

# PORTISHEAD YOUTH & COMMUNITY CENTRE

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## SAFEGUARDING POLICY

### **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility**

It is the responsibility of anyone working at Portishead Youth & Community Centre in a paid or unpaid capacity to report any concerns of child/young person/vulnerable adult abuse, neglect or exploitation to the appropriate authority. This applies **BOTH** to allegations/suspicions of abuse, neglect or exploitation occurring within Portishead Youth & Community Centre and to allegations/suspicions that abuse, neglect or exploitation is taking place elsewhere.

Everyone who attends Portishead Youth & Community Centre is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. Portishead Youth & Community Centre has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for children, young people or vulnerable adults, staff and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

Portishead Youth & Community Centre is committed to devising and implementing policies so that all staff accept their responsibilities to safeguard individuals from harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation or maltreatment, inside or outside the home, including online. This means to follow procedures to protect users, reporting any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities and providing help and support to meet the needs of individuals as soon as problems emerge.

Where children and young people attend the centre with their parents, it will be assumed that they are under parental care and supervision. Youth Centre staff and volunteers will therefore have only a general duty of care and of causing no harm.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children, young people and adults with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of Portishead Youth & Community Centre and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific safeguarding issues.

**A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children's Act 1989).**

**For the purposes of this policy and the work undertaken by Portishead Youth & Community Centre, this includes children/young people who are service users, volunteers and young workers.**

This policy is informed by Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 (KCSIE 2024) and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, in addition to guidance adopted from the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSSCP) (<https://www.northsomersetsafeguarding.co.uk>). This policy is reviewed annually to include updates from statutory guidance. This policy, along with other related Portishead Youth & Community Centre policies, are shared with professionals and commissioning bodies annually.

Portishead Youth & Community Centre's Designated Safeguarding Leads are:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Kimberley Jones (Head of Centre and Youth Provision) - 01275842461

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL): Steph Forrest (Youth Engagement Worker) – 07535351466

Designated Safeguarding Trustee (DST): Nicola Holland

## 1.1 Policy Statement

Portishead Youth & Community Centre is committed to the following:

- the welfare of the children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount. Providing help and support to meet the needs of individuals as soon as problems emerge is vital.
- all individuals, whatever their age, culture, ability, sex, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in activities in a fun and safe environment
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse, neglect or exploitation will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- all Portishead Youth & Community Centre employees and volunteers who work with children, young people or vulnerable adults will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility, and will be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and safeguarding procedures
- working in partnership with parents of children and young people (and the parents/carers of vulnerable adults) who use the Centre, for the overall protection of all individuals.

## 1.2 Monitor and review the policy and procedures

The implementation of procedures should be regularly monitored and reviewed. The Head of Centre and Youth Provision should regularly report progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements, gaps and areas where changes are required to the Trustees.

Besides a hard copy, this policy is kept in electronic form and is accessible by all staff through the 'Staff' drive on Portishead Youth & Community Centre computers.

The policy should be reviewed annually or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation.

## 2 Promoting Good Practice – working with children and young people

### 2.1 Introduction

To provide children and young people with the best possible experience and opportunities at Portishead Youth & Community Centre everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework such as the Ethical Conduct in Youth Work (2004) guidelines, published by the National Youth Agency.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse, neglect or exploitation. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of employees or participants in activities at Portishead Youth & Community Centre to make judgements about whether or not abuse, neglect or exploitation is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse, neglect or exploitation and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child/young person, as explained in section 4.

This section will help you identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice.

### 2.2 Good Practice

All personnel must adhere to the following principles and action:

- always work in an open environment (e.g., avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets). Where a child/young person wishes for good reason to have a 1:1 confidential



discussion, ensure that a colleague knows where you are, who you are with, and the general reason why. If possible, use an area where you can be seen by other staff/volunteers

- make the experience at Portishead Youth & Community Centre fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
- treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity
- always put the welfare of the child/young person first
- maintain a safe and appropriate distance with children and young people (e.g., it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child/young person or to share a room with them for sleeping purposes)
- avoid unnecessary physical contact with children and young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required it should be provided openly and with the consent of the child/young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the child/young person's consent has been given
- gain written parental consent for any offsite activity, hazardous activity or significant travel arrangements e.g., overnight stays
- ensure that if mixed groups are taken away, they should always be accompanied by at least two members of staff. Wherever possible this should be a male and a female member of staff. This should never be two male members of staff
- be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children and young people
- always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- recognise the developmental needs and capacity of the child/young person and do not sacrifice welfare in a desire for centre/club or personal achievements
- secure written parental consent for the club to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given
- to attend annual training in Child Protection and Safeguarding, re-read this policy and sign the annual Child Protection Policy declaration form (See Appendix for copy)
- To inform the Head of Centre of any personal involvement with local authority children's social care regarding allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation outside of your employment or volunteering at Portishead Youth & Community Centre.

### **2.3 Poor Practice**

The following are regarded as poor practice and must be avoided by all personnel:

- unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with children and young people away from others
- taking children/young people on an unplanned journey, however short without express consent from the Head of Centre (or other Designated Safeguarding Lead if Head of Centre is unavailable)
- taking children or young people to your home
- sharing a bedroom/sleeping space with a child/young person
- engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form, between children/young people and staff or between children and young people
- allowing or encouraging a child or young person to view inappropriate content (e.g., age restricted films, sexual imagery or films, material that may lead to children/young people being radicalised)
- allowing children and young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- making sexually suggestive comments to a child/young person, even in fun
- reducing a child/young person to tears as a form of control
- allow allegations made by a child/young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- do things of a personal nature that the child/young person can do for themselves
- being over friendly with children/young people and/or having favourites
- humiliating children/young people
- contacting children/young people through personal social media accounts including requesting or accepting children/young people as 'friends' or 'followers' and using personal phones to call or text them



- use of personal electronic equipment including mobile phones, tablets and other camera facilities to take photos (unless previously agreed by the Head of Centre or Designated Safeguarding Lead and appropriately removed from the device at the earliest opportunity).

