



## Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

Policy Approved on: 20/11/2025

Policy Review Date: 20/11/2026

### Background

Creative at HeART CIC believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or vulnerable person to experience abuse of any kind, and we recognise our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people at risk by a commitment to practice that protects them. This policy must be read in conjunction with the Adult Safeguarding Policy.

### Principles

- Safeguarding children and young people is everyone's responsibility and the welfare of children and young people at risk is of paramount importance.
- All children and young people at risk (whatever their background and culture, maternity or pregnancy status, age, disability, gender, racial origin, religious belief, sexual orientation and/or gender identity) have the right to participate in society in an environment which is safe and free from violence, fear, abuse, bullying and discrimination.
- All children and young people at risk have the right to be protected from harm, exploitation and abuse and to be provided with safe environments to live and play.
- Working in partnership with children, young people at risk and their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting children and young people's welfare.
- Creative at HeART CIC has a duty to promote the well-being of all people who use the service and to cooperate with other relevant agencies and partners in delivering its safeguarding duties.
- Creative at HeART CIC is responsible for establishing appropriate policies and procedures to ensure that its activities promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at risk, e.g., safer recruitment and safer working practices.

## Purpose

This policy demonstrates Creative at HeART CIC's commitment to meet its legal obligations and reassure people who use the service, members of the public, staff, and partners that:

- Creative at HeART CIC has appropriate policies and procedures to protect and safeguard children and young people at risk and respond to child protection concerns.
- It is clear to staff, volunteers, and Board Members what procedures to adopt if they suspect a child or young person is at risk of harm.
- Concerns can be raised through an established procedure to enable the best outcome for the child or young person.
- There is a high-quality recording and effective monitoring system in place.
- Board Members, staff, volunteers, and partners receive appropriate training in line with intercollegiate safeguarding competency guidance.

## Policy Statement

Creative at HeART CIC is committed to safeguarding children and young people who engage with our services. This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Creative at HeART CIC including Board Members, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students. We will ensure through our recruitment policies and procedures that suitable people are selected to work with children and young people at risk. We will take any concern made by any person seriously and sensitively, and we will not tolerate any form of harassment of anyone who raises concerns of abuse. We will comply with local Safeguarding Children Partnership inter-agency procedures and respond positively to any recommendations for improvement.

## Aims of the Policy

- Respect the rights, wishes, feelings and privacy of children and adults at risk by listening to them and minimising risks that may affect them.
- Prevent abuse and harm by good practice, creating a safe and healthy environment to avoid situations where abuse or allegations of abuse occur.
- Ensure that Board Members, staff, therapists, and volunteers understand Creative at HeART CIC's Codes of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy.
- Raise awareness among Board Members and staff of their safeguarding duty under relevant legislation and guidance including: The Children Acts (1989 & 2004), Children and Social Work Act (2017), Care Act (2014), Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003) as amended by the Serious Crime Act (2015), Domestic Abuse Act (2021), United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023).
- Ensure partner agencies and freelancers have safeguarding policies and procedures commensurate with their level of involvement with children and young people at risk.

- Respond to any allegations appropriately and implement appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Ensure clear procedures are in place and implemented in line with relevant local authority Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) procedures for safeguarding children and adults at risk.
- Share information about concerns with agencies that need to know, involving parents/carers and children appropriately.

### **Scope of this Policy**

This policy is for Board, staff, therapists, volunteers, or partner agencies that encounter or deliver Creative at HeART CIC services to children at risk. Safer working culture and practices should be used whenever Board, staff, therapists, and volunteers come into contact with children at risk.

### **Definitions**

‘Children’ includes ‘young people’ and ‘young persons’. ‘Children and young people at risk’ refers to those under 18, or anyone who may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation due to disability, illness, sensory impairment, frailty, or substance misuse. ‘Parents’ includes parents, carers, and guardians. ‘Child Protection’ relates to children at imminent risk of significant harm. ‘Safeguarding’ refers to wider concerns about safety, health, or welfare.

### **Criminal Disclosure, Barring and Safer Recruitment Practices**

Criminal disclosures are sought where roles involve substantial, regular, or unsupervised contact with children and young people at risk. DBS checks are undertaken at the appropriate level. Risk assessments are completed on job descriptions to identify posts requiring regular/substantial unsupervised contact. Applicants complete an application form to provide relevant prior experience. Warner-style (values-based) interviewing is used where appropriate. Successful applicants and Board Members are expected to join the DBS update service so checks can be reviewed periodically.

