



Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy – Stable Futures

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Introduction

At Stable Futures we believe that every young person deserves a safe environment. The key to this approach is our commitment and perseverance ensuring that all children & children & young people that use our services are protected from harm and our staff are undertaking that role to enable those they to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

Everyone who works with children & young people has a responsibility for keeping them safe, and this policy sets out the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation, or identification of abuse and neglect

This policy provides details about safeguarding (including prevent) responsibilities and arrangements in place, to address concerns and allegations about abuse and neglect affecting children and young people.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure that all children & young people who are receiving services from us or who are in contact with the service for any reason are protected from all forms of abuse or any significant harm.
- Supporting vulnerable children & young people in order to prevent potential radicalisation (prevent)
- Acknowledge that all staff members of Stable Futures (including third party providers) have a responsibility to act where there is cause for concern about service users safety and well-being.
- Promote best practice and a positive organisational culture which encourages the promotion of welfare of children & young people and ensures their safety.
- Ensure that we encourage working together with children & young people, their local authorities, health services and advocates as much as possible, in situations where there is cause for concern.
- Provide mandatory procedures, which must be adopted in any situation where there is cause to be concerned that a young person has experienced or is at risk of some form of abuse or any significant harm.

The policy will also, clarify the roles and responsibilities of Stable Futures and other agencies, especially those with a statutory responsibility.



Related Policies:

- Whistle blowing
- Managing allegations against staff
- Missing children
- Behaviour management
- Safer recruitment

Policy statement

We are fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and children & young people by taking all reasonable steps to protect them from neglect, physical, sexual or emotional harm. The development and implementation of this policy and procedures are to be seen as an integral part of Stable Futures's determination to provide high quality responsive services, which meet the needs of our service users.

Our approach to safeguarding and child protection is based on principles recognised in UK legislation.

The welfare and protection of children & young people is paramount. All children & young people regardless of age, disability, racial heritage, religious belief and sexual orientation or identify have the right to protection from all types of harm and abuse.

We recognise the importance in working in partnership with statutory organisations, agencies, parents and carers in the prevention and response to incidents or allegation of harm and abuse to children.

Definitions / types of abuse

Child Abuse is a Form of Significant Harm

The Children's Act 1989 (and amendment 2004) define significant harm, and four categories of abuse

- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse



- Sexual Abuse

A person can abuse or neglect a young person by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children & young people can be abused in a family, in an institution or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They can be abused by an adult or adults or another young person or children & young people.

For children & young people over the age of 18 we also need to consider risk of:

- Financial abuse
- Discrimination
- Self neglect

Recognition of abuse and neglect

All children & young people accessing Stable Futures are entitled to high standards of protection from harm. We recognise that many children & young people have underlying learning difficulties and we aim to ensure all children & young people, no matter their needs, are safeguarded whilst in our care.

Due to the nature of learning difficulty or social, emotional, and mental health barriers and previous traumas experienced by children & young people who access Stable Futures, it may be very difficult for them to communicate allegations of abuse. Therefore, staff must be especially vigilant and aware of the categories and indicators of abuse. The main categories are physical abuse; sexual abuse; emotional abuse and neglect.

At Stable Futures, we take into consideration individual young person's communication needs and staff will have appropriate training when such needs are identified. This may include staff training in Makaton, PECS, braille, BSL or another communication method.

Initially a situation may not seem serious, but it should be remembered that prompt help may prevent minor abuse escalating into something more serious.

The assessment of any harm or abuse should be multi-disciplinary and no one professional should take or have the responsibility of determining whether harm has occurred or not.

Therefore, it is important to discuss any concerns with your home manager/on-call manager immediately.

Stable Futures provides safeguarding training to all staff as part of their induction and this training is regularly refreshed. Bespoke courses are also available throughout the year to ensure staff are knowledgeable, confident and competent to respond to concerns for safety and/or identify risk or harm.



Children & young people should be supported by staff to understand what abuse is, and to manage the impact of any abuse or neglect they have suffered.

