

ChalCAN Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Adults and Children

ChalCAN is committed to safeguarding practices that help ensure the safety of both adults (notably those at risk) and children whilst taking part in our group activities. This policy helps everyone involved in our group:

- be aware of our legal responsibilities
- understand the safeguarding risks for ChalCAN
- 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 policy, and associated procedures, applies to all individuals involved in ChalCAN.

Code of conduct

When working with vulnerable adults and 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 supporters to behave according to the following values:

- All adults at risk and 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 adults and 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 adults at risk and 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 or an adult at risk

Legislation

ChalCAN recognises that the local authority has the main legal duty to safeguard adults and children at risk, including the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

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

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018;
- The Care Act 2014.

Definitions

A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, even if they are living independently.

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

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting these) AND;
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, AND;
- 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	• Bullying and cyberbullying
• Child sexual exploitation	• Child criminal exploitation
• Child trafficking	• Domestic abuse
• Female genital mutilation	• Grooming
• Historical abuse	• Online abuse
• Radicalisation	• Neglect and acts of omission
• Financial or material abuse	• Discrimination
• Organisational / institutional	• Self-neglect
• Domestic abuse (including coercive control)	• Modern slavery

Recognising safeguarding concerns

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

A child or adult may confide (disclose) to a ChalCAN supporter 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 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

Responding to concerns

ChalCAN has a designated safeguarding lead whose contact details are listed below.

We recognise that it can be difficult for many reasons to speak up if you think someone is being abused or neglected. However, we expect our supporters to take action in response to any concerns. Our safeguarding lead will support the person raising the concerns, as well as the person or child at risk of/experiencing abuse.

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 an adult or child discloses to anyone else in the group that they are being abused, the response should be as follows:

- Always make sure the child/adult speaking up feels they are being listened to and supported
- Don't promise to keep information confidential between you and them
- If the concern is a child, reassure them they have done the right thing by telling you, and emphasise that abuse is never their fault. Take time, be patient, and let the child go at their own pace. Do not talk to the alleged perpetrator about the child's disclosure, this could make it worse for the child.
- 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 member of the coordination group 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:

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?
- 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?

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.

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, or when there are suspicions or disclosures that a child is at current risk of, or is experiencing, abuse or harm.

- If the person or child is in immediate danger, call the police.
- Otherwise contact the local authority safeguarding team within 24 hours and make a referral.

- Be guided by the safeguarding team or police on any further actions required of you.
- If a child is showing signs of distress but there has not been a direct disclosure, you can consult with the NSPCC Helpline and be guided by them on any further actions.

(c) *Allegations concerning volunteers* (when someone has alleged that a ChalCAN supporter has harmed or abused a child or 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*: (when no one has been harmed, but a person shows signs of being in need, and 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 child or adult and if appropriate 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 appropriate 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 child or adult 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

Keeping records

ChalCAN 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 child or 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.

Confidentiality, consent and information sharing

Timely information sharing is key to keeping people safe and responding appropriately to concerns about their welfare. In general, ChalCAN expects all supporters 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.

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 child or adult 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).
- 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.

Training ChalCAN supporters

All ChalCAN supporters working with children or adults at risk will be made aware of the safeguarding policy and procedures of the group. They will be made aware of the designated safeguarding lead, and that they should go to them with any concerns.

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

Key contacts

ChalCAN designated safeguarding lead is Claire Carpenter clairecarpenter63@gmail.com

Childline <https://www.childline.org.uk/> tel 0800 1111

Gloucestershire County Council Safeguarding team: Children and Families Front Door Service on 01452 426565 childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk

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