and child protection procedures in place and are aware of how to raise a concern.
- Building a safeguarding culture, where staff, volunteers and service users know how they are expected to behave and feel comfortable in sharing concerns.

**2. How we ensure our staff are suitable**

All staff are enhanced DBS checked and registered on the DBS update service. This is to ensure all staff members' certificates are kept up-to-date and allows external organisations We may work with to check individual certificates online.

**3. Our procedures for maintaining safety in private practice.**

To ensure all children, young people, service users and Our staff are safe, We adopt the following approach(es) whilst operating from Vulcan House, Brighthouse and Seemore Business Centre, Ossett:

- The external door to the working premises will always remain locked. This includes to any other areas of the above address being used for purposes or services offered by Focusing Minds.
- All efforts will be made to ensure any work undertaken is done so from a suitable distance, with items such as tables or desks also between staff and child, young person or service user.
- At no point will any contact be recorded, whether by video or sound via mobile, transportable or other technological devices. The same is expected from all children, young people, service users and/or their parents/carers who access Our services.

**4. Our procedures for maintaining safety in other organisations.**

To ensure all children, young people, services users and/or Our staff are safe, we adopt the following approach(es) whilst operating under contract with other organisations:

- The safeguarding policy and key contacts of the organisation will be shared prior to any contracted work being undertaken, whether contracted work is to be undertaken at or away from the organisation's site.
- A suitable working environment, at the discretion of and provided by the organisation, should be provided to undertake any contracted work, when on the organisation's site.

- Our staff will support (not lead) staff from the organisation in safeguarding matters such as home visits or searches in line with the organisation's safeguarding policy. Our staff will not lead or act solely on any safeguarding matter.

Our staff will not:

- Provide transport for any number of children, young people or service users from an organisation, regardless of vehicular or business insurance.
- Directly search a child, young person or service user, even where staff from the organisation are present and in support.

**5. Our procedures for raising safeguarding concerns: private mentoring/support practice.**

We recognise that most safeguarding concerns may be delivered by a child/young person via a disclosure to Our staff in work undertaken with them.

- Any child/young person will be informed that disclosures will not be kept secret in the event they cause harm to themselves or others, whether physically, emotionally or mentally.
- Parents/carers will be advised of any relevant disclosures as to inform and for them to take appropriate safeguarding or protective actions, unless the safety of the child/young person is significantly compromised (please see section 9).
- Signposting to other, relevant organisations will be suggested to the child/young person and their parents/carers (where applicable) in the event support needs require greater or more complex intervention.
- All safeguarding concerns will be held confidentially. See Our Privacy Policy for further details on data storage.

**6. Our procedures for raising safeguarding concerns: in external organisations/education settings.**

Where Our staff are contracted to work with children/young people in schools or other education settings/organisations, We adopt the following procedure:

- Focusing Minds staff will adopt the safeguarding policy and practices of the organisation.
- Any child/young person will be informed that any disclosure will not be kept secret and referred to the appropriate members of staff within the organisation.
- Any disclosure will be recorded as prescribed by the organisation's own safeguarding policy and practices.
- Any recorded information will be stored solely by the organisation for which they will hold responsibility for its safe keeping.
- Appropriate members of staff within the organisation will ultimately make decisions on whether further referrals are needed on a case-by-case basis.
- It is the organisation's responsibility to share relevant concerns with parents/carers, though this may be conducted by Our staff at the discretion and direction of the organisation.

Focusing Minds takes no responsibility for the inaction of organisations where safeguarding matters arise either in their setting or contracted work undertaken under the organisation's instruction.

## **7. Protection against exploitation and abuse.**

Our staff will not:

- Engage in contact or activity with any child, young person or service user outside the intended purpose of the service provided. This includes in a community setting.
- Engage in relationships with any child, young person or service user's parents/carers or staff within organisation settings outside the professional purpose of The Company.
- Exchange money, goods or gifts for any activity or purpose outside the expectations of the service provided.
- Accept gifts of cash or financial incentive outside the service provided. This includes 'tips' or acceptance of inclusion in wills.
- Accept gift items of thanks over the value of £20.

## **8. Who we may refer to for guidance.**

If We have significant concerns relating to a child/young person or service user, We have a duty to ensure they are safeguarded. Consequently, We may contact external agencies for support or guidance, and this will be done anonymising the child/young person or service user unless instructed through:

- Children's Services under Section 47 of the Children's Act 1989.
- Police or other authority organisations where there is a legal requirement to provide information.

We may contact the following organisations for advice and guidance:

- Colleagues or Designated Safeguarding Leads in professional, local organisations.
- Regional/National organisations such as the NSPCC.
- Local Children's Services and/or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

## **9. Our duty to refer**

We have a responsibility to refer a child or young person to Children's Services under section 11 of the Children's Act 2004 if We believe or suspect they:

- Have suffered significant harm.
- Are likely to suffer significant harm.
- Have needs only likely to be met through provision of family support services under the Children's Act 1989.

## **10. How we ensure our staff are aware at spotting and responding to concerns**

All Focusing Minds staff have undertaken relevant child protection or safeguarding training which is updated at least annually.

## **11. Our response to infectious disease circumstances**

To protect children, young people or service user's during any future period of the spread of an infectious disease, we will adopt the following procedures:

- A disease-specific risk assessment.
- Social distancing or other practices in accordance with wider government guidance.
- Handwashing/sanitising of hands on entry to Vulcan House for all children, young people or service users and their parents/carers.
- Regular wipe down and sanitation of frequently touched areas such as door handles, surfaces and taps.

## **12. Where children/young people or parents/carers can find more information**

Children, young people, service users or their parents/carers can find such support from the following services:

- Child/young person's place of education (where accessible)
- NSPCC helpline: 0808 800 5000
- Childline: 0800 1111

The following applications/sites may also be suitable to help some children, young people or service users:

- Calm Harm – an app to support with self harm
- Kooth – an online mental wellbeing community

More support tools are available via the NHS's library, this can be found here: [www.nhs.uk/apps-library/category/mental-health/](http://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/category/mental-health/)

If You have significant concerns or are in crisis, You should refer to the following organisations:

- Calderdale Council Child protection Team: 01422 393336
- Calderdale Council Emergency Duty Team: 01422 288000 (out of hours)
- Kirklees Council Children's Services Duty and Advice Team: 01484 456848 (9am-5pm)
- Wakefield Safeguarding Children Partnership: 01924 306497
- The emergency services