Children & young people must be listened to and enabled to report any abuse or neglect at the earliest opportunity. They should be given information about how to report abuse or any concerns about possible abuse among their peers. This should include being able to access in private, relevant websites or help lines such as [Childline](#) to seek advice and help.

Abuse or neglect is not always easy to identify, staff are more than likely to have some information but not the whole picture.

The first indications that a young person is being abused or neglected may be:

- Remarks made by the young person or their parents or friends
- Changes in behaviour or demeanour which may indicate abuse or neglect
- a series of events or indicators which, whilst not necessarily of concern in themselves, are of concern when considered together

Reporting concerns

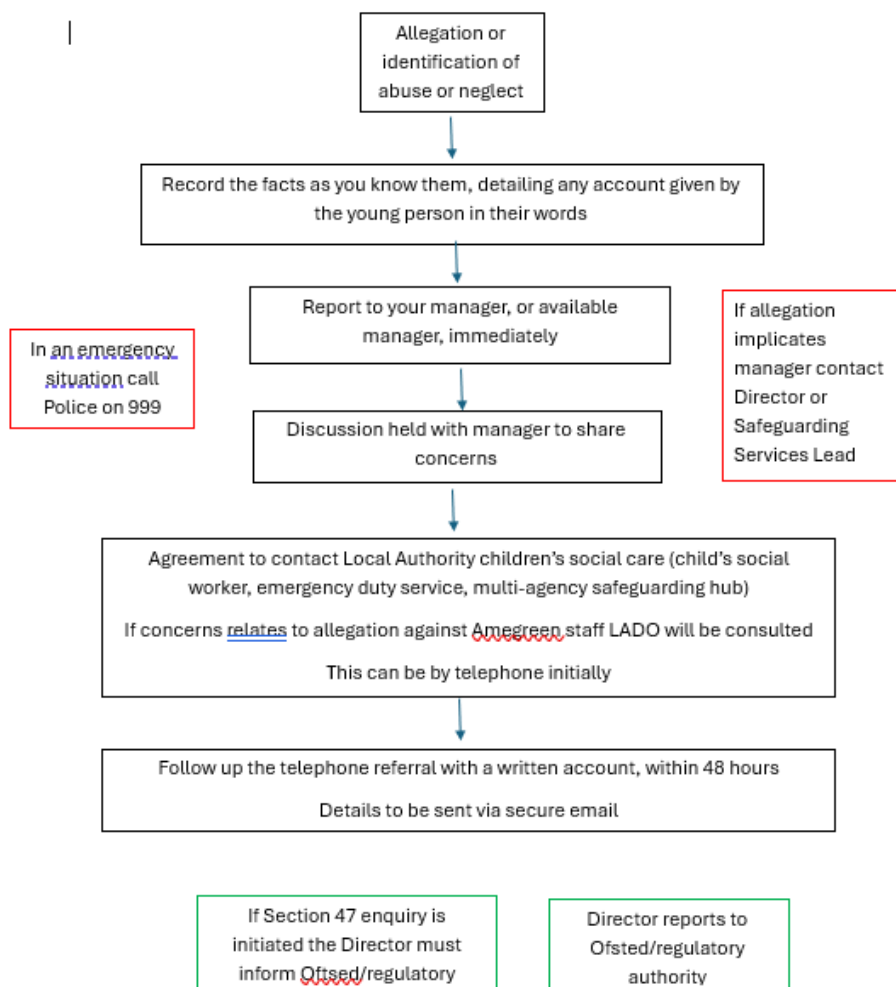
All staff have a responsibility to report any suspicions or concerns that a young person has or may be mistreated or harmed without delay.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for coordinating safeguarding referrals.

Local authorities have a duty to promote and safeguard the welfare of children & young people and to investigate and take necessary action to protect children & young people from abuse and harm

The general principle is that all safeguarding concerns and any allegations must be reported.

