



Safeguarding Policy

Contact Information:

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1. Introduction

Track Clinic is committed to providing a safe environment for all children, young people, and vulnerable adults involved in our services. This includes individual and group equine-assisted psychotherapy sessions. We recognise our moral and legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people and protect them from harm.

2. Policy Objectives

To ensure that all children and young people who access our services are protected from harm.
To provide clear guidance to staff, volunteers, parents, and stakeholders on their responsibilities in identifying, reporting, and responding to safeguarding concerns.
To promote a safe, inclusive, and positive environment that is free from abuse, bullying, discrimination, and harassment.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all Track Clinic staff, including psychotherapists, equine specialists, volunteers, sessional workers, students, administrative staff, and anyone involved in delivering services to children and young people on behalf of Track Clinic.

4. Legislative Framework

This policy is grounded in the latest legislation and statutory guidance, including but not limited to:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- The Education Act 2002
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018, updated 2020)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR
- The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)

5. Core Safeguarding Principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation, have an equal right to protection from harm.
- All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Children and young people have the right to be heard and have their views considered.
- Partnership working with children, young people, parents, carers, and other agencies is essential to safeguarding.

6. Key Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

The DSL is responsible for overseeing safeguarding at Track Clinic, ensuring all staff understand their responsibilities, managing safeguarding concerns, liaising with external agencies, and ensuring this policy is reviewed regularly.

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All Staff and Volunteers:

All individuals working with children at Track Clinic have a duty to:

- Recognise potential safeguarding concerns.
- Respond appropriately to safeguarding issues.
- Record any concerns or allegations in writing.
- Report concerns to the DSL without delay.

7. Safeguarding Procedures

a. Recognising Abuse

All staff must be vigilant for signs of the four categories of abuse:

1. Physical Abuse: Involves causing physical harm to a child.
2. Emotional Abuse: Includes persistent emotional maltreatment causing severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.
3. Sexual Abuse: Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.
4. Neglect: The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development.

b. Online Safety

All children and young people must be protected from the risks of online abuse, cyberbullying, exploitation, and grooming.
If required, staff will guide children in safe and responsible use of digital technologies.

c. Whistleblowing

Staff are encouraged to raise any concerns they have about unsafe practices or safeguarding failures. This can be done confidentially through the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line or directly to the DSL.

d. Safe Recruitment

Track Clinic will apply rigorous recruitment procedures to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children and young people:

Enhanced DBS checks will be conducted for all staff and volunteers.
At least two references will be obtained for each candidate.
Safeguarding training is a mandatory part of the induction process for new recruits.

e. Training and Induction

All staff, including volunteers, will receive mandatory safeguarding training, which will be updated regularly in line with the latest legislation.

Additional training on recognising the signs of radicalisation and working under the Prevent Duty will be provided.

Ongoing professional development will ensure all staff are confident in their ability to protect children and young people.

8. Responding to Concerns and Reporting Procedures

If a safeguarding concern arises, staff must report the issue to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately.

The DSL will follow the Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (SVPP) procedures for Wiltshire. Concerns will be referred to external agencies, such as Children's Social Care or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), within one working day. For urgent concerns, guidance will be sought immediately from the appropriate authorities.

Prevent Duty Concerns

If there is concern that a child or young person is at risk of radicalisation, the DSL will refer the case to Channel, a multi-agency programme that provides support to individuals at risk of radicalisation and extremism.

Key Contact Information for Reporting Concerns:

LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) and MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub)

Phone: 0300 456 0108 (Monday to Thursday, 8:45 am - 5 pm; Friday, 8:45 am - 4 pm)

Email: Integratedfrontdoor@wiltshire.gov.uk

For immediate danger: If there is an immediate risk to a child or young person's safety, contact emergency services by calling 999.

9. Allegations Against Staff

Track Clinic will follow the statutory guidance when handling allegations against staff or volunteers. Allegations that a member of staff has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may harm a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm.
- All allegations will be reported to the LADO immediately, and appropriate actions will be taken, including suspension or removal of the individual if necessary. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process, with information shared on a need-to-know basis.

10. Supporting Mental Health and Well-being

Safeguarding includes promoting the mental health and emotional well-being of children and young people.

Staff are trained to recognise signs of mental health struggles, self-harm, or emotional distress, and will ensure that appropriate support is offered, including referrals to specialist services if necessary.

11. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Track Clinic recognises that confidentiality is critical but not absolute. Information may need to be shared with external agencies if a child is at risk of harm.

We will adhere to the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR when processing, storing, or sharing personal data.

12. Bullying Prevention

We promote a positive, inclusive environment where bullying, harassment, or discrimination is not tolerated.

All reported cases of bullying will be dealt with promptly, and children or young people who are victims will be offered support.

13. Policy Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually or following significant changes to legislation or statutory guidance. The next scheduled review is January 2024, or sooner if required.

Date of Policy Establishment: 02 January 2019

Last Review: 22 January 2024

Next Review Due: 8 October 2025