

Aim to Thrive Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy

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1. Policy Statement

1.1. Aim to Thrive and its employees understand our responsibilities and are committed to keeping children safe from harm.

1.2. We recognise that for many of the children we work with, harm can come from different places, including their homes, streets, peers, school, or society. Many children face an increasing risk from their environment, and we are committed to assessing, attending, engaging and advocating for them whenever they are at risk of harm, in whatever form. We are committed to working with children wherever they are and whatever risks they face.

1.3. We comply fully with the duty to act appropriately in response to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse, wherever they happen. We believe that embedding and promoting a contextual safeguarding culture across the organisation and with our partners, is everyone's responsibility. This policy sets out how we ensure this happens.

1.4. In this policy we outline the overarching principles that guide us in our safeguarding practice, as well as details about our commitments and responsibilities to protecting who are known to us, from harm - this includes the children of adults who use our services and the friends of children who use our service.

1.5. We provide clear guidelines on our safer working practice, information on recognising abuse and detail what to do when dealing with safeguarding concerns or incidents.

1.6. We promote a culture of professional curiosity and ensure that staff have the training and confidence to challenge and tackle sensitive issues and cultural differences.

2. Scope and Definitions

2.1 This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Aim to Thrive, including facilitators, Board of Trustees, paid staff, bank staff, sessional staff, freelance contracted staff, as well as volunteers and students on placement with us.

2.2 This policy refers to 'Children' as per the Children Act (1989 & 2004), which is a legal term that refers to all those who have not yet reached their 18th birthday.

2.3 The Children Act (1989 & 2004) also includes young adults over 18 years of age who are Care Leavers (s23c to 24d) and 18-25 year olds with learning difficulties and receiving services under the Learning & Skills Act (2000) s13.

"The legal definition of a care leaver comes from The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 which states that a Care Leaver is someone who has been in the care of the Local Authority for a period of 13 weeks or more spanning their 16th birthday."

The Designated Safeguarding Lead decides whether to follow Aim to Thrive children's or adults safeguarding procedures, based on factors such as care history, open cases with Children's Services or Adult Social Care, and recent case closure.

2.4 Aim to Thrive also works with young adults who are 18 - 25 years old and, unless they have a learning disability, will come under Aim to Thrive Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for determining whether children's or adults' safeguarding procedures should be followed in each case, and the rationale for this decision will be recorded.

2.5 We use the term 'children' to describe any person under the age of 18. We use the term 'young adult' to describe those over 18 years of age, up until 25 years old. We use the term 'Care Experienced' to describe any young adult who fits the definition of 'Care Leaver'.

2.6 Types of abuse are often considered to fall into one of four categories:

- Physical abuse,
- Emotional abuse, ● Sexual abuse, and ● Neglect.

Additional information in respect of these categories is provided at Appendix 1. It is important to note that while these categories can provide a framework, a flexible and comprehensive approach is required to identify and address abuse, recognising that abuse can take many forms and may not always fit neatly into predefined categories.

2.7 Categories of abuse can also be grouped as 'intra-familial' (within the family) or 'extra-familial' (outside of the family home). Children can be subject to both intra and extra familial abuse and also vulnerable to multiple threats, including: exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines; trafficking, online abuse; serious violence, modern slavery, sexual exploitation and influences of extremism leading to radicalisation (see Appendix 1 for more details).

2.8 'Contextual Safeguarding', as coined by Dr Carlene Firmin, helps us recognise the impact of intersectional identities and experiences of children within extra-familial contexts, and the interplay between them, with varying weight of influence on their decisions. Enabling us to contribute to assessment and intervention by targeting the contexts in which abuse occurs, helping reduce risk and harm through the lens of child welfare, as opposed to crime reduction or community safety.

2.9 Staff should be aware that some children are at greater risk of experiencing abuse, for example children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who may identify as LGBTQ+, and also Global majority children. We will consider all prejudice (including homophobia, transphobia, and racism) as safeguarding issues and aim to create environments where children feel able to speak out and discuss such matters in a safe and healthy environment.

2.10 For more information, see:

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#)
- [The legal and policy framework for Contextual Safeguarding approaches \(2020\)](#)
- [NSPCC what-is-contextual-safeguarding](#)
- [DfE KCSIE](#)

3. Legislative Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy, and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A full summary is captured at Appendix 5.

A summary of the key legislation and guidance is listed below:

- Children Act (1989)
- Children Act s.11 (2004)
- Children and Young Persons Act (2008 and 2014)
- Care Act (2014) and Statutory Guidance
- Health & Social Care Act (2015)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Family Law Act (1996)
- Data Protection Act (2018)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1992)
- Human Rights Act (1998 & 2000)
- Education Act (2002 and 2011)
- Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act (1999)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#), Department for Education (2023)
- Pan Sussex [Safeguarding](#) Procedures

4. Supporting Documents

This policy statement should be read alongside Aim to Thrive organisational policies, procedures, guidance, and other related documents. They are listed under Art in Mind, the parent company of Aim to Thrive. As such, the policies still apply, including:

- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy](#)
- [Safer Recruitment Policy](#)
- [Attendance and Missing Persons procedure](#)
- [Lone Working policy](#)
- [Dealing with Challenging and Violent behaviour](#)
- [Behaviour Management Policy](#)
- [Data Protection Policy](#)
- [GDPR and Regulations](#)
- [Staff Code of Conduct](#)
- [Code for children and young people](#)
- [Counselling Professional Boundaries](#)
- [Whistleblowing Policy](#)
- [Health and Safety Policy](#)

5. Our Commitment

Aim to Thrive is committed to:

- Building a safe culture where all staff and children treat each other with respect, feel listened to and valued, and are comfortable sharing concerns. Aim to Thrive children are seen, heard, attended to, and understood.
- Embedding safeguarding into all areas of the charity, including safer recruitment processes; safe working practices, risk assessing, managing information, monitoring online activity, meeting health and safety standards, and staff learning and development.
- Stopping the abuse and/or neglect of children wherever possible, through working with local partners to help assess and intervene in extra-familial risk. If needed, attending multiagency meetings and contextual safeguarding groups. We recognise, respond, report, record and refer to concerns of abuse or risk.
- Keeping up to date with best practice, to promote the wellbeing of children and to raise awareness of safeguarding issues, recognising that some children have additional needs and we will act on concerns regardless of age, disability, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

- Working collaboratively with children, their families, carers, other agencies and the local community. We acknowledge the complexity of exploitation and extra-familial harm, understanding that children can be both vulnerable to harm and pose a risk to others. We are committed to assessing and addressing both the risks faced by children and any risks they may present, ensuring appropriate support and intervention.
- Investigating thoroughly any allegations made against staff members suspected of causing abuse or neglect and to take action to prevent this occurring in the future.
- Recording, storing, and using information confidentially and securely, in line with GDPR regulations.
- Having a clear, thorough and up to date policy and procedure, with a competent Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), and Trustee Safeguarding Lead (TSL) in place, so that staff understand their responsibilities and children are appropriately safeguarded.
- Informing children that where a person is in danger, a child is at risk or an unreported serious crime has been committed, then a decision may be taken to pass information to another agency, i.e. Children's Services, without consent.
- Effectively managing staff through induction, regular supervision, support, training and quality assurance, so that all staff and volunteers behave professionally and follow procedures competently.
- Be clear with users of our services about information sharing policies and procedures.

6. Roles, Responsibilities and Contact Details

6.1. Roles

6.1.1 Aim to Thrive has appointed individuals who are responsible for leading safeguarding across the organisation, this is referred to as the 'Safeguarding Team'. Within this team, the DSL will hold overall responsibility for safeguarding processes and procedures. The team will store information about safeguarding concerns centrally on Cliniko

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** The person in the organisation who has ultimate responsibility for operational safeguarding processes and procedures.
- **Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)** The person who supports the DSL in their role to ensure that safeguarding processes and procedures are followed.
- **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)** The person who can be delegated to either in the absence of the DSL or if the DSL is unavailable.
- **Project Coordinator (PC)** The person with overall responsibility for the organisation and for safeguarding.
- **Trustee Safeguarding Lead (TSL)** Supporting the board in fulfilling their strategic, advisory, and governance duties on safeguarding.