The following actions should be taken when there is any concern or disclosure about the welfare of a young person. This includes non-recent or historical abuse that may have occurred at some time in the past and may not have been previously reported or investigated.



Staff should firstly make their report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, unless the manager is implicated. In which case staff must notify one of the following:

- Another manager who is not implicated
- The Local Authority Children's Social Care Services in whose area the child's home is located
- The young person's social worker
- Police
- The Regulatory Authority

In an emergency, where there is an immediate risk to the children & young people, staff must take necessary action. This may involve asking for Police assistance or seeking emergency medical assistance e.g. taking the young person to hospital or contacting the



emergency services via 999. If the young person is taken to hospital or the Police are called, staff must inform them that there is a suspicion of abuse or harm. Thereafter staff must notify the manager (or other agency) as described above.

Once notified, the DSL will be responsible for following the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children Procedures for the relevant Local Authority area and making a referral to the Children's Social Care Services.

Responding to allegations

If a disclosure or allegation of abuse or harm has been made, staff should discuss with the young person or other person, who has made the complaint, what steps they would like taken to protect them and their wishes.

Where the allegation or disclosure is of a non-recent or historical nature, e.g. relating to abuse or harm that may have been perpetrated in another placement or by family members, allegations must be taken seriously and must be reported in the same way as any other allegation.

Staff must not give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to those who report possible abuse or harm, but they should guarantee that they will take steps to ensure that appropriate action is taken, and the young person protected.

If an allegation or any suspicion is about the behaviour, past or present of another member of staff, including managers, which may in any way put children & young people at risk, staff must follow the Allegations of staff procedure and the LADO procedures set out in each local authority.

Staff must make a written record, as soon as possible, of what they have been told, any questions they asked, the replies given, actions taken and by whom. They must then give the report to the designated senior manager.

Report any concerns to your DSL, if not available, to Amegreen Director (Rachel Redgwell). Inform the social worker as soon as practicably possible and do not attempt to investigate anything yourself

This information should be placed on the young person's record except where a colleague is implicated or there is any risk to the young person as a result, in which case notes/records should be given to the manager dealing with the matter.

Staff should not discuss the matter with others, including other staff, parents etc unless asked to do so by those responsible for dealing any subsequent investigation or enquiry.



Allegations against Stable Futures staff

Any allegation of abuse against a Stable Futures staff member must be taken seriously, both for the sake of the young person and the member of staff.

Staff receiving the allegation will follow the same process for responding to concerns.

The staff member who is the subject of the allegation must NOT be informed of the allegation at this point.

The DSL should refer the matter immediately to the Director(s) or in their absence the person acting for them.

The Director(s) will then decide whether the incident is serious enough to be considered as a potential safeguarding matter OR whether the allegation is less serious, in which case it should be dealt with under Amegreen's Complaints Policy and if appropriate disciplinary procedures.

If there is insufficient information to make this decision, the Director and/or Safeguarding Services Lead will need to decide as a matter of urgency, what information is needed and how this should be obtained, so that a decision can then be taken as to whether or not this situation should be considered as a matter of potential abuse.

If the Director/Safeguarding Services Lead decides that the situation should be considered as potential abuse, they will consult with the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and request that an emergency strategy meeting be convened to plan the process of investigation.

The Director(s) will also need to decide whether for the duration of the investigation, the member of staff should continue in their work, be moved to other duties or be suspended in accordance with the terms of the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

The LADO will be kept informed of all decisions taken by Stable Futures/Amegreen in relation to the staff member. If, the matter is to be investigated then the Director/Safeguarding Services Lead will advise the staff member that an allegation has been made against him/her and the matter has been referred to the Local Authority for investigation. To avoid prejudicing the investigation the details of the allegation should not be discussed prior to investigation and the staff member will be instructed not to discuss this with other colleagues. The staff member will be advised to take legal advice.