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situations e.g., transporting a child/young person in your car in the case of an emergency, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/carer, the child/young person involved and a Designated Safeguarding Lead. Only employees who have been authorised to drive on company business will be authorised to do so.

If you have any 1:1 contact outside work with any child/young person that you know through your work at the Youth & Community Centre then, to prevent any misunderstanding, that contact should be reported to the Head of Centre or a Designated Safeguarding Lead on your return to work, and a record made.

If during your care you accidentally hurt a child/young person, the child/young person seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the child/young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to the Lead Youth Worker of the session and Head of Centre. You must also complete a Safeguarding Incident Reporting form. Parents/Guardians must also be informed of the incident.

### **3 Promoting Good Practice – working with vulnerable adults**

#### **3.1 Good Practice**

All personnel must adhere to the following principles and action:

- always work in an open environment (e.g., avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets). Where a vulnerable adult wishes for good reason to have a 1:1 confidential discussion, ensure that a colleague knows where you are, who you are with, and the general reason why. If possible, use an area where you can be seen by other staff/volunteers
- make the experience at Portishead Youth & Community Centre fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with unkindness from other users
- treat all individuals equally and with respect and dignity
- always put the welfare of the individual first
- maintain a safe and appropriate distance with vulnerable adults. Where any form of manual/physical support is required it should be provided openly and with the consent of the individual. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and is consensual
- recognise the capacity of the individual and do not sacrifice welfare in a desire for centre/club or personal achievements
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given, in the Accident Book
- to attend annual training in Safeguarding, re-read this policy and sign the annual Safeguarding Policy declaration form (See Appendix for copy)
- To inform the Head of Centre of any personal involvement with local authority social care regarding allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation outside of your employment or volunteering at Portishead Youth & Community Centre.

#### **3.2 Poor Practice**

The following are regarded as poor practice and must be avoided by all personnel:

- unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with vulnerable adults away from others
- taking a vulnerable adult(s) on an unplanned journey, however short without express consent from the Head of Centre (or other Designated Safeguarding Lead if Head of Centre is unavailable)
- taking a vulnerable adult(s) to your home
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form, between vulnerable adults and staff or between vulnerable adults



- encouraging a vulnerable adult to view content that could pose a risk of harm to themselves or others (e.g., age restricted films, sexual imagery or films, material that may lead to children/young people being radicalised)
- reducing a vulnerable adult to tears as a form of control
- allow allegations made by a vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- do things of a personal nature that the individual can do for themselves
- humiliating individuals
- use of personal electronic equipment including mobile phones, tablets and other camera facilities to take photos (unless previously agreed by the Head of Centre or Designated Safeguarding Lead and appropriately removed from the device at the earliest opportunity).

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situation e.g., transporting an individual in your car, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of individual and the Head of Centre. Only employees who have been authorised to drive on company business will be authorised to do so.

If you have any 1:1 contact outside work with any vulnerable adult that you know through your work at the Youth Centre, then to prevent any misunderstanding, that contact should be reported to the Head of Centre or the Youth Engagement Worker on your return to work, and a note made.

If during your care you accidentally hurt a vulnerable adult, the vulnerable adult seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the vulnerable adult misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to the Lead Worker of the session and Head of Centre. You must complete a Safeguarding Incident Reporting form. Carers/support staff must also be informed of the incident.

## 4 Defining Abuse, neglect or exploitation

### 4.1 Introduction

Abuse, neglect or exploitation is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment, criminal exploitation or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. It commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse, neglect or exploitation of power or a breach of trust. Abuse, neglect or exploitation can happen to an individual regardless of their age, sex, race or ability.

Staff, volunteers and Trustees should be particularly aware of the vulnerability of a child/young person who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or from care
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- has returned home to their family from care
- is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child
- is persistently absent from education, including unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from school or college, or is in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit or,
- has a mental health need.



A **vulnerable adult** who:

- has needs for care and support and is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse, neglect or exploitation; 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, neglect or exploitation
- is elderly and frail due to ill health
- has a learning disability
- has a physical disability and / or a sensory impairment
- has mental health needs including dementia or personality disorder
- has a long -term illness /or condition
- misuses substances or alcohol
- is unable to make their own decisions and is in need of care and support
- is a young adult, over the age of 18, who has care and support needs and is 'in transition' from children to adults' services

All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child, young person or vulnerable adult has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Youth Centre staff, however, are well placed to observe individuals day-to-day and can identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Where individuals have suffered abuse, neglect or exploitation, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood/life experiences, this can have a lasting impact. It is key that staff are aware of how these experiences can impact on mental health and behaviour.

There are four main types of abuse: **physical, sexual, emotional and neglect**. The abuser may be a family member, someone the child/young person/vulnerable adult encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse an individual directly or may be responsible for abuse, neglect or exploitation because they fail to prevent another person harming the child/young person/vulnerable adult.

Abuse, neglect or exploitation in all of its forms can affect a child/young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood

Children/young people and adults with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse, neglect or exploitation had occurred.