### **Recognising Potential Abuse**

Abuse covers physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect, including bullying or grooming and any abuse that occurs online. This policy also covers child-on-child abuse, honour-based abuse (including FGM and forced marriage), child sexual exploitation, county lines, child trafficking and radicalisation. Staff and volunteers are expected to discuss concerns immediately with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy (DDSL).

### **Social Media**

Digital technology can support engagement for some children. Consent will be sought from the child and their appropriate adult where technology is used. We proactively identify risky online behaviour and online abuse in the same way as other forms of abuse.

## **Child-on-Child Abuse**

Child-on-child abuse includes physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse within peer relationships, both online and offline. It may include bullying (including cyber), physical assault, sexual violence/harassment, upskirting, harmful sexual behaviour, consensual/non-consensual sharing of images ('sexting'), hazing/initiations, exploitation and relationship abuse.

## **Honour-Based Abuse, FGM and Forced Marriage**

Honor-based abuse includes criminal acts undertaken to protect 'honour', including FGM and forced marriage. FGM is illegal in the UK. Suspicions of FGM must be reported to the police and recorded using the organisation's safeguarding recording system. Forced marriage involves one or both parties marrying without consent, including those lacking capacity.

## **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Trafficking**

CSE involves grooming and exploitation, often disguised as consensual relationships. Trafficking involves children being moved and exploited for sexual exploitation, benefit fraud, domestic servitude, forced labour or criminality. Indicators may include isolation, lack of schooling/GP registration, possession of unexplained items, injuries, or rehearsed stories.

## **Radicalisation (Prevent Duty)**

Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, Creative at HeART CIC has a duty to prevent vulnerable children being drawn into terrorism (Prevent Duty). Signs can include social withdrawal, scripted speech, secrecy, increased anger, or sudden disrespectful attitudes. These signs are contextual and may have alternative explanations.

## **County Lines**

County lines involves criminal gangs exploiting children to move drugs using dedicated phone lines and properties such as short-term rentals, hotels, or 'cuckooed' addresses. Motivations may include peer pressure, perceived protection, financial incentives, or exclusion from school.

## **Managing Allegations Against and Reports of Abuse of Children in Our Care**

When a child reports abuse: explain you cannot keep the information secret; reassure and listen; record verbatim using the organisation's safeguarding recording system; inform the DSL/DDSL. In urgent cases call 999 (police child protection unit). The DSL/DDSL will ensure support, manage risk proportionately, and liaise with external agencies.

## **Data Protection**

All safeguarding records will be stored securely and retained in line with data protection and retention guidelines. Access is restricted to the DSL/DDSL or authorised persons. Creative at HeART CIC complies with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

## **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

Safeguarding the child is paramount. Appropriate, lawful information sharing is critical to safety. The Caldicott Principles support sharing where necessary. Record what you share, with whom, and why. Allegations against staff will be supported per the Whistleblowing Policy.

## **Involving Children, Parents and Carers**

We work in partnership with parents/carers wherever appropriate. In cases where parents/carers may be responsible for abuse, the DSL/DDSL will be informed immediately and parental engagement will be managed in line with statutory guidance to avoid risk.

## **When it is Not Appropriate to Share Concerns with Parents**

Information should usually be shared with individuals unless doing so is likely to result in serious harm to a child or another person, or it relates to a third party who has requested non-disclosure. Any decision not to share should be recorded with reasons.

## **Police Requests and Court Orders**

Where police or courts request notes, the Clinical Lead/DSL will confirm legal basis (consent or lawful order), apply data minimisation, ensure secure transfer, consider redactions, inform relevant parties where appropriate, and retain data only as necessary.

Summary Steps:

- Verify legitimacy of request.
- Confirm consent or lawful basis; share minimum necessary data.
- Transmit securely; seek legal advice if required.
- Respect the child's rights and inform where appropriate.

## **Implementation and Monitoring; Roles and Responsibilities**

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Dean Ashworth.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL): Gareth Scott-Evans.

The DSL/DDSL will: maintain up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding procedures; ensure effective internal procedures; provide safeguarding supervision; liaise with agencies; decide on referrals (including Early Help); ensure secure record keeping; audit safeguarding records and training compliance; provide regular progress reports and an annual safeguarding report to the Board.

The CEO is responsible for ensuring staff, therapists and volunteers receive training commensurate with their responsibilities. The Safeguarding Board Member ensures appropriate reporting to regulators where thresholds are met and annual safeguarding reporting to the Board.