6.2 Responsibilities

6.2.1 The DSL will:

- Be trained in Safer Recruitment, support recruiting managers to be trained and to ensure that recruitment processes follow Safer Recruitment guidelines.
- Oversee the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and ensure that all new staff working with children or with access to sensitive data have a DBS check prior to starting work and are regularly updated.
- Make decisions in conjunction with the DSO and Board of Trustees as to new staff suitability for the role based on previous convictions and/or safeguarding concerns, in line with relevant legislation.
- To ensure the effective management of a single central record, Cliniko, which holds all safeguarding related information about staff and volunteers, including DBS checks, references, training undertaken, policy signing, and any safeguarding concerns. This record is held in Cliniko. The operational management of the single central record can be delegated to another senior member of staff.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers read this policy, understand their responsibilities in the policy, and receive the training necessary to implement this policy during their induction and work in accordance with this policy throughout their work with Aim to Thrive.

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Oversee staff and volunteer learning and development around safeguarding; ensure that safeguarding training is completed, refreshed regularly and that any actions identified in training are followed up swiftly. This includes online safety and specifically Filtering and Monitoring. Online safety filtering blocks harmful content, acting as a preventative fence, while monitoring records user activity to detect issues like bullying or self-harm, providing alerts for intervention.

- Ensure that online safety is treated with the utmost importance within the organisation, which includes ensuring that staff and volunteers know how to keep children safe while working online, managing incidents (e.g. cyber bullying), updating and delivering training, reviewing and carrying out annual audits and reporting to the Board of Trustees. This is particularly important in the area of Filtering and Monitoring, as is the ongoing checking and reporting of this.
- Be accessible to staff to discuss concerns about children we work with.
- Gather information from reporting staff and volunteers and offer support managing safeguarding situations; they will involve staff in the decision-making process and provide guidance about what action to take.
- Ensure the voice of the child is listened to and feeds into safeguarding decisions where appropriate and safe to do so.
- Ensure that all safeguarding concerns are recorded and referred to Children's Services or allocated social workers and that referrals are followed up and issues addressed.
- Ensure that in cases where Aim to Thrive are not satisfied with the response provided by a partner agency, the relevant Local Authority's escalation policy is adhered to.
- Oversee all safeguarding cases, in particular cases involving members of staff.
- Reinforce the need for good practice around confidentiality and ensure that staff adhere to this; it is at the time that a person starts to challenge abuse that the risks of increasing intensity of abuse are greatest.
- Ensure that staff working with children who have experienced, or are experiencing abuse, are well supported, receiving regular supervision and Reflective Practice Supervision (RPS).

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- Ensure whistleblowers are supported and afforded protection, if necessary, under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (see [Whistleblowing Policy](#)).

Liaise with other relevant professionals (e.g. DSO's/DSL's from other organisations) and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to ensure that we work in accordance with local policy and procedure and to share information as appropriate.

- Attend appropriate multi-agency conferences, contextual safeguarding groups, and other meetings to ensure joined-up working with partner organisations.
- Maintain clear records and a log, and report regularly to Trustees any safeguarding concerns raised, ongoing safeguarding investigations, policy amendments and training needs.
- Review this procedure annually and work with the Designated Safeguarding Officer, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer and Trustee Safeguarding Lead to get it signed off.
- Ensure that amendments to this policy are clearly communicated to staff, that it is made available to all staff and to service users as appropriate.
- Attend 6-weekly clinical supervision sessions with a professional safeguarding lead.
- Nominate a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead to assume their responsibilities before any period of absence from work, and notify staff of this in advance.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will:

- Take on tasks delegated to them by the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that safeguarding procedures are followed, and that the essence of the policy is put into practice.
- Be a second point of contact for staff who need advice and guidance about any concerns they have and to be able to offer support in taking the appropriate action.

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Will be the first point of contact for staff and volunteers with safeguarding concerns when the DSL is absent from work, which will include making decisions about what should be reported and recorded and any actions that need to be taken.

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- Manage all urgent safeguarding issues that come up while the DSL is not at work.
- If the DSL post is vacant, or a longer-term absence occurs, the DDSL will delegate additional aspects of the DSL role to the DSO who holds sufficient safeguarding knowledge to fulfil the function.

The **Project Coordinator PC** who is also **Aim to Thrive's DSL** will:

- Drive the strategic direction of Aim to Thrive safeguarding activity and develop a culture of safeguarding and consistent good practice.
- Ensure that they have undertaken the DSL training to ensure quality of safeguarding at a strategic and operational level.
- Ensure that there is always a nominated DDSL and DSO; that they are well informed, well trained, competent, and have the necessary resources to fulfil the requirements of the role.
- Work closely with the DDSL and DSO to ensure that the Safeguarding team stays abreast of developments in the field and the safeguarding culture is embedded and maintained.
- Be available to staff and volunteers if they are unable to contact the DDSL or DSO and support is needed urgently, or where it is not appropriate for them to contact the DDSL or DSO because concerns relate to them.

The **Trustee Safeguarding Lead** will:

- Take responsibility for both the Charity Commission and Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) being informed following investigations of members of staff and will provide additional support to the DSL as required when managing these scenarios.
- Will partake in an initial safeguarding meeting. Subsequently they will attend quarterly meetings and have an annual Safeguarding review meeting with the DSL to ensure that they are familiar with the safeguarding practices, review any cases they have been involved in, and to ensure that all related actions are followed up.
- Be available to staff and volunteers if they are unable to contact the DDSL, DSL, or the DSO and support is needed urgently, or where it is not appropriate for them to contact them because concerns relate to them.
- Be the Lead Trustee for online safety, specifically for Filtering and Monitoring to support the organisation to take its responsibilities seriously, that an annual audit of online safety is complete (to include Filtering and Monitoring).
- See also responsibilities for staff (below).

Staff and Volunteers will:

- Read the policy during their first week of employment and contact the DSL to say that they have understood it. This is their opportunity to ask any questions about the policy itself or the procedures they need to follow.
- Staff and volunteers will read any updates and amendments to the policy so that they stay up to date with organisational procedure.
- Undertake safeguarding training regularly to ensure that they know how to recognise the need for safeguarding and report their concerns correctly. This includes Online Safety training and training in Filtering and Monitoring.
- Undertake a range of related training that will help them ensure the safety of children, the minimum for all staff is Level 2, which also includes Trustees.
- Ensure that they explain to children they work with, what they should do if they are concerned about their safety or the safety of other children.
- Always act if they witness a safeguarding incident in a way that is professional, and act to maintain their own safety and the safety of others around them who might need help.
- Support children to ensure their online safety while working with us; this includes the specific Filtering arrangement, how to intervene in and report any incidents of inappropriate use or behaviour.
- Report safeguarding concerns to their line manager, the DSL or another member of the safeguarding team if the DSL is not available or appropriate. This must occur on the same working day that the concern arises.

6.3. Contact details in regard to safeguarding

- Our DSL is Sam Taylor samtayloraim@gmail.com

7.0 Establishing Safer Working Practices

7.1 Safer Recruitment

7.1.1 Aim to Thrive is committed to implementing safer recruitment practices for all staff/volunteers. The DSL must be Safer Recruitment trained, so they understand their responsibilities. The guidelines in this section of the policy should be followed.

7.1.2 Aim to Thrive will endeavour to have senior staff trained in Safer Recruitment; there will always be someone in addition to the DSL who is Safer Recruitment trained to ensure we can deter, identify, and reject individuals who pose a risk of harm to children.