#### 4.2 Indicators of Abuse, neglect or exploitation

Even for those experienced in working with child/young person/vulnerable adults, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse, neglect or exploitation may occur or has already taken place. It is important to remember that bullying is a form of child on child or young person on young person abuse. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child/young person/vulnerable adult is being abused, neglected, exploited or bullied may include one or more of the following:

Children/young people	Vulnerable adults
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inappropriate sexual awareness</li> <li>• going missing or running away</li> <li>• difficulty in making friends</li> <li>• unexplained changes in a child/young person's behaviour e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper</li> <li>• an unexplained drop off in performance</li> <li>• a significant increase in high value possessions, cash or 'gifts' that could have been obtained by means of corruption, bribery or grooming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• history of unexplained falls or minor injuries, especially at different stages of healing</li> <li>• frequent change of GP or reluctance to visit the doctor or have a doctor undertake a home visit</li> <li>• accumulation of medication that has been prescribed but not administered</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down</li> <li>• physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes/choosing clothes which always cover the whole body, bingeing e.g., on food, alcohol or cigarettes</li> <li>• absence or being missing from education</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Children/young people and vulnerable adults</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries</li> <li>• engaging in sexually explicit behaviour</li> <li>• an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent</li> <li>• displaying variations in eating patterns including over-eating or loss of appetite</li> <li>• losing weight for no apparent reason</li> <li>• untreated medical concerns</li> <li>• becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt</li> <li>• being prevented from socialising with others</li> <li>• significant adverse changes to mental health outlook</li> <li>• distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected e.g., family</li> <li>• the individual describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them</li> <li>• an out of character shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions</li> <li>• another individual expresses concern about the welfare of a child/young person/vulnerable adult</li> </ul>	

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse, neglect or exploitation is taking place. It is **NOT** the responsibility of those working in Portishead Youth & Community Centre to decide that child/young person/vulnerable adult abuse, neglect or exploitation is occurring. **It IS their responsibility to act on any concerns.**

Children/young people/vulnerable adults may feel embarrassed, humiliated or scared to disclose abuse, neglect or exploitation. This must not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and passing on their concerns to the Head of Centre/Youth Engagement Worker. Even if there are no reported cases on child-on-child abuse, neglect or exploitation, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported.

All staff should be aware that technology can be a significant contributor to child/young person/vulnerable adult abuse, neglect or exploitation. Perpetrators, including peers or acquaintances may use social media, gaming and mobile phone contact to abuse or exploit others.

**See Appendix A for a more extensive list of forms of abuse, neglect or exploitation. All staff, volunteers and Trustees are responsible for maintaining a critical awareness of these within their engagement with Portishead Youth & Community Centre. See Bullying Policy for recommended actions that will be taken by Portishead Youth & Community Centre staff in these situations.**

## Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

### 4.3 Receiving Evidence of Possible abuse, neglect or exploitation

We may become aware of possible abuse, neglect or exploitation in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed in section 3 and the Appendix of this document, it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the child/young person affected.



In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a child/young person/vulnerable adult says or indicates that they are being abused, neglected or exploited, you should:

- **stay calm** so as not to frighten the individual
- **do not promise confidentiality** as it is very likely that information will need to be shared for the safety of the victim. Clearly explain the information sharing process and reassure the individual that they are not to blame, that it was right to tell, that they are being taken seriously and they will be supported and kept safe
- **listen** to the individual, showing that you are taking them seriously
- **keep questions to a minimum** so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and abuse, neglect or exploitation cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the individual has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Use the 'TED' approach to clarifying information: 'tell me', 'explain to me' and 'describe' to obtain further information given in the individual's own words.
- **inform** the individual that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the individual this is to help stop the abuse, neglect or exploitation continuing.
- **safety of the individual** is paramount. If the individual needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors/paramedics of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a safeguarding issue
- **record** all information
- **report** the incident to the Head of Centre and Youth Provision. Maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality by only involving others who absolutely need to be involved, for the safety of the individual and the integrity of the disclosure.

#### 4.4 Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, and the details used to complete a Safeguarding Incident Reporting form as soon as possible. This should be within 24 hours of the disclosure, unless there are extenuating circumstances (e.g., being away on a residential). In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

Information should include the following:

- the individual's name, age and date of birth
- the individual's home address and telephone number
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also, any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- details of witnesses to the incidents, and any other people nearby at the time
- the individual's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred
- have the parents/guardians/appropriate family member been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser, neglecter or exploiter? Record detail
- date and time of the report

#### 4.5 Reporting the Concern

All suspicions and allegations **MUST** be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

In cases where FGM is suspected, there is a statutory duty to inform the police by the person receiving the information, who will be supported by the Head of Centre. Seeking medical help or advice may also be appropriate.



Portishead Youth & Community Centre expects its staff and volunteers to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of the individual, immediately with the person in charge, and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

Staff should report any concerns to the Head of Centre. If the Head of Centre is not available, or you feel uncomfortable approaching the Head of Centre, you should then contact the Youth Engagement Worker or Administration Manager. If they are not available, take responsibility and seek advice from the duty officer (Safeguarding Trustee – see appendix for contact details) or the local authority children’s social care department or the police.

**Local authority social care (office hours): 01275 888 808 (children’s) 01275 888 801 (adults)**

**Local authority social care (out of office hours): 01454 615 165 (children’s and adults)**

**Police: 101**

**Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 01275 888211/[LADO@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@n-somerset.gov.uk)**

**See Flowchart in Appendix C**

#### **4.6 Where there is a concern regarding a staff member, volunteer or Trustee**

In the case of a complaint against an employee, volunteer or Trustee, there may be three types of investigation.

- **Criminal** in which case the police are immediately involved (e.g., rape or penetration)
- **Child/young person protection** in which case the local authority children’s social care (and possibly) the police will be involved
- **Disciplinary or misconduct** in which case Portishead Youth & Community Centre will be involved and possibly the Police

If staff have safeguarding concerns or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors) posing a risk of harm to children/young people/vulnerable adults, then this should be referred to the Head of Centre and Youth Provision. Where there are concerns/allegations about the Head of Centre and Youth Provision, this should be referred to the Chair of Trustees and local authority designated officer(s) (LADOs).