Once the investigation is completed, the Director(s) and HR Manager will decide whether any further action is needed in relation to the information arising from the investigation. Depending on the outcome of the investigation it may be necessary to commence Stable



Futures formal disciplinary policy and this much be conveyed to the staff member within seven days of the completion of the investigation.

Allegations against Third Party Providers

Regarding any allegation of abuse against a Stable Futures third party provider, staff receiving the allegation will follow the same process for responding to concerns as detailed above.

In relation to reporting concerns the receiving staff member will contact their line manager, who in consultation with the Director/Safeguarding Services Lead will inform the line manager of the staff member subject to allegation within the providing organisation.

The staff member belonging to the third party, who is the subject of the allegation, must NOT be informed of the allegation. The matter will be handed to the providing organisation to follow in accordance with their own safeguarding, complaints and disciplinary processes.

It would be the responsibility of the providing agency to inform the LADO.

Child on Child Abuse

The safeguarding culture within Stable Futures services aims to prevent any harm to children & young people we are supporting. Stable Futures Behaviour Management Policy is in place to ensure that children & young people feel safe and protected within their home.

However, we recognise that on occasion abuse and harm can be child on child. This can include persistent or serious bullying, sexual exploitation, aggression, or other threatening behaviour which places a young person at risk or causes any level of harm.

Where there is any suspicion or allegation of abuse or harm inflicted on one young person by another, the procedures set out for bullying and behaviour management should be followed.

Protecting the rights of both children & young people is important. It may be necessary, dependent on an assessment of all the facts, to separate the children & young people, but it may not be possible to explain why this is necessary to the alleged perpetrator.

Throughout the process thereafter it will be necessary to ensure that children & young people with allegations made against them are properly supported, by an independent person if appropriate or required, as well as their social worker and parent(s).

Once the investigation is complete, consideration will then need to be given to the needs and interests of both children & young people, and whether counselling and/or other support should be given.



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Safer Recruitment

Amergreen and Stable Futures has in place a comprehensive series of systems and checks, which assist in the safe recruitment and selection of staff. Prior to appointment, all staff are subject to a Disclosure & Barring Service check at the enhanced level and candidates must provide proof of identity through official documents and qualifications and references are checked for authenticity.

All staff must provide a full employment history with any gaps fully explained and all appointments will be subject to a minimum of two references having been received (one of which must be the most recent employer) and checked. Referees will be reminded that references must not contain any omission relevant to the suitability of the applicant.

Even the most careful selection process cannot guarantee the suitability of candidates and all new appointments will be subject to a probationary period. On commencement of duties all staff participate in the Stable Futures and Amergreen Inductions programmes, and completion of all mandatory training which provides regular, planned and supportive observations, supervision, guidance and development opportunities.

Whistleblowing

Children & young people and Staff have the right and the responsibility to raise genuinely held concerns about abuses of power and trust by colleagues towards:

1. Children & young people using our services
2. Any other children & young people
3. Adult Service Users (i.e. Social Workers)
4. Other employees

Any concerns that a colleague might or has been mistreating or abusing a young person must always be reported.

The procedure will also apply to people involved in working with us though not employed by the Company (e.g. consultants, students on placement etc).

No one exercising their responsibilities under this procedure and in good faith will be penalised for doing so. Any attempt to victimise employees for raising genuine concerns or to prevent such concerns being raised will be regarded as a disciplinary matter.

Any attempt to abuse this procedure by maliciously raising unfounded allegations will also be regarded as a disciplinary matter.



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Record keeping

It is impossible to say, at the time of making a safeguarding note, who will eventually have access to it, or when. It may be consulted months or even years after it was written. Always bear in mind that someone who is a stranger to you and Stable Futures may need to read your record at some stage in the future. (A court may release the papers to the parent).

Handwritten logs of incidents, disclosures and notes should be clearly legible and written in black ink.

All notes and reports must contain the following:

- Name and date of birth of the young person concerned
- Date and time of the record being made
- Printed name & signature of person making the record
- Job title of person making the record
- A factual account of what happened, and the location where the incident took place (include the actual words spoken by the young person here if possible)
- A note of any other people involved e.g. as witnesses
- Any other agencies informed?