7.1.3 We will ensure that our commitment to safeguarding is clear in all recruitment materials and we will make explicit the various checks that are in place. This includes notifying all shortlisted candidates that a basic online check will be conducted, extensive checks on social media are not expected to be part of this.

7.1.4 We will adopt an organised approach to recruitment processes so that there is adequate time to make the necessary checks before appointing new staff/volunteers (e.g. checking original ID, questioning gaps in service, on-line search, calling referees to discuss anomalies).

7.1.5 We will work towards involving children (especially those with histories of being looked after, in care or care leavers) in recruitment of new staff/volunteers, for example by feeding into questions asked and being on an interview panel.

7.1.6 All staff/volunteers applying to work directly with children or with access to confidential files will be interviewed by at least two staff members, preferably a member of the Safeguarding Team. We will obtain two satisfactory references and complete a DBS check.

7.1.7 Aim to Thrive will work within the current legal framework for referring staff and volunteers to the DBS who have harmed or pose a risk to children, young people and/or adults. For conditions of this referral please click [here](#).

7.1.8 When a new Trustee Safeguarding Lead is recruited, they are involved in an initial safeguarding meeting. Subsequently they will attend quarterly meetings and an annual review to ensure that they can familiarise themselves with current practice and challenge the DSL around any discrepancies or anomalies.

7.2 Disclosure Barring Service (DBS)

7.2.1 No one shall work with children within Aim to Thrive who has been convicted of or has received a formal police caution concerning an offence against children, as listed in the First Schedule of the Children and Young Person's Act (1933); or who has been convicted of or has received a caution for sexual offences against children.

7.2.2 All staff members, volunteers and trustees who work directly with children under the auspices of Aim to Thrive or who have access to confidential information about children will require an enhanced check through the DBS.

7.2.3 Recruiting Managers must take all reasonable steps, including obtaining disclosures from the DBS, to ensure that persons who have been convicted or have received a formal police caution for an offence against children, as listed in the First Schedule of the Children and Young Persons Act (1933); or, who has been convicted of or has received a caution for sexual offences against children.

7.3 Staff and Volunteer Safeguarding Learning and Development

7.3.1 Aim to Thrive staff and volunteers will have a minimum probationary period of six months during which time their ability to, and experience of, safeguarding children will be discussed. Learning and development needs will be considered in this period and a plan put in place to meet these needs.

7.3.2 During induction, all staff and volunteers will familiarise themselves with child protection policies, procedures and guidance, and they will complete basic child protection training that includes how to recognise and respond to the signs of abuse and neglect, on-line safeguarding, additional vulnerabilities of children with special educational needs and disabilities and consideration of the impact of a family's cultural identity.

7.3.3 Staff and volunteer training will include separate Online Safety training and training in Filtering and Monitoring where this is appropriate; for example for any senior staff with a safeguarding responsibility, a responsibility for filtering and or monitoring, any staff working with children online or those overseeing work with children online.

7.3.5 Staff and volunteers will have regular 'supportive supervision' thereafter, during which time these conversations will continue to ensure that training needs are identified and met.

7.3.6 Staff and volunteers will be adequately trained for the roles they undertake on behalf of Aim to Thrive, and Safeguarding training will be tailored to their role and need and repeated regularly.

7.3.7 Staff and volunteer training will include generic safeguarding training at the level appropriate to their role and also specific training in, for example, Trauma Informed Practice, and around professional curiosity, an awareness of cultural differences and online safety. This will be offered where needed and suited to staff or volunteer roles.

7.3.8 The DSL must ensure that any actions or developments needed as identified in staff training sessions are followed up to ensure that all staff's learning needs are met.

7.3.9 Staff and volunteers will undertake regular group Reflective Practice Supervision (RPS) so that they have opportunities to reflect on the issues they come across in their work and to ensure that any difficulties are processed effectively.

7.3.10 The DSL will have 6-weekly clinical supervision with a leading safeguarding professional.

7.3.11 The DSL will have 6-monthly meetings and an annual review with the TSL to ensure that there is support available for the DSL and accountability across the organisation.

7.4 Single Central Record on Cliniko

7.4.1 Aim to Thrive will record all relevant safeguarding information for purposes of checking and vetting of all potential staff (paid and voluntary) on a Single Central Record on Cliniko.

7.4.2 The SCR will include staff personal details (full name, DOB, address), their role, professional qualifications, ID seen, references, DBS checks, proof of right to work. It must also include a list of training needed, when this will occur and dates the training was undertaken.

7.4.3 The SCR must record which member of staff has made the DBS check, alongside the date the check was made, whether the staff member has signed up to the DBS update service and when the check requires update/review.

7.4.4 Leavers must be stored in a separate 'archived' spreadsheet.

7.5 Managing Confidential Information

7.5.1 Aim to Thrive is committed to maintaining confidentiality wherever possible and information around safeguarding should be shared only with those who need to know.

7.5.2 All allegations/concerns will be recorded and held securely. Any hard copies of information will be immediately shredded or secured in a locked filing cabinet in the relevant offices and accessible only to the DSL and TSL. (Guidance on how to manage disclosures and allegations is captured at 8.4)

7.5.3 In line with GDPR, the Data Protection Act (2018), and our [Privacy Notice/Policy](#), safeguarding files will be kept for 35 years after which they will be securely destroyed.

7.6 Managing Risk

7.6.1 Aim to Thrive takes a proactive and thorough approach to risk management; we risk-assess people before working with them, premises before using them and projects before starting them. Risk assessments highlight the risks, which we reduce and monitor through risk management plans. In addition to formal risk assessments, we also dynamically risk assess situations to ensure the safety of staff and children. See [Risk Assessment policy](#) for more information.

7.6.2 We facilitate groups of children where there could be a risk of disruptive, challenging, aggressive or violent behaviour. Staff and volunteers will try to obtain as much information about children before we start working with them, and staff and volunteers will be trained in de-escalation techniques to manage such situations. See our [Behaviour Management Policy](#).

7.6.3 We manage projects in properties that sometimes have areas that are accessed by the public. Whilst staff and volunteers cannot control the behaviour of the public and children in our care are never left unsupervised in public spaces and these spaces require close supervision.

7.6.4 It is important to work closely with other professionals and agencies supporting any young person who is engaging with Aim to Thrive to ensure that we are able to support them to stay safe and meet their needs holistically. This is particularly important if children are open to Children's Social Care, Youth Justice or have additional physical or learning needs.

7.7 Managing Dangerous Situations/Use of Restraint

7.7.1 Our staff and volunteers have guidelines about behaviour management and managing violent incidents, see the relevant procedures. Our staff and volunteers should not need to restrain children.

7.7.2 In exceptional circumstances, such as stopping a child from seriously injuring themselves or another, contact may be required. The principle must be the minimum amount of force for the shortest possible time.

7.7.3 Staff and volunteers must not use 'excessive force' in any circumstances and would be subject to disciplinary procedures if that were found to be the case. In some circumstances, where staff and volunteers feel comfortable and competent to do so, they can help diffuse potentially or actually violent situations using the physical space around them and their own physical presence to help manoeuvre people out of danger, but they should not do so by physically restraining anyone.

7.7.4 Any dangerous situation and/or situations where the use of physical contact has been necessary to protect someone's immediate safety, must be reported to the staff and volunteer line manager and DSL as soon as it is safe to do so. Consideration must be given to informing the child's parents/carers and key professionals about the situation.

7.7.5 A de-brief in respect of the situation must be held within 24 hours, with consideration given to what steps can be taken to prevent a recurrence of such an incident and to determine if there is broader learning that needs to be shared amongst colleagues.