#### **If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern**

Any suspicion that a child/young person/vulnerable adult has been abused, neglected or exploited by an employee or a volunteer should be reported to the Head of Centre and Youth Provision or the Youth Engagement Worker, or in their absence, the Administration Manager who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the individual in question and any other child/young person/vulnerable adult who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- Portishead Youth & Community Centre will refer the matter to local authority social care department/ **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**
- In the case of a child/young person, their parent/guardian will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the local authority children’s social care team
- the Chair of Portishead Youth & Community Centre Trustees should be notified to decide who will deal with any media inquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings
- if the Head of Centre is the subject of the suspicion/allegation the report must be made to the Youth Engagement Worker who will refer the matter to local authority social care and the Chair of Trustees

Allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation are sometimes made sometime after the event. Where such allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and have the matter reported to local authority social care. This is because other children/young people/vulnerable adults involved in activities at the Youth and Community Centre

may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse, neglect or exploitation against children/young people is automatically excluded from working with children/young people.

#### **4.7 Concerns outside the immediate Youth Centre environment (e.g., a disclosure from a parent/guardian or other individual)**

- Report your concerns to the Head of Centre.
- If the Head of Centre is not available, speak to the Youth Engagement Worker. If the Youth Engagement Worker is unavailable, the person disclosing the alleged abuse, neglect or exploitation should contact their local authority social care team or the police
- Local authority social care and the Head of Centre will decide how to inform the parent/carer in the case of a child/young person
- Maintain confidentiality on a need-to-know basis

#### **4.8 Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only. Seek local authority social care advice on who should be informed outside of Youth Centre staff.

#### **Staff must not share information regarding any case unless authorised by the Head of Centre and Youth Provision/Safeguarding Trustee/Chair of Trustees**

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with Data Protection laws and the DfE Data Protection guidance for schools (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/data-protection-in-schools>).

#### **4.9 Internal Inquiries and Suspension**

- The Head of Centre, with the Youth Engagement Worker or Administration Manager if appropriate, will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse, neglect or exploitation should be temporarily suspended pending further police, local authority social care and Chair of Trustees enquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of the local authority social care or police inquiries the Head of Centre and Youth Provision, in consultation with the Chair of Staffing or Safeguarding Trustee, will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases a decision must be based upon the available information. The welfare of the child/young person/vulnerable adult should remain of paramount importance throughout.

#### **4.10 Concerns about safeguarding practices within the Centre**

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in Portishead Youth & Community Centre's safeguarding regime however trivial and know that such concerns will be taken seriously. Individuals should refer to the Centre's Whistleblowing policy for further information.

#### **4.11 Harm test**

An individual satisfies the harm test if their conduct indicates that they may harm a child or put them at risk of harm. There must be credible evidence regarding the individual's behaviour rather than a 'feeling' e.g., a member of staff discloses to a colleague that they are sexually attracted to children would satisfy the harm test, even though they have not acted on these feelings.

Relevant conduct is:

- endangers a child or is likely to endanger a child



- if repeated against or in relation to a child would endanger the child or be likely to endanger the child
- involves sexual material relating to children (including possession of such material)
- involves sexually explicit images depicting violence against human beings (including possession of such images)
- is of a sexual nature involving a child

A person's conduct endangers a child if they:

- harm a child
- cause a child to be harmed
- put a child at risk of harm
- attempt to harm a child
- incite another to harm a child

[Making barring referrals to the DBS - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

It may be deemed by the Disclosure and Barring Service that a record be made to bar the individual from working with vulnerable groups. Portishead Youth & Community Centre has a legal obligation to refer any person that meets the conditions of the harm test and who works in a regulated activity (e.g., with children and young people or vulnerable adults) to the Disclosure and Barring Service. There is still an obligation to refer an individual even if they move to another area of work that isn't a regulated activity or might work in a regulated activity in the future, they resign or retire, or the individual has carried out one of the following:

- engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children and/or adults. An action or inaction has harmed a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk or harm or,
- satisfied the harm test in relation to children and/or vulnerable adults. e.g., there has been no relevant conduct but a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable still exists or,
- has been cautioned or convicted of a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence

[Making barring referrals to the DBS - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

## 5 Safer Recruitment, Induction and Training

Please see the Safer Recruitment Policy for full details.

The policy outlines the steps to be taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children/young people/vulnerable adults. This applies to staff (full and part time), volunteers and Trustees.

Our recruitment process includes:

- reviewing a candidate's CV, a full candidate application form, online candidate checks, identity checks, exploring gaps in employment, interviews
- and/or being supervised in a trial session and/or presentations.

All interviews are conducted by a panel that includes an individual trained in Safer Recruitment. Many roles in the Centre require unsupervised work with children, young people or vulnerable adults, and so a DBS check is done for all staff, volunteers and Trustees.

Induction includes reading the Centre's Safeguarding policy, including the latest updates to the statutory guidance such as Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children. All staff, volunteers and Trustees are supported in understanding the internal processes to record and investigate disclosures, concerns and general observations that when combined could demonstrate a more significant safeguarding concern for children, young people or vulnerable adults. Staff, volunteers and Trustees are reminded that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Training continues these themes, with a new DBS check every 3 years for all, annual update training on changes to statutory guidance according to the roles, and any changes to local safeguarding processes.