All Board Members, staff, therapists, and volunteers must safeguard and promote welfare, act to protect themselves from wrongful allegations by following policy, and promptly raise

concerns to the DSL/DDSL. Understanding and compliance will be monitored through audits, supervision, appraisals, staff feedback, and ad-hoc checks.

### **Child Protection Services**

If a worker is unable to follow Creative at HeART CIC's procedures due to unavailability of contacts, they may seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the appropriate local authority for the area in which the child resides. Contact details for all local authority safeguarding teams can be found on the NHS Safeguarding Guide App or under the 'Contacts' section of the NHS Safeguarding website. In an emergency where a child is at immediate risk, call 999.

### **Misuse of the Procedure**

Malicious or vexatious complaints and/or serious and/or persistent abuse of safeguarding policies and procedures will not be tolerated and will be addressed through the organisation's disciplinary process.

### **Equality and Inclusivity**

Children, adults at risk and their families, regardless of circumstances or characteristics, have the right to be protected from harm and abuse. This includes duties under the Equality Act 2010.

### **Legislation and Guidance**

- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- Mental Health Act 2007
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Prevent Duty 2015 (Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015)
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022
- Health and Care Act 2022
- Care Act 2014 (England)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (Whistleblowing)
- Charity Commission / Regulator guidance as applicable
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Children Act 1989 & 2004

### **Policy Review**

This Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed every year, or earlier in the event of changes in legislation, or to consider changes in working practices following incidents or allegations. The effectiveness of this Policy will be reviewed regularly and reported to the Board in accordance with our governance framework.

## Appendix A: Safeguarding Process Flowchart

### **1. Child identified as 'at risk' or makes a disclosure**

**If immediate danger is suspected, contact 999 immediately.**



### **2. Record safeguarding concern**

**Record the concern on the organisation's safeguarding system under the child's profile and complete a body map if appropriate.**



### **3. Document disclosure details**

**Record the concern verbatim (in the person's own words) including time, date, location, and to whom the disclosure was made.**



### **4. Contact safeguarding lead**

**If DSL unavailable, contact DDSL. If both unavailable, contact LADO or the appropriate local authority (see NHS Safeguarding website for details).**



### **5. DSL/DDSL actions**

**The DSL/DDSL will take appropriate action via the safeguarding system. This may include instructing a therapist to contact the school DSL, family, carer, or social worker.**



### **6. Confidentiality and follow-up**

**Safeguarding concerns are shared strictly on a need-to-know basis. Staff will only be informed if necessary of actions carried out by the DSL/DDSL.**



## Appendix B: Recording Form for Safeguarding Concerns

### Safeguarding Concern/Disclosure Form

Staff, therapists, volunteers, and regular visitors are required to complete this form and pass it to the DSL or DDSL if they have a safeguarding concern.

Organisation Case No:	
Your name and role:	

### Nature of Concern/Disclosure

Please include where you were when the child made a disclosure, what you saw, who else was there, what the child said or did, and what you said.