7.8 Online Safety

7.8.1 Children using our service sometimes may access technologies that can present risks, particularly online activity. It is our responsibility to ensure that they do so safely. We have a responsibility to ensure that the online activity of Aim to Thrive staff and volunteers enables and enforces the safeguarding of all children, who are vulnerable due to their age, not just those deemed at risk, vulnerable or with additional needs.

7.8.2 The DSL will ensure that online safety is treated with the utmost importance, which includes ensuring that staff and volunteers know how to keep children safe while working online, that they are aware of the organisation's filtering restrictions for online activity, liaising with IT related professionals, managing incidents (e.g. cyber bullying), updating and delivering training, and reporting to the Board of Trustees.

7.8.3 Our main points of reference for online safety best practice are the [NSPCC](#) and the Government's [Cyber Security Standards for Schools and Colleges](#).

7.8.4 When considering the online risk to children working with us, we identify four main categories of risk:

- **Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content e.g. pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, selfharm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation and extremism.
- **Contact** – being subjected to harmful on-line interactions with others, e.g. child to child pressure, commercial advertising, and adults posing as children with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
- **Conduct** – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes harm e.g. making, sending and receiving explicit images, (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying.
- **Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing, and/or financial scams.

7.8.5 While staff and volunteers are present to supervise online work undertaken by children using our services, it is important to recognise that we cannot monitor every aspect of their online engagement. Our aim is to create a supportive environment where staff are available to guide and oversee digital activities within our sessions. However, we also encourage ongoing conversations about online safety and empower young people to make safe and informed decisions beyond our supervision.

- 7.8.6 Staff and volunteers will be aware of the organisation's filtering mechanisms to ensure they know what is blocked, why and how this can help keep children safe online. Staff and volunteers will manually monitor internet activity during sessions.
- 7.8.7 Staff and volunteers will talk to children about online safety at appropriate moments during their work with us, in a way that is age appropriate and suitable for their level of cognitive ability. Both age and cognitive ability will influence the language staff use and what will be talked about. Staff and volunteers will be sensitive to the fact that as children get older, their needs and behaviours change, particularly through the teenage years, when they are more prone to risk-taking, mood swings, and whether or not they will even talk to staff and volunteers about things they may find embarrassing or even be ashamed about.
- 7.8.8 Staff and volunteers can work together to plan specific sessions that will help focus conversations with children around safer use of technologies.
- 7.8.9 Staff and volunteers will be able to recognise the additional risks that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) face online; from bullying, grooming, and radicalisation, and are confident they have the capability to support children with SEND to stay safe online. Staff and volunteers may also need to signpost these children to other support services where helpful and they should not presume this has already been done.
- 7.8.10 Where staff and volunteers become aware of any worrying circumstances that have occurred online, they should speak to the DSL or the DSO immediately, and they should not discuss the situation with anyone else. Depending on the situation, the DSL will ensure that the relevant action is taken.
- 7.8.11 Photos will only be taken of children where necessary to document work being done or for project promotion purposes. This will only ever be done with the child or young person and their parents' consent. This will only ever be used for the purpose that was agreed and intended and these will be stored securely (see our sister companies [Art in Mind photography and filming policy statement](#)). Any exception to this will be discussed and agreed in advance with the DSL or DSO who will ensure that children are safeguarded at all times.
- 7.8.12 Children use many different social media platforms, sites and apps including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and X (formerly Twitter); some for social networking and staying connected to friends and family, they can be used for gaming, making things and developing their interests. The risks include oversharing (e.g. personal information or their location), talking to people they don't know or who are older, sending or receiving inappropriate content, unrealistic notions of body image or obsessing about likes and followers. Staff and volunteers must ensure that to mitigate some of these risks;

review location and privacy settings, understand age ratings and features, and to talk to children about the impact of social media on themselves, their health, their families and their communities. Supporting children understanding how algorithms work and how this can impact the content that they are shown is also another important aspect of supporting children to stay safe online.

7.8.13 If needed the DSL may liaise with the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP) which helps keep children safe online, they are part of the police service in the National Crime agency [CEOP](#).

7.8.14 Issues may include nude images of children, gaming abuse, hate content, inappropriate adverts, terror content, or the issue may involve infractions by staff or service users misusing equipment.

7.8.15 Where service users are found to be misusing the organisation's equipment for use deemed inappropriate, the action taken will depend upon and be proportionate to the circumstances.

7.8.16 Where staff and volunteers misuse the organisation's equipment, internet or via a personal device, they could be subject to disciplinary procedures. Action taken will depend upon and be proportionate to the circumstances. We will consider whether the incident involved illegal activity or content, in these cases, the DSL will report the matter to the police.

7.8.17 Staff and volunteers recognise that safeguarding issues can arise if data is compromised or lost. Our [Data Protection Policy](#), [Confidentiality Policy](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) outline how we keep data safe.

7.8.18 Aim to Thrive recognises the duties placed on online service providers under the Online Safety Act and aligns its practice with national guidance to mitigate online harms for children.

8.0 Dealing with Safeguarding Incidents

8.1 Witnessing Safeguarding Incidents and Disclosures

8.1.1 Aim to Thrive will ensure that staff and volunteers have guidance on how to deal effectively with safeguarding incidents or disclosures (for specific pointers see Appendix 2 Guidance on handling incidents and disclosures) and that they understand how to report these (the flow diagram in Appendix 3 provides a quick reference point for staff and volunteers to follow).

8.1.2 Incidents - Where Aim to Thrive staff and volunteers witness safeguarding incidents, they will conduct themselves calmly and professionally, and get involved only to maintain their own safety and the safety of those around them, for example to call emergency services. Staff and volunteers will always report such incidents to the DSL preferably, or someone else in the Safeguarding team, as soon as it is safe to do so.

8.1.3 Disclosures - Where Aim to Thrive staff and volunteers witness safeguarding disclosures, they will adopt a supportive and reassuring approach to ensure the child or young person feels like they have done the right thing. Staff and volunteers will ensure the child or young person knows that the disclosure will be passed to; the DSL or perhaps another person in the Safeguarding team, and dependent on the content of the disclosure, possibly other agencies, such as Children's social care or the police.

8.1.4 Once the DSL is aware of the situation, in line with The Children's Act 2004, they should always try to seek the views of the child and young person about what they would like to happen as a result of the concern. This will help to inform what actions are taken.

8.1.5 Staff and volunteers must be aware that some children will be suffering some kind of abuse or neglect or know of another child suffering in this way, but may not feel ready to report it. Staff and volunteers should use their professional curiosity to consider what might be going on and to report any concerns even without a disclosure from a child.

8.1.6 A child or young person may be witnessing domestic violence, and they may or may not understand the long-term negative impact upon them as professionals might. Staff and volunteers should use their professional curiosity to explore the situation, while being sensitive that the young person may not even consider violence at home as "domestic violence".

8.2 Reporting Concerns

8.2.1 In addition to speaking directly with a trusted staff member or accessing support through Childline, young people are encouraged to report any concerns directly to our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) via Sam Taylor samtayloraim@gmail.com. This information will also be included in the confidentiality handbook for easy access. We want young people to feel heard and supported, and we are committed to ensuring multiple, safe pathways for raising concerns.

8.2.2 Aim to Thrive staff and volunteers must report all safeguarding issues that they encounter in their role to their line manager. In cases where staff are unsure if the matter is a safeguarding issue, they should discuss this with their manager. Either person can report to the DSL if it is decided necessary. If the manager is not clear, the DSL should be contacted.

8.2.3 In cases where staff and volunteers are unable to get hold of their manager and the situation cannot wait for their manager to get back to them, staff and volunteers must contact the DSL

directly. The DSL will always be available to discuss safeguarding matters with staff and volunteers .

8.2.4 Staff and volunteers must record their concerns on a Concern Form, even if concerns are raised verbally in the first instance. These are stored on Cliniko. If a staff member is uncertain about how to do this, they can ask their line manager or the DSL. The Safeguarding Incident Concern form can be found [here](#).