Any requests to provide statements for either the police or courts should be referred immediately to the DSL or Amegreen Director. Evidence derived from a Child Protection Investigation e.g. statements, exhibits, transcripts of video-recorded interviews with children may be made available for use in subsequent disciplinary proceedings, prior to which, availability must be discussed at a Strategy Meeting.

Contextual Safeguarding

The Contextual Safeguarding approach recognises that as children & young people grow and develop, they are influenced by a whole range of environments and people outside of their family. For example, in school or college, in the local community, in their peer groups or online.

Children & young people may encounter risk in any of these environments. Sometimes the different contexts are inter-related and can mean that children and children & young people may encounter multiple risks.



At Stable Futures we are committed to exploring how we can best understand these risks (sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, internet safety etc) and engage with children & young people and help to keep them safe.

All staff are provided with relevant training and support, and relationships have been developed with Thames Valley Police, and local support services such as Missing Children Coordinators to enable effective information sharing and safeguarding within the young person's social contexts.

Mobile Phones and Devices Policy

To ensure the safety and well-being of all children and young people accessing our alternative provision sites, it is required that mobile phones and other electronic devices are not brought onto the premises. All students must hand in their mobile phones and any other personal electronic devices to staff upon arrival at the site. These devices will be securely stored and returned to the students at the end of the day during pick-up.

This policy is in place to safeguard the privacy and security of all children and young people at our sites, as well as to protect vulnerable individuals from the risks associated with the unauthorized use of mobile phones, including the taking of pictures, filming, or sharing content on social media platforms. By implementing this rule, we aim to create a safe and supportive environment free from the potential harms associated with digital devices.

Any breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with our behaviour management procedures.

Missing Children

Stable Futures have a Missing from Education policy which should be read alongside this safeguarding policy.

A child is missing from education if they are not where they are supposed to be, and their whereabouts is unknown.

In these situations, Stable Futures staff will take steps to try and locate the young person and/or encourage them to return to the provision before reporting the young person missing to the police.

Mandatory Reporting Duty Female Genital Mutilation.



The Mandatory Reporting Duty commenced in October 2015. All health, social care and teaching staff must report to the police cases where they discover that an act of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out. Staff should discuss any such case with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and involve children's social care as appropriate.

At Stable Futures we believe this is good practice and in the interest of the children and children & young people we support, and therefore we also have a responsibility to report our concerns, in line with local safeguarding children's boards processes.

Self- Harm

If the need is identified within a risk assessment, or a child/young person accessing Stable Futures is known to have a recent history of self-harm staff will be trained in self-harm and first aid and will support children & young people to understand their emotions and seek healthy coping mechanisms. Any incidents of self-harm will be recorded on the child's record, and communicated with relevant professionals (social worker, support services)

Self-harm is a broad term for many acts that cause personal harm, ranging from someone:

- Not looking after their needs properly emotionally or physically.
- Direct injury such as scratching, cutting, burning, hitting yourself, swallowing or putting things inside.
- Staying in an abusive relationship.
- Taking risks too easily.
- Eating disorders (anorexia, binge eating and bulimia).
- Addiction (for example, to alcohol or drugs).
- Suicide.
- Attempted suicide.

Children & young people often disclose a 'trigger' or circumstance that led them to begin self-harming, such as being bullied, or other incidences connected to isolating and mistreatment. Many triggers are connected to another important factor in a young person's life, such as family life or communication barriers.

We aim to ensure a young person has access to specialist and/or relevant support services. Our main priority is for children & young people to understand that they have people available to talk to, and they will not be judged.



Radicalisation and Extremism

At Stable Futures we value freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs/ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society's values. Children & young people and staff have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion.

Stable Futures seeks to protect children & young people against the messages of all violent extremism.

Staff will be made aware at safeguarding training of the characteristics within children & young people and families that may indicate radicalisation or warning indicators of those who may be vulnerable to radicalisation.

