

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY STATEMENT

Purpose and scope

Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Service (NDAS) is a charitable organisation working in Northamptonshire, dedicated to helping and supporting the victims of domestic abuse.

NDAS takes seriously its obligations in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To protect children and young people (under 18 years of age) who receive NDAS's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.
- To provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of NDAS, including senior managers and the Board of Trustees, paid staff, volunteers, agency staff and students.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available here: [Child protection system for England | NSPCC Learning](#)

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 provides statutory guidance on multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children. The guidance also includes the definition of abuse and neglect.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>. A web browser and mobile device compatible version is also available here: <http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/>

Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) is a statutory multi-agency partnership lead by three strategic leads as stipulated in Working Together 2023. As an agency working within Northamptonshire, NDAS follows the policies, procedures and guidelines of the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership:

<http://www.northamptonshirescb.org.uk/>.

Policy Statement

NDAS believes that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind.
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

NDAS recognises that:

- The welfare of children is paramount in all the work that we do and in all the decisions we take.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.

- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Children who come into our service are now recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. Their previous experience may make them more vulnerable to abuse and extra safeguards may be needed in order to keep them safe.

NDAS will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them.
- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Lead, a Deputy and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently.
- recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance.
- sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions.
- making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern.
- using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately.
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise.
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.
- building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

Contact details

Designated Safeguarding Lead

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We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

Reviewed:	April 2025
Next Review:	July 2025
Signed: Rachel Duncan, CEO	

SAFEGUARDING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Responding to concerns about a child's welfare

Everyone working for NDAS has a responsibility to report their concerns to ensure all children and young people are safe. If you are concerned that a child is suffering harm or is likely to suffer harm from another person you have a responsibility to protect the child by **reporting your concern to the DSO immediately**.

If there is an immediate and serious threat to the child/ren, support worker should consider use of 999.

General

- If a child discloses abuse, staff must always refer to MASH. Upon disclosure the child/ren should always be believed and reassured that they are not in trouble for speaking out. The child should also be assured that although certain individuals must be told in order to help the child, the information will not become common knowledge.
- In order to respect confidentiality, teenagers who disclose should be encouraged to tell their parent/carer, with the support of a worker. If the parent/carer is the abuser staff will make a referral on the young person's behalf without informing the parent/carer if the young person so wishes.
- If a child/ren discloses or child abuse is suspected and the child/ren are no longer at risk because they are living in the refuge or are away from the alleged abuser staff must still refer to outside agencies. This will enable the child/ren and the parent/carer to receive the necessary support and would also help protect a child that may at some point be taken back to the abusive environment.
- The parent/carer of the child/ren involved should be informed of the decision before the referral is made. Only in exceptional circumstances should the parent/carer be informed after the referral has been made. An exceptional circumstance would mean that staff had good reason to believe the child/ren would be at greater risk if staff informed the parent/carer of their decision to refer before the appropriate agency contacted them.
- If it is suspected or apparent that the parent/carer is the abuser, external advice and support must be sought immediately.
- NDAS recognises that both the child and parent will require support during the process of a referral being made.
- *If support is required the Operations Manager will designate a member of staff to provide this support and will work with the staff member to resolve the situation in the refuge, unless sexual or other severe abuse is involved. In all cases of abuse, NDAS will, in their capacity to protect the child, report their concerns to MASH*

In all cases the decision to make a referral to MASH must be discussed with your DSO or your line manager in the absence of the DSO.

Refuge specific

- *If another service user has reported the abuse, staff must maintain confidentiality by not discussing the case further with the person reporting it. If staff do not have any additional concerns and there is no clear evidence to support the allegation, staff should advise the service user to report the concerns themselves to MASH.*
- ***If a child/ren is abused by another adult resident, the child in accordance with their age and maturity and the parent/carer of the child will be advised of the options available to them and possible courses of action that they may take. The support worker has a duty of care to report this to MASH or Police depending on the severity of abuse and threat of immediate danger to the child/ren***
- If in refuge, the Support Worker in collaboration with senior management will decide whether the behaviour of the abuser warrants eviction or a move to other accommodation managed by NDAS.
- ***When informing a parent/carer of a decision to refer to external agencies, the support worker after consulting with the DSO, should make them aware***
- If a client leaves a refuge and a referral has been made (or decision to refer is made) to outside agencies staff will encourage them to inform Social Care & Health of their decision to move on. In any case as part of the

case closure procedure the appropriate Support Worker will inform Social Care & Health of the client's departure from refuge and, if known, the forwarding address.

- If the child/ren are old enough to understand, they must be informed of other options available to them so that they do not have to return to an abusive situation.

Recording and Storing child safeguarding records

If concerns are raised about a child or young persons welfare or safety, all relevant details **MUST** be recorded. This should be done regardless of whether the concerns meet threshold to be shared with statutory agencies.

An accurate record should be kept of:

- the date and time of the incident/disclosure
- the date and time of the report
- the name and role of the person to whom the concern was originally reported and their contact details
- the name and role of the person making the report (if this is different to the above) and their contact details
- the names of all parties who were involved in the incident, including any witnesses
- the name, age and any other relevant information about the child who is the subject of the concern (including information about their parents or carers and any siblings) what was said or done and by whom
- any action taken to investigate the matter
- any further action taken (such as a referral being made)
- the reasons why NDAS decided not to refer those concerns to a statutory agency (if relevant)

Reports should be factual, and any interpretation or inference drawn from what was observed, said or alleged should be clearly reported as such.

All further action taken, including the contents of phone calls, letters, and conversations in relation to this policy **must** be carefully and accurately recorded.

All information and records will be stored securely in accordance with NDAS Data Protection and Retention Policy.

Safer Recruitment

NDAS have in place a Safer Recruitment Policy which forms an essential part of the charity's efforts to safeguard children and young people. Recruitment and the checks that are undertaken as part of this process are the organisation's first chance to make robust efforts to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Managing concerns about or allegations made against staff or volunteers

If concerns are raised or an allegation is made about a member of staff or a volunteer, then the DSO and Chief Executive must be consulted immediately. They will ensure that the allegations against staff procedure will be followed which can be found here:

http://www.proceduresonline.com/northamptonshire/scb/p_alleg_against_staff.html

If a worker or volunteer abuses a child resident in the refuge then the relevant disciplinary procedures will be used and the Police and Social Services will be informed immediately.

Managing concerns about or allegations made against a child or young person

If it becomes apparent or is suspected that a child living in the refuge has abused another child also resident in the refuge, members of staff will talk to the parents/carers of all the children involved before referring to outside agencies. It may also be appropriate in this situation to move one or both families involved to other accommodation.

How NDAS will support parents who are finding it difficult to cope with their child/children both in refuge and within the community

NDAS recognises that families may bring their children up differently, and it is important to be sensitive and tolerant of customs and views which may be held by service users, while at the same time making clear what is acceptable behaviour and what is not.

NDAS acknowledges that living in a refuge can present additional challenges and this may impact on a child's behaviour. Staff members will work closely with parents in refuge through their Individual Support Plan to assist them in developing appropriate parenting skills and responses. This will include giving parents practical and emotional support, as well as providing information about support from other agencies (for both them and their child/children).

NDAS will offer training and information sessions about positive parenting, including alternative ways to manage children's behaviour in a non-threatening way. Support Workers will also offer additional support to children and young people by referring them to partner agencies or other team members who can focus on helping them cope better.

Reviewed:	May 2024
Next Review:	May 2025
Signed: Rachel Duncan, CEO	