8.2.5 The information recorded should be factual and not based on opinions; record what the person tells you, what you have seen and any witnesses if appropriate. Use the terminology that the person uses; do not tone down offensive language or change the words used for more professional terminology. Forms should be written in the third person, using initials to identify individuals including one's self.

8.2.6 Reports must be completed by the person reporting the concern and done within 12 hours (although in some cases this will be required sooner, as determined by the DSL and/or partner agencies), and all reports will be kept secure and will comply with General Data Protection Regulations.

8.2.7 A person is a [private foster](#) carer if both the following apply:

- They're not a close relative - a grandparent, brother or sister, uncle or aunt or step-parent.
- They're looking after a child who's under 16 (under 18 if they're disabled) for more than 28 days in a row.

If a child or young person shares that these are their circumstances, staff and volunteers should report this to the local authority, so that some checks can be completed to ensure that this is a safe and supported arrangement. If safe to do so, it is important to let the child/young person and their carer know that you will be doing this.

8.2.8 [Children missing education](#) are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. If you identify a child/young person that you are working with, you must report this to the relevant Local Authority using the links below:

- [Brighton and Hove](#)
- [West Sussex](#)
- [East Sussex](#)

8.2.9 Missing Person (MISPER) Procedures - Staff and volunteers have clear reporting procedures for any children who have not attended the sessions they were due to attend. Staff

and volunteers should request copies of any safety plans in place for the children that they are working with, in order that we can ensure that they are complied with when children are in our care. If there is not a safety plan detailing the expected response to a missing child, then staff and volunteers must respond according to their knowledge of the child. At a minimum, on the same day, staff and volunteers must contact the school they attend to see if they attended school. If they are not at school the worker should call the person. If there is no reply, they should call the parent or guardian to advise them. Staff and volunteers will report all absences to their manager. If the worker cannot contact either parent or child, they should try another professional in the child or young persons' network. If the concern is escalated because the child or young person is believed to be at risk, the police should be called.

8.3 Reporting Information for Children

Important to know:

"We want to be honest with you. If you tell us something that makes us worried about your safety or someone else's, we might need to share that information with other people who can help. This could include other agencies or professionals who work to keep children safe. We do this because we care about you and want to make sure you get the best help possible. We want you to know that your safety and the safety of your friends is really important to us at Aim to Thrive. If you ever feel worried about something that's happening to you or someone else, we're here to listen and help. Here's what you can do if you're concerned:

1. **Talk to any of us:** You can tell any staff member you feel comfortable with. It doesn't matter if you're not sure or don't have proof - we still want to hear from you.
2. **We'll listen:** The person you talk to will hear you out and help figure out what to do next to keep everyone safe.
3. **It's okay to speak up:** Even if you're just feeling unsure or uncomfortable about something, it's always better to tell someone.
4. **We're here to help:** Our job is to make sure you're safe and happy when you're with us and as you go about your daily life.
5. **Remember, if you ever need someone to talk to outside of Aim to Thrive, you can always call Childline.** They're available anytime at 0800 1111, or you can visit their website a <https://www.childline.org.uk/>. Your voice matters, and we're always here to listen and help!"

8.4 Reporting Allegations Regarding Colleagues from other Organisations

Aim to Thrive staff and volunteers will discuss allegations that are made against or concerns that arise about colleagues in partner agencies, directly with and only with their manager or DSL.

The DSL must then determine the appropriate next step in accordance with the nature of the allegation. That may include 1 or more of the following actions:-

- Contacting the Police,
- Informing the LADO,
- Contacting the DSL or a senior lead in the partner organisation.

If in doubt about the necessary next step, contact the relevant LADO for consultation and advice.

8.5 Managing an allegation made against a member of staff

8.5.1 All concerns or allegations raised about staff and volunteers will be treated with sensitivity and seriousness and staff and volunteers are strongly advised to report any incident involving them that could give rise to concern, including the potential for misinterpretation by others.

8.5.2 Circumstances in which staff and volunteers may 'blow the whistle' or directly report safeguarding concerns against colleagues include:

- Behaviour or conduct in their personal life that might indicate unsuitability to work with children (e.g. domestic or assault against another adult).
- Behaviour that has harmed or may have harmed a child.
- Inappropriate or professionally unboundaried relations with children.
- Possibly committed a crime against a child.

8.5.3 This relates to any paid or unpaid member of staff or volunteer in a position of trust, working with children. This includes staff and volunteers who:

- Work directly with children.
- Work in a setting where children regard them as safe and trustworthy.
- Have access to sensitive information regarding children.
- Are senior managers or trustees who have responsibility for appointing people to work with children.

8.5.4 In the instance of an allegation being made against any staff or volunteer, the person should not discuss the issue with any other staff members; they must make immediate contact with and disclose concerns directly to our DSL who will handle the matter fairly, consistently and promptly. This also applies to any low level concerns, even when there is no evidence to support concerns.

8.5.5 If the member of staff and volunteer does not feel comfortable speaking to the DSL about the concern, e.g. their concern relates to the DSL, the staff / volunteer can contact either the DDSL or DSO or the TSL.

The DSL or TSL must notify the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer within one working day in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child (Criminal Threshold);
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child (Harm Threshold);
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children (Risk Threshold);
- Behaved in a way which raises concerns as to their suitability to work with children (Suitability Threshold).

8.5.6 The TSL will take responsibility for the Charity Commission and Disclosure Barring Service being informed, providing additional support to the DSL as required.

8.6 Sharing Information with Parents/Carers with a Statutory Duty of Care

8.6.1 The parent/carers of under 18's, with statutory duty of care must be contacted where allegations are made unless this may expose the child to additional harm/risk or may impact a police investigation. The DSL/TSL will liaise with Children's Services, the Police and the LADO to ensure this is done safely and sensitively and only when appropriate. Senior staff contact service users parents/carers/families with parental responsibility to gain consent from them for collection of their child's information.

8.7 Supporting Staff Following a Safeguarding Incident or Disclosure

Aim to Thrive recognises how distressing it can be following an observation or disclosure of abuse. In the first instance staff or volunteers should speak with their immediate line manager who may be able to offer support internally, however, in some instances either external or more therapeutic support may be required. This can be discussed with the DSL and support can be accessed via the GP.

Additionally, staff and volunteers should utilise RPS to reflect on stressful work.

APPENDIX 1. Recognising Signs and Symptoms of Harm and/or Abuse

Abuse by definition is any act, or failure to act, which results in a significant breach of a child or young person's human rights, as per the [UN Convention on the Right of the Child](#).

At Aim to Thrive we can work with children with multiple complex mental health needs, living in care and in unstable homes. We remain vigilant to disclosures of abuse or risk of harm in our groups, one-to-one sessions and workshops. Many of these disclosures or observations

constitute our legal duty to report based under the traditional four categories of abuse, as outlined in [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#):

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

Most frequently, these categories overlap, and an abused individual frequently suffers more than one type of abuse. These definitions can be useful in recognising abuse and taking action to report and record concerns.

