



PYRAMID

Safeguarding Children – Protection Policy

Policy Statement

Everybody has the right to be valued as an individual, to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be safe.

This policy has been written to help Pyramid to:

- work in a way that can prevent abuse
- support any participant who is experiencing abuse
- stop that abuse occurring

Pyramid will work:

- to promote the rights of all people to live free from abuse and coercion
- to organise activities in a way which promotes safety and prevents abuse
- to create a safe and open environment where social relationships can be confidently discussed and negotiated
- to ensure the safety and wellbeing of a child who has experienced or is experiencing abuse
- as far as possible, to make sure the child understands what is happening and can decide what they want to do
- within the framework and guidelines of the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Pyramid respects every child's right to privacy. If someone tells us any personal information we will normally keep it private. But if we are worried about a child's safety we have to tell someone else, even if the child doesn't agree.

Pyramid will make sure that everyone in Pyramid knows about this policy, and can work together to keep each other safe. The Director will be responsible for arranging training to help them to do this.

The policy is reviewed according to the schedule of our governance calendar (at least every two years). The lead person for child protection at Pyramid is the Director, James Hill. Talk to him if you have any questions about this policy.



Recognising Abuse

Child abuse is rare, but everyone needs to be aware of and look out for possible signs of abuse.

The Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership defines four types of child abuse:

PHYSICAL ABUSE: Causing any sort of physical harm to a child. For example hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or inducing illness.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE: Persistent actions and behaviour which cause harm to a child's emotional development.

For example:

- making a child feel that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate
- not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or “making fun” of what they say or how they communicate
- inappropriate expectations of a child, such as interactions that are beyond their intellectual capability
- overprotection and limiting a child's learning or access to normal social interaction
- bullying or actions which cause a child to feel frightened or in danger

SEXUAL ABUSE: Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence. For example:

- physical contact including assault by penetration (rape or oral sex) or non- penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing
- non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

NEGLECT: The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological and emotional needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.



Possible signs of abuse include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries or the explanation of the cause of the injury is does not seem right.
- The child discloses abuse, or describes what appears to be an abusive act.
- Someone else (child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child.
- Unexplained change in behaviour such as withdrawal or sudden outbursts of temper.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or sexually explicit behaviour.
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Difficulty in making friends.
- Eating disorders, depression, self-harm or suicide attempts.

Becoming aware of a safeguarding issue

This could happen in various ways, for example

- a child or young person's appearance, behaviour, creative output or statements cause suspicion of abuse and/or neglect
- a child or young person discloses an incident(s) of alleged abuse, either recent or which occurred some time ago
- concern is expressed by someone else (child or adult) about the welfare of a child
- a third party or anonymous allegation is received
- a written report is made regarding the serious misconduct of an employee or volunteer towards a child or young person

Who to tell

If you are worried about anything at all the best thing to do is to let someone know.

If possible, first speak to the **core worker** of the group. If that is not possible / appropriate, then contact:

Safeguarding Lead

James Hill (Director)

0113 234 6040 / 07834 452

312

OR

Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Andrew Marshall (Trustee)

07912 160 036



Alternatively, you can report your concern directly to **Leeds Children Social Work Services**:

Duty and Advice team: 0113 376 0336

Out of office hours Emergency Duty Team: 0113 535 0600

Email: childrensedt@leeds.gov.uk

Emergencies

If you are a witness to abuse or abuse has just taken place at Pyramid, you should:

- Ensure your own safety
- Check if the victim of abuse requires medical attention. Shout for the Core Worker (who will have been trained in First Aid) and call an ambulance if needed (phone 999)
- Where a crime has just been or is being committed, call the police (phone 999)
- Inform a staff member as soon as possible
- Preserve any physical evidence
- Make a written record of everything you witnessed

What to do if you are concerned about a child

Any concern you have will be addressed and treated seriously. It is never okay to do nothing, or to hope that someone else will deal with it. You should:

- Initially talk to a child/young person about what you are observing. It is okay to ask non-leading questions, for example: *"I've noticed that you don't appear yourself today, is everything okay?"*
- Listen carefully to what the young person has to say and take it seriously. Always act towards them as if you believe what they are saying. If possible, ask another person to listen as well.
- Always explain to the child/young person that any information they have given will have to be reported on if it suggests they (or others) have been harmed, or are at risk of harm
- Notify the Safeguarding Lead for Pyramid (listed above), or Leeds Children's Social Work Service
- Make a written record of what was said as soon as you can, while it is fresh in your mind and sign and date it.
- Respect confidentiality – do not share what has happened other than to make your report to the appropriate person and ensure any written document is kept safely and securely.
- Do not confront the alleged abuser yourself, or tell them about the allegation.
- Remember that it is not your responsibility (or Pyramid's) to investigate incidences of suspected child abuse but to gather information and refer only.



Responding to abuse or suspected abuse: management responsibilities

The Safeguarding Lead will contact the Leeds Children's Social Work Service or Duty and Advice team as soon as possible after being notified.

They will also contact the child's parents / carers unless to do so would place the child at an increased risk of harm.

Allegations against staff (including freelance workers and volunteers) and project participants

An allegation against a staff member should be reported to the Safeguarding Lead, or Deputy.