Staff will treat any radicalisation/extremism concerns in the same manner as safeguarding concerns and will follow the child protection and safeguarding procedures as outlined in this document. All staff complete their Prevent Duty training.

Important Contacts

If you become aware of concerns that a young person is being abused, or if you have any concerns, you must report it to your line manager. If you think someone is being abused, don't assume that someone else is doing something about it.

Your line manager will contact the relevant Safeguarding Officer.

The key contacts for Safeguarding at Stable Futures are:-

| Key Personnel | Name (s) | Telephone No. |
|---|------------------------|--|
| Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) | Emily Clayton | Emily.Clayton@amegreencs.co.uk 01183 347200 07795 342004 |
| Stable Future's Team Leader Deputy DSL | Danielle Peers-Holland | Danielle.peers-holland@amegreencs.co.uk |

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|--|--|--|
| | | 07895 861 330 |
| Amegreen CS Mental Health Lead / HR Manager | Amber Mitchell | amber.mitchell@amegreencs.co.uk |
| Nominated Safeguarding Internal Quality Assurance | Laurence Baker Becky Herron | Laurence.Baker@amegreencs.co.uk Becky.Herron@amegreencs.co.uk |
| Out of hours social care | | 0300 555 1373 |
| Police | | 101 or in emergencies 999 |
| Safeguarding advisors / Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs) Hampshire | Barbara Piddington Fiona Armfield Shona McMinn | HCC Safeguarding Unit Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Safeguarding Unit, Hampshire Children's Services Department, Clarendon House; Monarch Way; Winchester; SO22 5PW Tel: 01962 876364 Child.protection@hants.gov.uk Hampshire Fiona Armfield - 07540930259 |

As Stable Futures sits on border of West Berkshire- Parent company registered to West Berkshire

Key Contacts within WBC Local Authority

Pan Berkshire Safeguarding Procedures: <http://berks.proceduresonline.com/>

| | Name | Address | Telephone contact | Email |
|--|--------------------|---|--|--|
| Contact, Advice & Assessment Service (CAAS) | Duty Social worker | Council Offices West Street House West Street Newbury Berkshire RG14 1BD | Professionals only contact number: 01635 503190 Parents only Contact number: 01635 503090 or Emergency Duty Team (outside of office hours) Tel: 01344 786543 Fax: 01344 786535 | child@westberks.gov.uk |
| Prevent Officer Thames Valley Police | Prevent officer | Reading Police Station Castle Street Reading RG1 7TH | 07800702319 01189636349 | Preventreferrals@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk |
| Building Communities Together Team Manager and PREVENT Lead, WBC | Susan Powell | CEO & support West Berkshire Council 20 Mill Lane Newbury RG14 5QU | (01635) 264703 07881 856801 | susan.powell@westberks.gov.uk www.westberks.gov.uk |



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|--|---------------|---|---|---|
| Service manager for early years, vulnerable learners and families | Avril Allenby | Council Offices West Street House West Street Newbury Berkshire RG14 1BD | 01635 519044 | Avril.Allenby@westberks.gov.uk |
| Principal Education Welfare and Safeguarding Officer, and PREVENT Link for Education | Melissa Perry | Council Offices West Street House West Street Newbury Berkshire RG14 1BD | 01635 519788 | EWSS@westberks.gov.uk |
| LADO West Berkshire | | | | Fiona Goussard – 07384875650 – Fiona.goussard1@westberks.gov.uk |
| LADO Hampshire | | | If you need to report an allegation you can contact the LADO. Phone: 01962 876364 | https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/safeguardingchildren/allegations |

Date Reviewed: 26.5.2022

Date of next review: 26.5.2023

Best Practice

Policy reissued to stable futures for review: 15.03.2023



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Date of next review: 15.03.2024

Policy reissued to stable futures for review: 15.03.2024- completed EC

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Reviewed: January 2025- E CLAYTON & B HERRON