- Appendices: Appendix A Types of Abuse, neglect or exploitation
- Appendix B Safeguarding Policy sign off
- Appendix C Safeguarding Flowchart
- Appendix D Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form
- Appendix E Protocol for the retention and storage of safeguarding records

Reviewed September 2024

Signed  .....Chair of Trustees

Signed  .....Head of Centre/Youth Provision



## Appendix A

### Types of Abuse, neglect or exploitation

- **Physical:**

Children/young people	Vulnerable adults
<p>Physical injury from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being hit</li> <li>• Shaken</li> <li>• Thrown</li> <li>• Poisoned</li> <li>• Burnt</li> <li>• Bitten</li> <li>• Scalded</li> <li>• Suffocated</li> <li>• Drowned</li> <li>• Being given alcohol/inappropriate drugs</li> <li>• Parent/carer reporting non-existent symptoms or illness or deliberately causes ill health in a child/young person they are looking after. This is called Munchausen syndrome by proxy or fabricated or induced illness.</li> </ul>	<p>Physical injury from:</p> <p>As per children/young people, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being hit, slapped, pushed or restrained</li> <li>• Being denied food or water</li> <li>• Not being helped to go to the bathroom when they need to</li> <li>• Misuse of medicines</li> </ul>

- **Emotional:**

Children/young people	Vulnerable adults
<p>Persistent emotional ill treatment, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child/young person's emotional development, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telling a child/young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued</li> <li>• Being constantly criticised</li> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Body shaming</li> <li>• Bullying (see below)</li> <li>• Expectations of children/young people that are not appropriate to their age or development.</li> </ul> <p>These may cause a child/young person to be scared or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the child/young person frightened or withdrawn.</p>	<p>Persistent emotional ill treatment that causes upset and distress such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threats to hurt or abandon an individual</li> <li>• Stopping an individual from seeing people</li> <li>• Humiliating, blaming, controlling, intimidating or harassing an individual</li> <li>• Verbal abuse, neglect or exploitation</li> <li>• Cyberbullying and isolation</li> <li>• An unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or support networks</li> </ul>
<p>Ill treatment of children/young people/vulnerable adults, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse, neglect or exploitation.</p>	



**Domestic Abuse:**

<b>Children/young people</b>	<b>Vulnerable adults</b>
<p>A wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. It covers types of abuse, neglect or exploitation such as psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse, neglect or exploitation. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse, neglect or exploitation at home and/or suffer domestic abuse, neglect or exploitation in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse, neglect or exploitation). All of these can have a detrimental and long-term impact on health, wellbeing and development.</p>	<p>An incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse, neglect or exploitation by someone who is, or has been, an intimate partner or family member.</p>

• **Neglect:**

<b>Children/young people</b>	<b>Vulnerable adults</b>
<p>When an adult fails to meet the child/young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child/young person's health or development, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing</li> <li>• Failing to protect from physical harm or danger</li> <li>• Failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.</li> <li>• Refusal to give love, affection and attention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not being provided with enough food or with the right kind of food, or not being taken proper care of</li> <li>• Leaving an individual without help to wash or change dirty or wet clothes</li> <li>• Not supporting an individual to access medical care or a doctor when needed or not making sure an individual has the right medicines.</li> </ul>

• **Sexual:**

<b>Children/young people</b>	<b>Vulnerable adults</b>
<p>When peers/adults use others to meet their own sexual needs. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• full sexual intercourse</li> <li>• masturbation</li> <li>• oral sex</li> <li>• anal intercourse</li> <li>• fondling</li> <li>• showing children/young people pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner</li> </ul> <p>Sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is</p>	<p>Could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indecent exposure</li> <li>• Sexual harassment</li> <li>• Inappropriate looking or touching</li> <li>• Sexual teasing or innuendo</li> <li>• Sexual photography</li> <li>• Being forced to watch pornography or sexual acts</li> <li>• Being forced or pressured to take part in sexual acts</li> <li>• Rape or sexual assault</li> </ul>



developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. Harmful sexual behaviour can occur online and/or face to face and can also occur simultaneously between the two. Harmful sexual behaviour should be considered in a child protection context. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than 2 years' difference or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. A younger child can abuse, neglect or exploit an older child, particularly if they have powers over them, for example, if the older child is disabled or smaller in stature.

- **Support of terrorism/radicalisation** occurs when terrorist promoters target children/young people/vulnerable adults to encourage them to engage in and support terrorist activities. Individuals may be coerced to follow and support terrorist groups due to the promoter offering intrinsic rewards such as feeling part of a special club or group, making the other group members proud and having people who 'understand' them.

**Child/young person specific abuse, neglect or exploitation:**

**Bullying** may come from another child/young person (child on child or young person on young person abuse) or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are three main types of bullying; physical (e.g., hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g., racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages), emotional (e.g., tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g., unwanted physical contact or abusive comments). Incidences of bullying can also occur online through gaming platforms, social media accounts, email and messaging.

- **Child on child/young person on young person abuse** can include a number of (or combination of) forms of abuse including extreme bullying; emotional, physical, sexual or relationship abuse; child/young person sexual exploitation or gender/LGBT+ based abuse between children/young people. It is more likely that girls will be victims and boys' perpetrators, however all child-on-child abuse, neglect or exploitation is unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children. This form of abuse also includes cyber bullying, harassment and sexting. The specific child on child or young person on young person abuse, neglect or exploitation of Voyeurism (including 'upskirting': taking a photo under someone's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks for sexual gratification or causing humiliation, distress or alarm) is now a criminal offence.

Further details on how Portishead Youth & Community Centre staff and volunteers prevent and respond to bullying can be found in our 'Preventing and Responding to Bullying of Children and Young People' policy (see Appendix).

Portishead Youth & Community Centre operates a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, neglect or exploitation, and negative behaviour between individuals should never be passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys' as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children and young people.