They will report to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) using the notification form and contact details on the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership website. <https://www.leedsscp.org.uk/> - search for 'managing allegations'.

The process for managing the allegation will be to follow our Disciplinary Procedure, and to take any further action as advised by the LADO.

Where the alleged abuser is someone with a learning disability, Pyramid will work to ensure that the needs of both are met. The needs of the child experiencing abuse will be paramount and the alleged abuser will be suspended while an investigation takes place. Pyramid has a responsibility to inform the alleged abuser of the procedures being followed, and to allow them the chance to express their feelings and respond. It may be necessary for this communication to be in the form of an independent representative.

Pyramid senior staff and management will ensure appropriate support and supervision for staff who:

- have reported abuse
- are working directly with someone who has/is experiencing abuse
- are working directly with someone who behaves abusively



Safe Recruitment

Pyramid has robust recruitment procedures for staff, workers and volunteers. In all cases, candidates

- Complete and sign an application form and attend an in-person interview so we can fully assess their suitability for the role
- Provide proof of their identity
- Are asked to declare any criminal convictions they may have which involve abuse against children, however old these convictions may be. (This is an exemption from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.)
- Provide the contact details for two referees, which are followed up by the office staff. The reference questionnaire includes a question on their suitability to work with children.

In addition, anyone offered a role at Pyramid

- Undertakes a Disclosure and Barring Service check at the highest level allowed for their position (an enhanced check for all roles working directly with children)
- Is given copies of our safeguarding policies and asked to sign a document to confirm they have read, understand and accept their responsibilities as regards safeguarding.
- Is provided with basic safeguarding training

Pyramid can decide to exclude someone from working or volunteering with us if we have any doubts about their references or suitability.

Management, supervision and training

All staff, sessional workers and volunteers are provided with clear job descriptions and specifications for their work, and they will complete a probationary period of employment as set out in their contract of employment.

Regular planning and monitoring meetings provide volunteers and workers with the opportunity to review and plan their work, share experiences, receive training and discuss their relationship with group members.

Pyramid is committed to training its volunteers and sessional workers, and to delivering a rolling programme of training throughout the year. The Foundation course includes a session on the safeguarding policy and procedures. All volunteers and workers will be expected to attend the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board's Level 1 Safeguarding training and other relevant training as appropriate.



We encourage everyone involved to speak up if they have any concerns about safeguarding practices or procedures at Pyramid. Everyone should feel free to openly discuss areas of concern or make suggestions for improvement so that we can ensure the safest possible environment for the young people we work with.

Our Complaints Procedure, Grievance Procedure and Whistleblowing Procedure all outline the ways you can raise a serious concern about Pyramid in a formal way.

Recording and managing confidential information

Your written statement should be given to the Safeguarding Lead or appropriate person (e.g. police officer) as soon as possible.

Pyramid takes privacy and data security seriously and all records will be handled in line with our Data Protection Policy and Privacy Statement.

Remember that children and young people have a right to privacy and confidentiality. It is only in the exceptional circumstance that you believe someone is at risk of abuse or harm that you should break that confidence. If possible, you should explain directly to the child that you cannot keep secrets if it means someone might get hurt.

Keeping Records

- Use a pen with black ink if you possibly can
- Ensure written records are clear and detailed
- It may be possible to take notes at the time the allegation is being made. Try and note down what the child actually says, using their own words and phrases. Also make a note of what you said and did in response.
- Note records of any injuries, behaviours etc.
- If you can't take notes, make a written report as soon as possible afterwards, while it is fresh in your mind.
- Factual information should be clearly separated from expression of opinion
- Be aware that your report may be required later as part of a legal action or disciplinary procedure
- Sign and date the report
- Give the report to the appropriate person named in this policy



Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees

The Board recognises its responsibility to implement effective safeguarding procedures across the organisation.

We will

- Ensure we have clear written policies and procedures around risk assessment, personal conduct and safeguarding
- Ensure we maintain our robust recruitment procedures, including DBS checks
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding training is undertaken by staff

Sessional Safeguarding Rules

In sessions which involve young people, we ensure minimum risk by adhering to the following guidelines:

- Sessions are be staffed by at least two workers and two volunteers. This may mean parents/carers staying with young people until volunteers/workers have arrived.
- Adults must avoid being alone with a child: if an adult needs to leave the room with a child, they must ask a third person to come with them.
- In exceptional circumstances where an adult may be alone with a child for a short period, the adult must ensure that other workers are aware of the situation and that they support this action
- No worker or volunteer will be alone with a child in a vehicle. The only exception would be emergency transport home/to hospital with the permission of parent/ guardian.
- Adults are not permitted to meet individually with children outside group activities
- Workers are required know the safe arrangements for children to get to the group and home after activities
- Workers and volunteers must ensure that physical contact is not exploitative and is not open to misunderstanding. Children must be encouraged to communicate what they find acceptable and unacceptable in the way they are approached by others in the group
- Children will be encouraged to discuss openly their feelings about activities, and the behaviour of adults and young people to each other in session debriefs and review meetings
- Confidential material collected on children relevant to their address, care needs etc. must be treated with respect and only be shared between workers and volunteers on a need-to-know basis