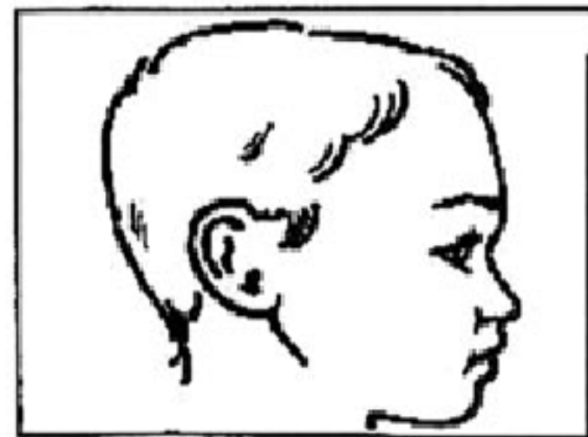
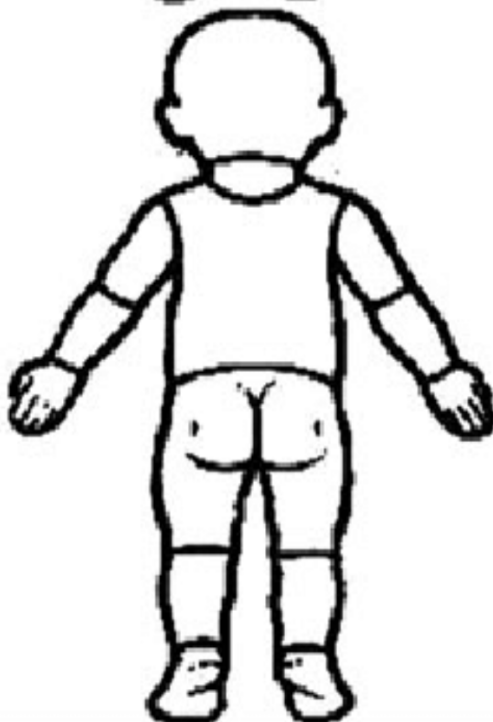
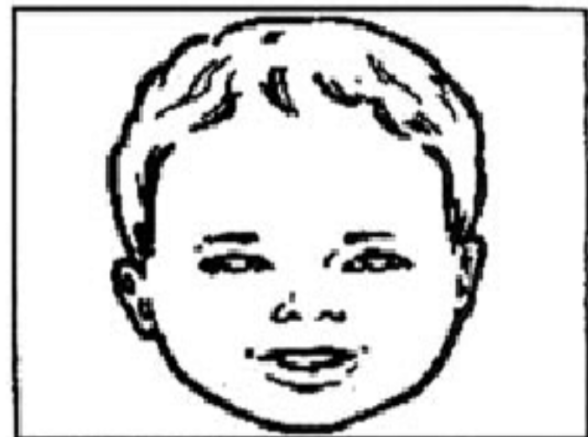
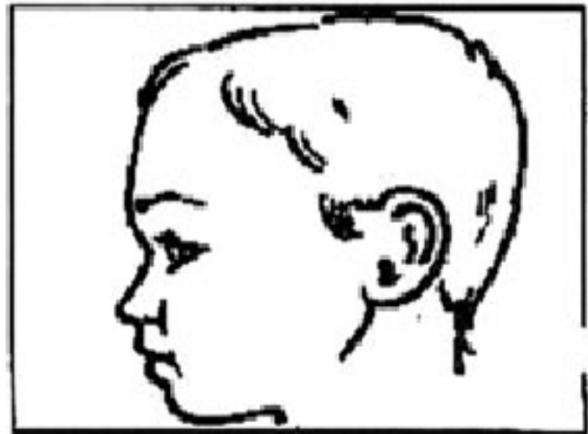
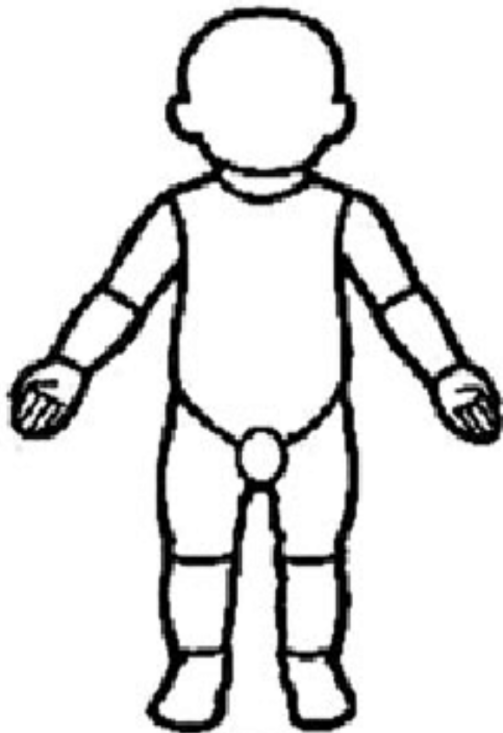
Time & date of incident:	
To whom are you passing this information? Name:	
Position:	
Have education been informed? (Yes / No)	
Your signature:	
Time form completed:	
Date:	

### For DSL/DDSL Use Only

Time form received by DSL/DDSL:		
Action taken by DSL/DDSL:		
Is a referral required to (circle): MASH / Police / CAMHS / Other Services		
If no, state reason:		
Date and time referral to external agencies was made:		
Parents informed? (Yes / No). If no, state reason:		
Any further action agreed:		
Full name:	DSL/DDSL Signature:	Date:

### Appendix C: Safeguarding Concern – Body Injury

This form is to be completed when recording any visible injuries, marks or disclosures made by a child or young person. Please ensure that entries are factual, signed, and dated. Attach additional sheets if required.



## Injury Key

**O** Bruise

**X** Cut / Laceration

**^** Swelling

**\*** Scratch / Graze

**\*** Scratch / Graze

**A** Burn / Scald

**->** Direction of injury / movement

Recorder's Name	
Signature	
Date	
Time	

Reviewed by DSL/DDSL: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

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## Version Control and Review Log

Version	Date Approved	Reviewed By	Summary of Changes
1.0	20/11/2025	Dean Ashworth (DSL)	Full-length policy with process flow, forms, and embedded body maps