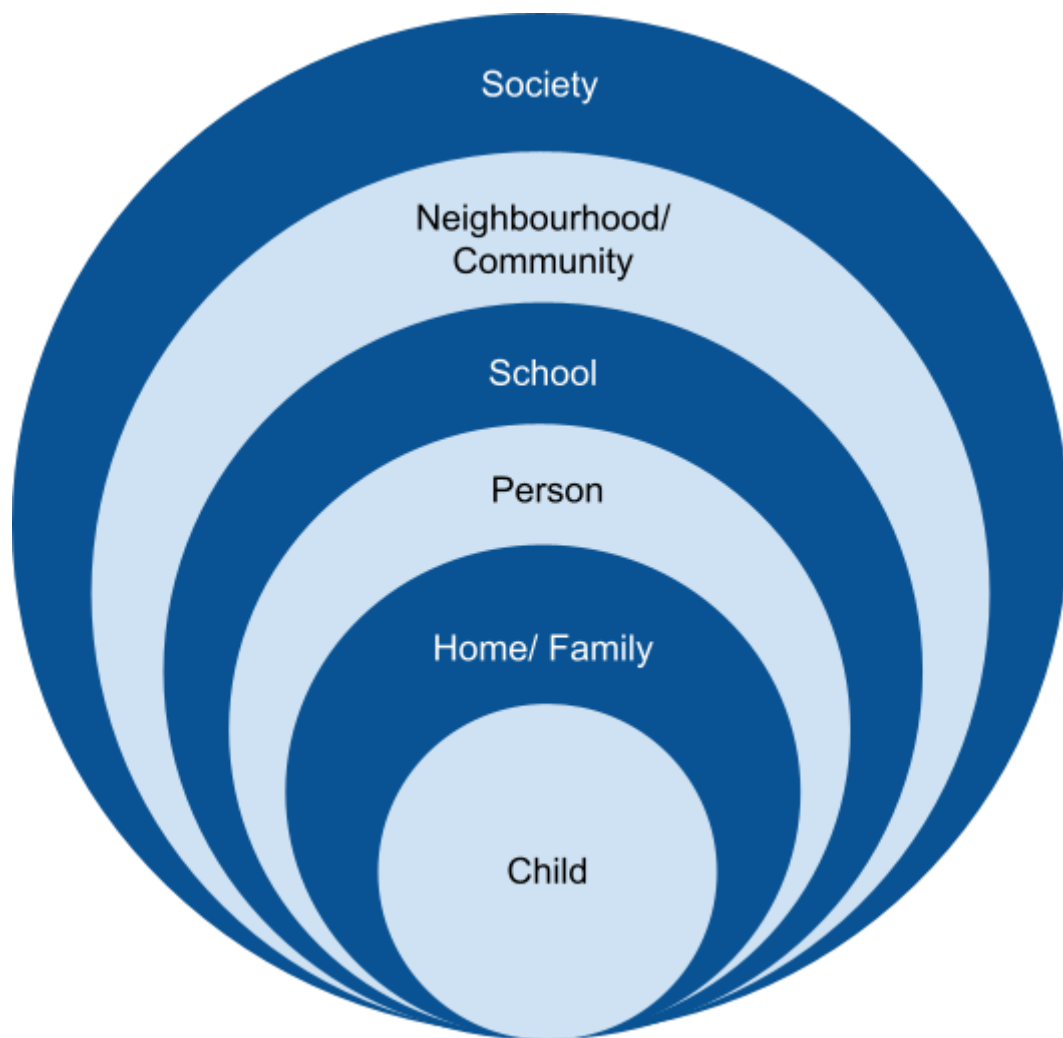
Aim to Thrive is committed to ensuring that all staff undertake training to gain an awareness of the signs and symptoms of intra and extra familial abuse and risk areas of harm from a contextual safeguarding perspective. The DSL and TSL received higher levels of safeguarding training appropriate to their roles.

Extra-Familial Harm and Contextual Safeguarding

In addition to these traditional definitions of safeguarding, 'Contextual Safeguarding' expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse beyond their front doors. It places an emphasis and duty (as per Working Together 2017 revisions) on our responsibility to also recognise the wider-environment when we consider what constitutes abuse. This may include:

- Peer to peer intimate relationship abuse
- Criminal exploitation
- Sexual exploitation
- Online abuse
- Missing episodes
- 'Gang' involvement
- Radicalisation
- Safeguarding risks in public spaces
- Human Trafficking
- Modern slavery
- Organised Immigration Crime
- Serious Violence including possession of knives and weapons

Examples of how we understand a wider-environment of risk existing for Aim to Thrive children, as well as those external to Aim to Thrive, is illustrated in the diagram below.



Many of these risk areas and abuse forms may be common knowledge to a group of children accessing an Aim to Thrive project, such as a park that young females often go to drink and hang out with older males, or a house in the community often used as a space to use drugs. This knowledge, as a result, may also be known to staff or volunteers and constitutes contextual safeguarding' concern that should be reported to the DSL.

The DSL will decide when information should be shared externally in what format , and to whom dependent on Local Safeguarding Partnership arrangements Aim to Thrive will ensure all staff will receive appropriate training in these risk areas to support active reporting.

Safeguarding and Mental Health

It is also the case that more mental health problems and disorders are being seen in children today. Staff/volunteers may be presented with an immediate safeguarding concern for a child's mental health and resultant physical wellbeing.

For example, symptoms of psychosis, increased severity in self-harm, or disclosed suicidal ideation or attempt. All of which are recognised signs and symptoms of harm/abuse and require immediate reporting. Where suicidal ideation or severe self-harm is apparent and deemed to be an immediate threat to life, emergency services should be called immediately, in line with any other form of harm or abuse that is life threatening. The DSL should be informed verbally as soon as possible and followed up in writing on the Concern Form.

Children in the Community

Staff or volunteers may also observe safeguarding concerns regarding the welfare of other children they do not directly work with but interact with in the community. As per the Children's Act 1989, all Aim to Thrive staff or volunteers have a responsibility to report these concerns to the DSL immediately, or in exceptional circumstances to contact emergency services prior to informing the DSL.

Physical Abuse

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm. It may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces an illness. The following are often regarded as indicators of concern for a child or young person:

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury.
- Several different explanations provided for an injury.
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment.
- Parents/carers who are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury.
- Parents who are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment.
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (e.g. bruising and cuts), fabricated, and/or induced illness.
- Family use of different doctor surgeries, Minor Injury Units, or Accident and Emergency departments.
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries.

It is important to remember that indication of physical injury, wounding or bruising or infections could be indicative of extra-familial harm and serious violence, for example sexual or criminal exploitation.

Emotional Abuse

Involves the persistent emotional maltreatment such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the individuals' emotional development. It may involve conveying that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the individuals the opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. For a child, it may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing the individual to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation of an individual.

Sexual Abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the individual is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetration or non penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. Non-penetrative acts may also include noncontact activities, such as involving looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child or young person in preparation for abuse (including via the Internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can children. Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse.

Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development. An adult in a position of responsibility may ignore the child's medical, emotional or physical care needs, failing to provide access to appropriate health care and support, educational services or withholding the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and shelter. For adolescents, basic needs may be neglected if they are being exploited, going missing or impacted by violence.

Definitions for additional forms of abuse experienced contextually by children in the wider environments will often incorporate multiple signs and symptoms of abuse from the four categories above. Some examples may include:

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Can take many forms from what may appear to the child to be a 'consensual' relationship but where sex is exchanged for needs such as affection, accommodation, and/or gifts, to serious organised crime and child trafficking. The perpetrator always holds some degree of power over the victim, increasing the dependence of the victim as the exploitative relationship develops.

Resources and further information on CSE can be found at <https://stopce.org/helpful-resources/>

Financial Abuse

The Care Act 2014 describes 'financial abuse' as a type of abuse which includes having money or other property stolen, being defrauded, being put under pressure in relation to money or other property and having money or other property misused. While the Care Act 2014 definition is clear, financial abuse takes many forms. It's a type of abuse that can start subtle and is often hard to detect. When defining financial abuse, we know there are many elements at play. It is true that financial abuse often involves or is associated with:

- Taking or misusing someone's money or belongings for their own gain
- Harming, depriving or disadvantaging the victim
- Controlling someone's purchases or access to money
- Often associated with other forms of abuse
- Doesn't always involve a crime like theft or fraud

There are examples of children who have been exploited so that other individuals can use their bank accounts to store illegal funds.

