

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

POLICY and PROCEDURES

i. INTRODUCTION

Interactions Speech and Language Therapy aims to assure the safe and secure provision of speech and language therapy services for children and young people through effective assessment, intervention and joint working with parents, carers and other professionals. Therefore, safeguarding the welfare of children and young people in our care is part of our core business and all staff must be aware of their responsibilities in this regard.

This policy applies to all staff, students, volunteers or anyone working on behalf of Interactions Speech and Language Therapy, hereby referred to as 'representative'. The purpose of this policy is to provide representatives with the principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

ii. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Children Act 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 (Department for Education) define safeguarding and promoting children and young people's welfare as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding action may be needed to protect children (and parents) from:

- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Bullying, including online bullying and prejudice-based bullying
- Racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse
- Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls
- Radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE) and trafficking
- Honour based abuse, including female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Peer factors, including gang activity and youth violence
- Any other activity not listed that poses risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults

iii. **RECOGNISING SAFEGUARDING ISSUES**

Interactions SLT staff have a responsibility to identify and appropriately report safeguarding concerns in the best interests of the child or young person concerned.

We recognise that:

- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or identity, are potentially at risk and have a right to equal protection from all forms of harm and abuse.
- Some children are especially vulnerable due to previous experiences, level of dependency, communication needs, disability or other issues. Due to the nature of our work, children and young people in our care are likely to fall into this category, therefore we must be especially vigilant in ensuring their welfare.
- Working together with children, young people, their families and other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare.

Representatives should be aware that a safeguarding concern may present itself in different ways:

- a third party or anonymous allegation is received
- a child or young person's appearance, behaviour, play, artwork or statements cause suspicion
- a child or young person directly reports an incident(s)
- an Interactions SLT representative directly witnesses an incident, or hears about an incident from a third party
- an allegation of misconduct of a worker towards a child or young person is made
- a series of seemingly less concerning incidents/observations occur that when put together are cause for greater concern

iv. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is important that you treat any concerns seriously. Never think that someone else may be dealing with it. If you are at all concerned that a child may be at risk of, or experiencing harm it is your responsibility to:

- Talk further to the child/young person if appropriate. It is okay to ask questions, for example: "I've noticed that you don't appear yourself today, is everything okay?"
- Never use leading questions, ask open questions and listen carefully to what the young person has to say and take it seriously. Act at all times as though you believe what is being said - it is not the responsibility of Interactions SLT representatives to investigate or validate safeguarding concerns but to gather information and refer this on to appropriate parties.
- Always explain to children and young people that any information they have given will have to be shared with others, if it indicates that they or anyone else are at risk of harm.
- If the concern arises during work in a school/nursery, then notify the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for the setting. If the concern arises during work with an Interactions SLT family at home, then notify the Interactions SLT Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).
- Record what was said or what you observed as soon as possible and ensure it is signed and dated. If working in school, ask if they have their own proforma they would like you to

complete. Otherwise use the Interactions SLT Safeguarding Concern proforma. Provide a copy to school if concern arose in school, and a copy to the Interactions DSO if the concern arose in relation to a client at their home.

- Record briefly in the child's notes that a concern form has been completed and who it was given to. Create a tag on the record 'SGA' (safeguarding active) to allow safeguarding cases to be tracked and followed up.
- Follow up on any concerns that you have reported to ensure they have been acted upon and that you are satisfied that the welfare of the child concerned is being protected – write a brief note in the child's electronic record to document your follow up.
- The Interactions DSO will upload any concern forms given to them to the child's electronic record.
- For school clients, concern forms should be held and followed up on by school according to their own safeguarding policies and procedures. If the Interactions representative is not satisfied with the school's handling of a concern, they should contact the Interactions DSO for further advice.
- If you have followed up on a concern and are satisfied that the child's welfare has been protected, document this in the child's electronic record and delete the 'SGA' tag.

Responsibilities of the Interactions Designated Safeguarding Officer:

- The DSO should take immediate action if there is a suspicion that a child is in immediate danger. In this situation the DSO should contact the police and/or the Duty and Advice Team.
- When the child is not thought to be in immediate danger, it is the DSO's responsibility to guide the reporter through the necessary steps.
- The DSO should contact the Duty and Advice Team if there are significant concerns (or advise the reporter to do so), who will advise on next steps and/or indicate if referral to Children & Young people's Social Care is required.
- Parents / carers will need to be informed of a referral to Children & Young people's Social Care unless to do so would place the child at an increased risk of harm.
- The DSO will complete quarterly checks of the safeguarding caseload to ensure concerns are followed up.

v. SAFEGUARDING TRAINING and SUPERVISION

- All representatives of Interactions SLT will undertake appropriate safeguarding training (e.g. provided by Leeds Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)) at least once every 3 years and will be responsible for providing evidence of that training.
- Supervision will be provided once per school term to all Interactions representatives.
- Representatives may make external supervision arrangements with an independent supervisor at their own cost if they wish.
- All representatives will be aware of the Interactions DSO and how to contact them (see below).
- Staff are encouraged to call the DSO, and failing that the Duty and Advice Team if they are at all unsure about how to respond to a situation that is causing concern.

vi. MANAGING ALLEGATIONS

- Any allegation against an Interactions SLT representative should be reported immediately to the DSO or deputy DSO.
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should also be informed within one working day of all allegations that come to an employer's attention or that are made directly to the police. The LADO is appointed by the Local Authority and works within Children's Services. They manage 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
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child, or
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he may pose a risk to children. (Working Together 2015)
- Once an allegation has been reported to the LADO, Local Authority procedures will be followed (details available on LSCB website).
- All duties will be suspended until the outcome of the procedure has determined that the person in question poses no risk and can return to their duties.
- In circumstances where the person is found to pose a risk of harm to service users, they will be removed from work on a permanent basis and a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service will be made.

vii. ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

We will protect the welfare of children and young people by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them
- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)
- Outlining a safeguarding procedure for staff, students and volunteers
- Ensuring all staff, students and volunteers hold a valid Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate
- Ensuring all staff, students and volunteers have accessed appropriate safeguarding training and supervision
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely (see separate Information Governance policy and procedure).
- Following Leeds Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) local protocols
- Following West Yorkshire Consortium Safeguarding Children Board regional protocols
- Staying up to date with information and changes to local protocols through the LSCB e-bulletin.
- Reviewing and updating our safeguarding policy at least every 3 years.

viii. CONTACT DETAILS

Interactions Designated Safeguarding Officer: Anna Lees
Tel: 07513 234 257
Email: anna@interactionspeechtherapy.co.uk

Children's Services Duty and Advice Team:

During office hours
(Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm) Tel: 0113 376 0336

Out of office hours
(Children's Emergency Duty Team) Tel: 0113 376 0469
Email: childrensedt@leeds.gov.uk

Local Authority Designated Officer:
(Monday to Friday) Tel: 0113 3789687