- **Child/young person Sexual Exploitation (CSE) (Grooming)** is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse or exploitation may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or

nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children/young people in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children/young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child/young person in preparation for abuse, neglect or exploitation including via the internet. CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child/young person's immediate knowledge e.g., through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. CSE can affect any child/young person, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children/young people may not realise they are being exploited e.g., they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

- **Honour based abuse** is a collection of practices used to control behaviour within families to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Violence and abuse, neglect or exploitation can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code. This can include Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Forced Marriage.
- **Criminal Child/young person Exploitation (CCE)** is a form of abuse whereby an adult exploits a child/young person for their own gain through a range of illegal activities such as drug dealing (including County Lines distribution), theft and gang subscription and gang violence; with the abuser or exploiter using coercion, trafficking and bribery to engage victims in their criminal activity.
- **Online platforms** can be used by others to send abusive, harassing or misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of explicit images (especially using chat rooms) and the sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who do not want to receive such content.

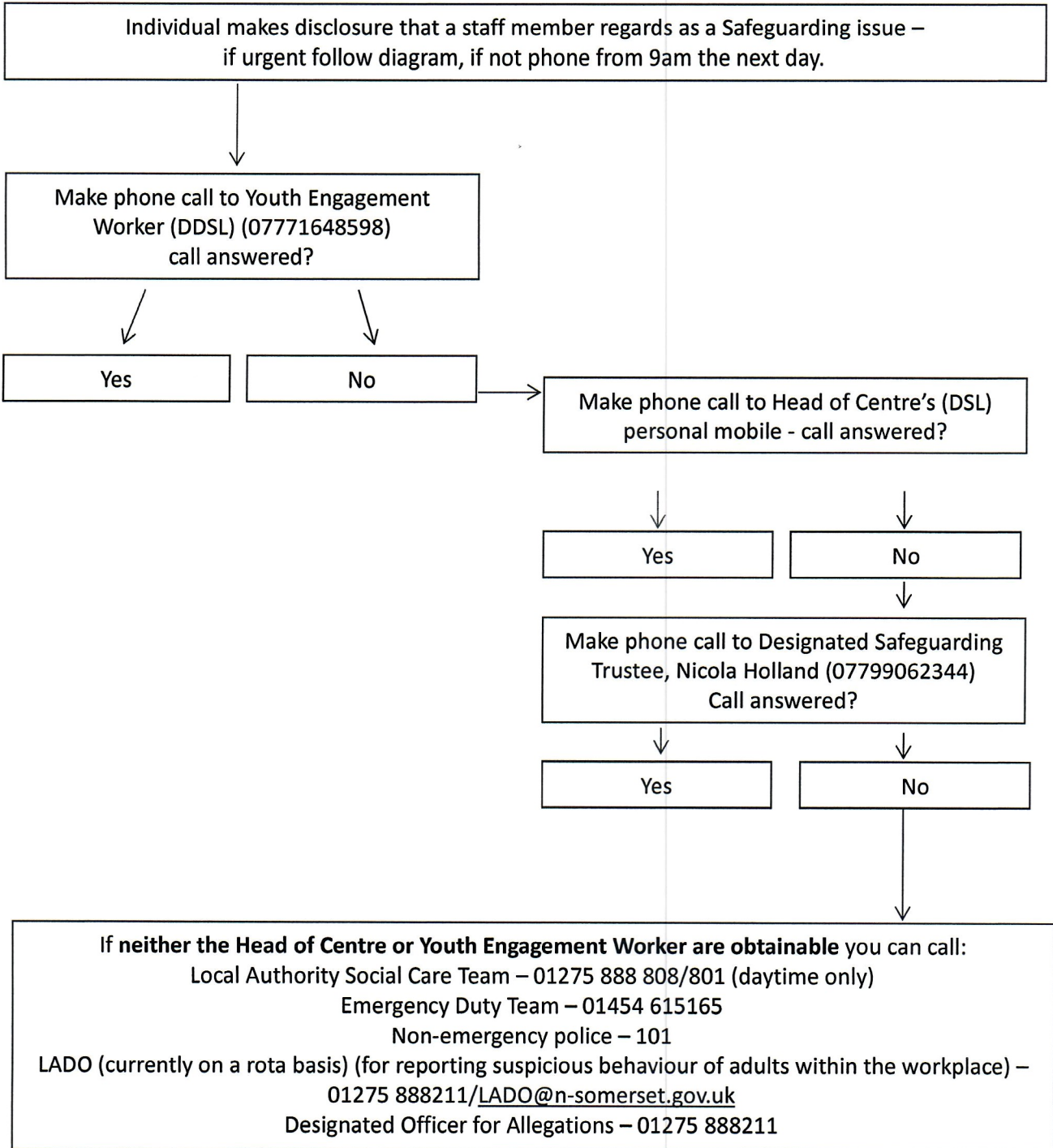




**Appendix C**

**Safeguarding Flowchart**

This flow chart is intended to ensure that all staff can seek advice and guidance on cases where they are concerned that a child/young person is at risk of harm to themselves or others.