Radicalisation

Aim to Thrive also has a duty under the Prevent Duty 2015 to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". Normal safeguarding reporting procedures should be used by staff that suspect any form of radicalisation and subsequently reported by the DSL/DSO to children's services and/or the police. The Prevent Agenda helps to stop people becoming involved in or supporting violent extremism or terrorism through mentoring programmes such 'Channel'.

For further information go to: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-guidance>

Female Genital Mutilation

Aim to Thrive has a duty to report Female genital mutilation (FGM), which is child abuse and constitutes significant harm. More information regarding FGM and related signs and symptoms can be found at:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/preventing-protecting/>

So Called 'Honour-Based Violence'

This is an umbrella term used to describe practices used to control and punish the behaviour of a person in a family or group, to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs in the name of 'honour'. Although predominantly associated with women and girls, males can also be victims. Violence and abuse may occur when it is felt that an individual's behaviour has broken the 'honour code', bringing disgrace to their family.

Perpetrators will feel that they need to restore their loss of face and standing in their community. There is often an element of approval and social acceptance from other family members and the community. It is noteworthy that it is now unlawful to marry under the age of 18.

Trafficking

Trafficking is where children are tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their homes and are moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Children are trafficked for:

- Sexual exploitation
- Benefit fraud
- Forced marriage
- Domestic slavery like cleaning, cooking and childcare
- Forced labour in factories or agriculture
- Committing crimes; begging, theft, working on cannabis farms, moving drugs

Trafficked children experience many types of abuse and neglect. Traffickers use physical, sexual, and emotional abuse as a form of control. Children are also likely to be physically and emotionally neglected and may be sexually exploited. It is essential to recognise that trafficking does not have to take place over geographical areas, it could be from one hotel room to another if the purpose is for exploitation.

Child Criminal Exploitation and Modern Slavery

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

The UK Home Office defines **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)** as:

"Where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity. This may be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may not recognise that they are being exploited and may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual."

CCE can involve various forms of criminal activity, including **county lines drug trafficking, theft, serious violence, and forced involvement in gangs**. It often overlaps with other forms of exploitation, such as sexual exploitation and modern slavery.

Modern Slavery

Under the **Modern Slavery Act 2015**, **Modern Slavery** is defined as:

"The recruitment, movement, harbouring or receiving of children or adults through the use of force, coercion, abuse of vulnerability, deception, or other means for the purpose of exploitation."

Exploitation under modern slavery includes:

- **Forced labour**
- **Sexual exploitation**
- **Criminal exploitation (including county lines and forced begging)**
- **Domestic servitude**
- **Human trafficking**

For children, **consent is irrelevant**—any child moved, recruited, or exploited under these conditions is considered a victim of modern slavery, even if they do not perceive themselves as such.

County Lines

[County Lines](#) is the police term for urban gangs exploiting children into moving drugs from a hub, normally a large city, into other markets - suburban areas and market and coastal towns - using dedicated mobile phone lines or “deal lines”. Children under 10 years old have been exploited into carrying drugs for gangs. This can involve children being trafficked away from their home area, staying in accommodation and selling and manufacturing drugs. However, children may be exploited locally meaning that they may not be travelling substantial distances, but involved in county lines drug supply and suffering associated harms. It is essential to recognise the link to violence and other forms of harm as outlined above.

Children Missing from Education

All children are entitled to full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and their special educational needs. Children missing from education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education otherwise. These children are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and not engaging in education, employment or training later in life. Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensure that these children are safe and receive a suitable education and intervene early where problems occur.

Children Absent from Education are children registered at school who have repeated or prolonged absences from school. These could be indicative of potential violence in the life of the child and

consequently absence must be recorded, the data must be analysed regularly and any concerns must be reported.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf57a4dcb0757928e5bd39/Children_missing_education_guidance_-_August_2024.pdf

Adultification

Davis and Marsh (2020) define adultification as:

'The concept of adultification is when notions of innocence and vulnerability are not afforded to certain children. This is determined by people and institutions who hold power over them. When adultification occurs outside of the home it is always founded within discrimination and bias. There are various definitions of adultification, all relate to a child's personal characteristics, socioeconomic influences and/or lived experiences. Regardless of the context in which adultification takes place, the impact results in children's rights being either diminished or not upheld.'

Key considerations in respect of adultification are as follows:

- Black children are more likely to experience adultification bias
- Racism is the core issue influencing the adultification of Black children
- Black children are more likely to be met with suspicion, assumed deviance and culpability
- Adultification reduces professional and organisational responsibility to safeguard and protect children, yet increases a responsabilisation of children to safeguard themselves ● Adultification bias is a breach of child safeguarding legislation and guidance.

Staff must actively reflect on whether adultification bias may be influencing risk assessment, thresholds for intervention, or expectations of self-protection.

Pregnancy

If a member of staff or volunteer at Aim to Thrive believes that a young person they are working with may be pregnant or their partner may be pregnant, they should seek advice from their manager/DSL. This must be explored with the young person where safe to do so, and if the young person is pregnant or is believed to be pregnant/the partner of a pregnant person, support should be offered to ensure they are seeking the appropriate medical and practical support.

If the pregnant person or the father of the expectant child is aged under 16, this must be referred to the relevant children's services department.

If the young person is aged 16 or over, and there are safeguarding concerns for the young parent(S) or the unborn baby, this must be referred to the relevant children's services department.

Each Local Authority will have its own pre-birth protocol which can be referred to in this decision making.

APPENDIX 2 Guidance for Handling Safeguarding Situations and Disclosures

If you witness abuse, or abuse has just taken place you should:

- Get involved only to maintain your safety and that of others needing your help
- Call the Police if you think a crime had been committed
- Call an ambulance if you think someone, e.g. a child, needs medical attention • Consider what can be done to keep yourself and others safe until help arrives
- Call the DSL as soon as it is safe to do so (or someone else in the Safeguarding Team)
- Record what happened straight after (preferably straight onto safeguarding form)
- Contact your manager to notify them
- Consider whether you need any ongoing or subsequent support in the aftermath

If you Receive a Disclosure or Allegation:

- Listen respectfully to what the person says, remain calm, don't show shock/disbelief
- Reassure them that they will be taken seriously, and they have done the right thing
- Reassure them that any abuse that happened to them was not their fault
- Do not start to investigate, or ask detailed or probing questions Do not promise to keep the things they are telling you a secret
- Ascertain if this is historical or if there is an immediate threat of significant harm
- If there is an immediate threat, tell them you will call the Designated Safeguarding Lead

In exceptional cases it may be necessary to call 999 immediately and if that need arises, the staff member should inform the DSL as soon as that immediate action is completed.

- Call the DSL immediately (or someone else in the team if need be)
- If the disclosure was historical or they are no longer at risk of harm, tell them you will tell your manager and complete a form for the DSL.
- Tell them the names of the people you will contact if this is possible
- Record the disclosure on a Concern Form as soon as possible
- Consider whether or not you need any on-going or subsequent support • Send the DSL the completed Concern Form within 12 hours

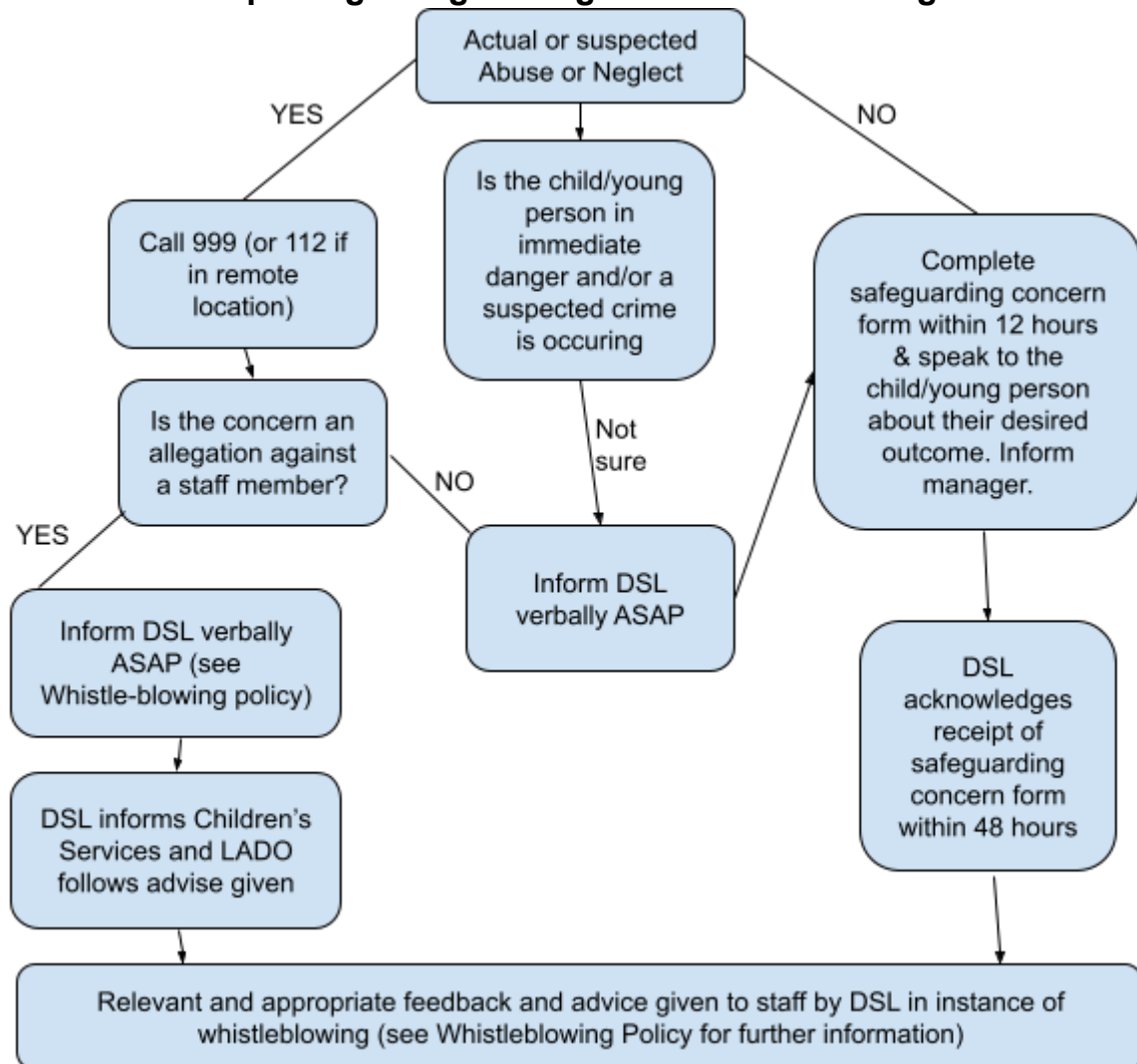
Contact details in regard to safeguarding:

- Our DSL is Sam Taylor samtayloraim@gmail.com

- Our TSL is Vanessa Kemp vanessa@zebracat.co.uk

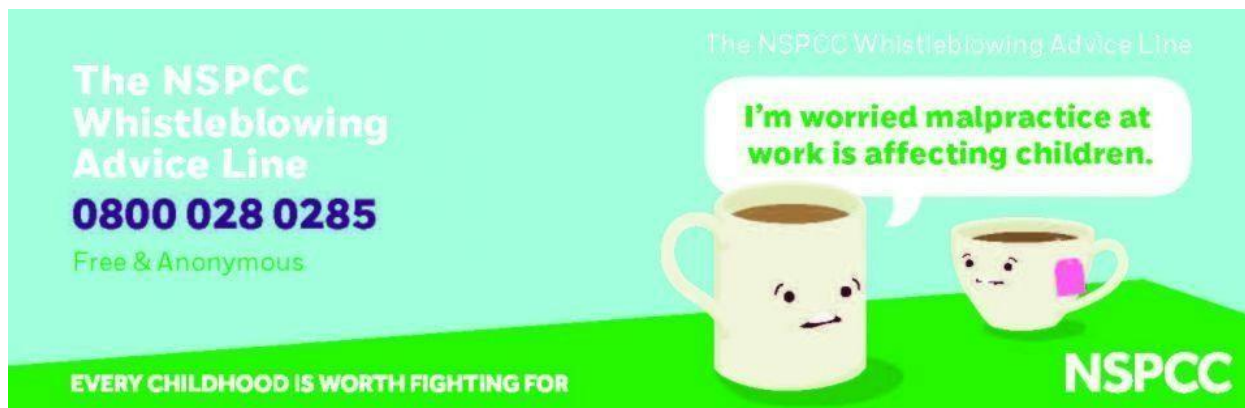
Contact the DSL first, unless it is not appropriate (e.g. the concern is about them), then contact the TSL, Vanessa Kemp.

APPENDIX 3. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns Flow Diagram



APPENDIX 4. Contact Details (including NSPCC and Children's Services)

These numbers are for guidance, staff must discuss issues with our Safeguarding Team.



The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line

0800 028 0285

Free & Anonymous



NSPCC

Worried about a child? 0808

800 5000 help@nspcc.org.uk

Each Local Authority Children's Services have Different Safeguarding Access Points

Brighton & Hove Children's Services - 'Front Door for Families':

Use the [online reporting form](#) to report a concern or for advice and support or email FrontDoorforFamilies@brighton-hove.gov.uk

01273 290400 9am to 5pm Mon – Thurs and 9.00am to 4.30pm on Fridays.

Out of hours you can contact the Emergency Duty: **01273 335905** or **01273 335906**.

West Sussex Children's Services - Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub:

Professionals must use the [Online reporting form](#) unless there is an emergency concern.

01403 229900 - Mon to Fri 9.00am - 5.00pm

For out of hours emergencies call the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) 5.00pm-9.00am weekdays or alternatively, at weekends or bank holidays call **033 022 26664**

East Sussex Children's Services - Single Point of Advice:

Professionals can use the [online reporting form or manual download](#) or you can email

0–19.SPOA@eastsussex.gov.uk or call **01323 464222** - Mon-Thurs 8.30am-5pm, Fri 8.30am-4.30pm

Out of hours, with serious concerns that can't wait till the next working day, contact the Emergency Duty Service: **01273 335905** Monday-Thursday 5pm-8.30am, after 4.30pm on Fridays, weekends and bank holidays.

APPENDIX 5. Relevant legislation and guidance

- Equality Act (2010)
- Leaving Care Act (2000)

- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998)
- Education Act (2002 and 2011)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021)
- Munro Report (2011)
- Protections and Freedoms Act (2012)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act (2014)
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#), Department for Education (2023)
- Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB's) [Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees](#), The Charity Commission (2017)
- 'Revised Guidance for Safer Working Practices for Adults who Work with Children and Young People in Education' (2019), plus April 2020 'Coronavirus Outbreak'
- [Charity law summary](#), NCVO
- [DfE Keeping Children Safe In Education 2023](#)
- [Filtering & Monitoring standards for schools](#)
- Children Act (1989)
- Children Act s.11 (2004)
- Children and Young Persons Act (2008 and 2014)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Data Protection Act (2018)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1992)
- Human Rights Act (1998 & 2000)
- [Pan Sussex Safeguarding Procedures](#)

Change Record

At Aim to Thrive, we are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually. This policy was implemented on

Date of Change:	Changed By:	Comments:
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08 03 26	Vanessa Kemp- chairperson	Policy approved by the Trustees