Safeguarding Incident Reporting form



Your name:	
Your role:	
Child/young person/individual's name:	Child/young person/individual's date of birth:
Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	Does child/young person/individual have a disability: <i>Please state</i>
Parent/guardian name(s) (under 18s):	
Contact information (parents/guardian/carer):	
<i>Address:</i>	<i>Postcode:</i>
Have parent/guardian been notified of this incident? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If YES please provide details of what was said/action agreed:	
Are you reporting your own concerns or responding to concerns raised by someone else: <input type="checkbox"/> Responding to my own concerns <input type="checkbox"/> Responding to concerns raised by someone else	
If responding to concerns raised by someone else: <i>Please provide further information below</i>	
<i>Name:</i>	
<i>Position within Portishead Youth &amp; Community Centre or relationship to the child/young person/individual:</i>	
<i>Telephone numbers:</i>	<i>Email address:</i>
Date and times of incident:	
Details of the incident or concerns: <i>Include other relevant information, such as description of any injuries and whether you are recording this incident as fact, opinion or hearsay. Include the names of all parties involved in the incident and any <u>relevant</u> information regarding parents/guardians/carers and siblings.</i>	

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Child/young person/individual's account of the incident in their words:

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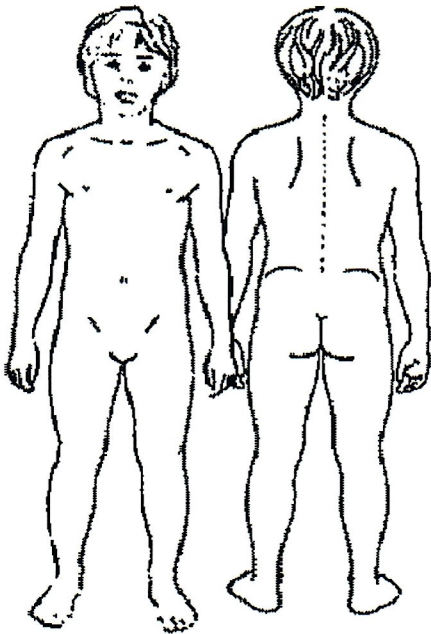
<p>Please provide details of any witnesses to the incident:</p> <p><i>Name:</i></p> <p><i>Position within the Centre or relationship to the child/young person/individual:</i></p> <p><i>Address:</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>Postcode:</i></span></p> <p><i>Telephone number:</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>Email address:</i></span></p>
--

<p>Please provide any witness accounts of the incident (add additional pages if required):</p>
--

<p>Please provide details of action taken to date:</p>	<p>Has the incident been reported to any external agencies?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If YES please provide further details:</p>
--	--

<p><i>Name of organisation / agency:</i></p> <p><i>Contact person:</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>Telephone numbers:</i></span></p> <p><i>Agreed action or advice given:</i></p>	<p><i>Email address:</i></p>
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Indicate any injury on the appropriate section of the diagrams below – DO NOT PHOTOGRAPH IT



Description of injury:

If the child/young person/individual has given an account of this injury give details:

Please indicate the attitude of the child/young person/individual regarding the injury:

If the parent/guardian/carer has volunteered an account of this injury give details:

Please indicate the attitude of the parent/guardian/carer regarding this injury:



Any additional information:

Your Signature:		Print name:	
Date:		Time:	

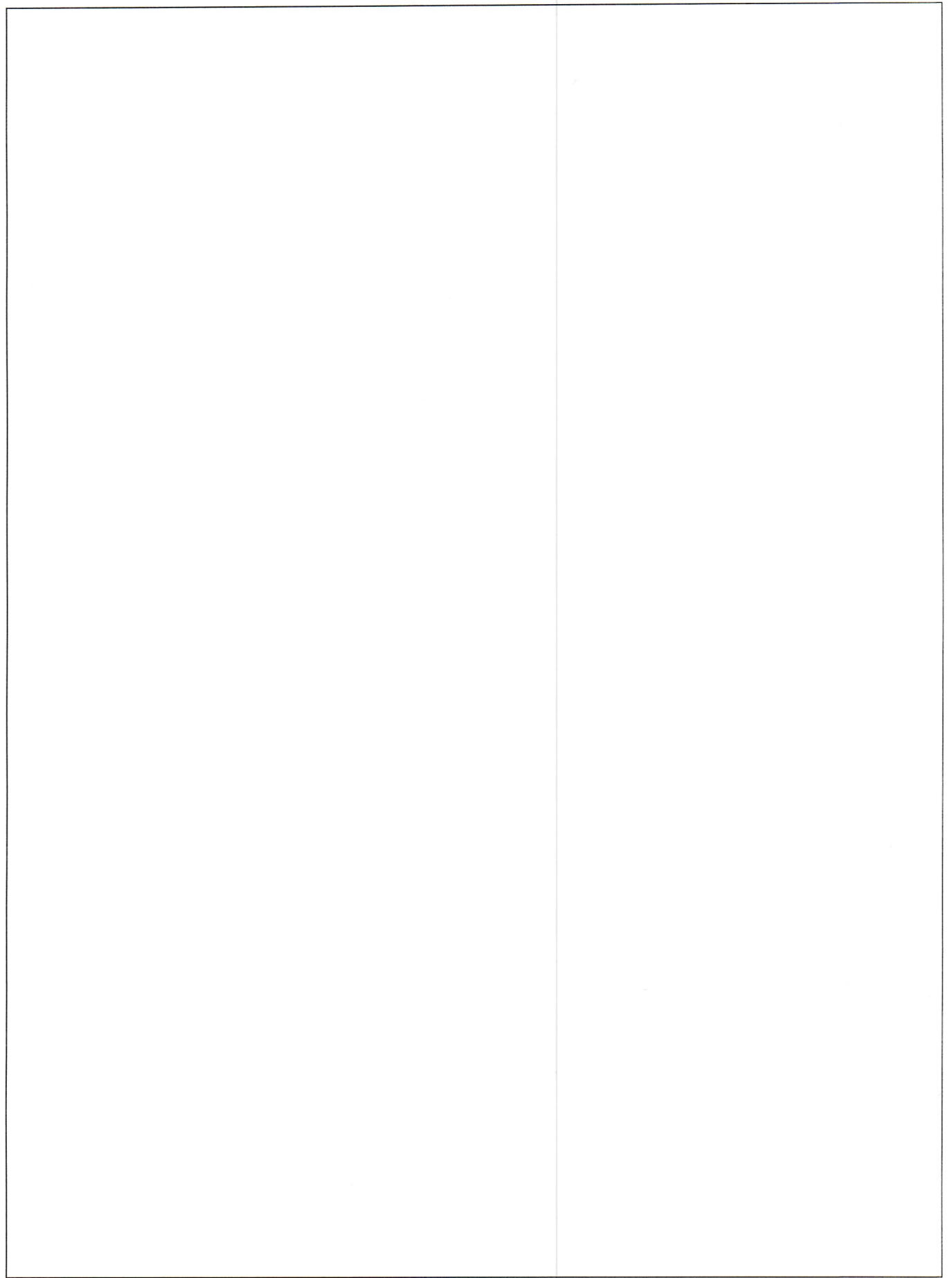
Received by Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Signed:

Date:

Time:

Further action taken and **rationale for any decisions made**  
(please include dates, times and persons involved in actions):





## Appendix E

### PROTOCOL FOR RETENTION AND STORAGE OF SAFEGUARDING RECORDS

Preamble: As part of the Safeguarding Policy, records of incidents are created. This document defines the management of those records, from creation to storage/retention and finally deletion. This document has been informed by the NSPCC Child Protection Records Retention and Storage guidance.

Records are kept following Data Protection principles:

- They are adequate, relevant and not excessive for the purpose for which they are held;
- They are accurate and up to date;
- They are only kept for as long as necessary;
- Children and young people for whom we hold safeguarding records will be made aware that a record exists for them and be given an outline of what it contains;
- Any adult for whom we hold a safeguarding record will be entitled to have a copy; where appropriate this will be given to their carer/family member/holder of power of attorney or other appropriate adult;
- Records created for adults, against whom allegations of inappropriate behaviour have been made, have the right to know the content of the record and we will provide them with a copy.

#### SAFEGUARDING RECORDS

##### Creation and Storage of Records

All information about Safeguarding Concerns should be reported on the Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form (See Appendix D).

Information about each child/adult is stored separately from the general file, though that file should have an indication that a safeguarding file exists. This applies only to those young people to whom we are providing alternative education provision; there are no other individual reports for attenders at the Centre.

Each safeguarding file is stored separately, not in one "concern file". Electronic reports are password protected, on computers with protection against hackers and viruses. Paper reports are in a separate locked cabinet. No personal computers are used for these records.

Access to all safeguarding reports is controlled by the Head of Centre and Youth Engagement Worker or in their absence by the Administration Manager. A password protected log is kept which includes the name of the individual, the file location, file password, creation date and a record of when the file is accessed as well as the name of the member of staff who has viewed it.

##### Retention and Destruction of Records

For the young people who are in alternative education with the Centre, their current school will be made aware of any safeguarding concerns. Appropriate school staff have access to the individual GoogleDocs records for each of these students, on which staff may record low level concerns to monitor changes in behaviour. More serious disclosures or concerns will be reported immediately by telephone to the School Designated Safeguarding Lead, and a Safeguarding Incident Report Form will be completed and shared. Safeguarding Incident Reports will also be sent directly to the police and/or North Somerset Council LADO if requested, or if the Centre judges the case to be serious enough for this.

For other young people, if the Centre judges the case to be serious enough, it will release copies of safeguarding reports to the school if requested after discussion with the School Designated Safeguarding Lead. The reports will be released to the police and/or North Somerset Council LADO if requested, or shared directly if the Centre judges the case to be serious enough for this.

For adults, the reports will be released to the police and/or North Somerset Council LADO if requested, or shared directly if the Centre judges the case to be serious enough for this.

Safeguarding reports for children/young people will be kept until the individual is 25, unless the criteria for a longer period are met. Safeguarding reports for adults will be kept for 10 years or until the person dies if that is earlier. Retention criteria will be checked and acted upon whenever destruction is considered. If retention is continued, the file will be clearly marked with the reason for this.

When the retention period is ended, paper records will be shredded by the Head of Centre or in his/her presence. Electronic reports will be purged. If the organisation is closed down, arrangements will be made by the Trustees for the ongoing management of records, including their review, retention and disposal.

#### **RECORDING CONCERNS ABOUT ADULT BEHAVIOUR**

Clear and comprehensive records should be kept of all allegations made against adults or volunteers working for the Centre with children or vulnerable adults. These will include:

- the allegation(s)
- how they were followed up
- how they were resolved
- any action taken
- any decisions reached about the person's suitability to work with children (including conclusions from a Harm Test – see Safeguarding Policy for more information).

This will include the result of disciplinary proceedings if instigated. The records will be kept in the person's personnel file and a copy given to the person. If the allegations prove to be malicious, the record will be destroyed immediately. If the allegations are upheld and meet the Harm Test criteria, the DBS service will be notified.

Portishead Youth & Community Centre may then use the information:

- in compiling a reference for another employer in the future
- if a future employer asks for clarification about information disclosed as part of a vetting and barring procedure
- if new allegations surface after a period of time.

#### **Retention and Destruction of Personnel Records**

Staff records relating to safeguarding concerns will be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or 10 years, whichever is the longer. When destruction is considered, the criteria for further retention will be reviewed and acted upon. The file will be marked accordingly if it is retained.

When the retention period is ended, paper records will be shredded by the Head of Centre or in his/her presence. Electronic reports will be purged. If the organisation is closed down, arrangements will be made by the Trustees for the ongoing management of records, including their review, retention and disposal.

#### **CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS (DBS)**

Unless there is a dispute about the results of a check, the certificates should not be stored, just a confidential record of:

- the date the check was completed
- the level and type of the check
- the reference number of the certificate
- the decision about whether the person was employed (with reasons).

In the case of a dispute, a copy of the certificate can be kept for no longer than 6 months.