

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

1. Policy Statement.

Gympanzees is committed to safeguarding all those who use its services. 'Safeguarding' is a term broader than 'Child Protection' and relates to the action taken to promote the welfare of children as well as protecting them from harm. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and includes:

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

This policy and these procedures are guided by all British legislation and legal guidance (Appendix A.) that enshrines children's welfare rights and complies with best practice. It recognizes that the welfare and interests of the children are paramount in all circumstances. For the purpose of this document 'children' are aged 0-25 years.

Gympanzees aims to ensure that regardless of age, gender, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or socio-economic background, all those using its services:

- Have a positive and enjoyable experience in a safe and child centred environment
- Are protected from abuse whilst participating in the activity or outside of the activity.

As part of this policy Gympanzees will:

- Promote and prioritize the safety and well being of its children.
- Ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities in this regard.
- Ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns and provide support to the individual/s who raise or disclose a concern
- Ensure that confidential, detailed, contemporaneous and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- Prevent the employment/engagement of unsuitable individuals.

Compliance with this policy and these procedures is mandatory for all those involved with Gympanzees. Failure to comply will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from this organization.

2. What is child abuse?

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Many factors can make a disabled child more vulnerable to abuse than their non-disabled peers. Some of the reasons may be:

- They have fewer outside contacts than other children.
- They receive intimate care from a number of carers, increasing the risk of exposure to abuse and making it difficult to set physical boundaries.
- They may have impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse
- They may be inhibited about raising concerns for fear of losing services.
- Carers may lack the ability to communicate adequately with the child.
- Some adult abusers may target disabled children in the belief that they are less likely to be detected.



Child abuse has 4 broad types, physical, sexual, emotional and neglect, though they are not mutually exclusive and are not easily recognized.

1. **Physical**- hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning or biting. Giving children drugs and alcohol is also abusive. Force feeding, rough handling and unjustifiable physical restraint is also abusive.
2. **Sexual**- where children are encouraged or forced to observe or participate in any form of sexual activity. This may involve physical contact, assault or touching or non-contact activities such as watching pornographic material or encouraging them to behave in a sexual way.
3. **Emotional**- persistent emotional maltreatment of a child causing severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve
 - conveying to the child that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of the other person.
 - Imposing developmentally inappropriate expectations on the child. This can be interactions above their age, or overprotection and preventing the child from normal social integration.
 - Seeing or hearing ill-treatment of another i.e. domestic violence or abuse.
4. **Neglect**-persistent failure to meet the child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to cause serious impairment of the child's health and development. This includes inadequate supervision.

No single professional can have a full picture of any child's needs or circumstances, so all those who come into contact with the child have a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action and so fulfil the purpose of safeguarding legislation. The arrangements should also have a child-centred approach, whereby effective services are based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of the children.

Recognizing abuse:

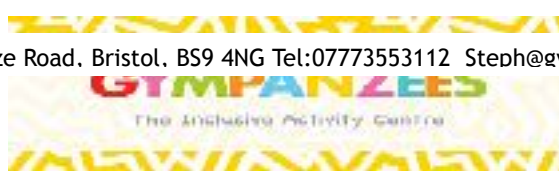
Recognizing abuse is important in safeguarding children. Often it is signs but it can be behaviour changes that raise the concern i.e.

- Becoming aggressive/withdrawn/clingy
- Seeming to keep a secret
- Deterioration in general well being
- Unexplained bruising, marks or poor personal hygiene
- Unreasonable fear of certain places or people
- Acting out inappropriately with adults, other children, toys or objects.
- Sexually explicit language or actions

Not all concerns relate to abuse, they may well be other explanations e.g. family breakup.

A Safeguarding Children Board Serious Case Review (2006) of situations involving disabled children found the following themes:

- An under-reporting of disabled children in the safeguarding system
- A lack of safeguarding knowledge in staff working with disabled children
- The staff's need for training and access to advice from colleagues with safeguarding experience.
- The tendency for indicators of abuse to be explained as a function of the disability.
- Practitioners have difficulty in focussing on the child's needs separately from those of the parent/carer.
- Staff can over identify with the parents/carers and so are reluctant to accept that abuse is taking place. It is seen as attributable to the stress and difficulties of caring for the disabled child.
- The general problems encountered in recognizing and acting on neglect are compounded when the child is disabled.



Children with disabilities are children first and foremost, and have the same rights to protection as any other child. Gympanzees will keep them safe by:

- Acknowledging that the welfare of the child is paramount.
- Affirming that all children have the right to protection regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexual orientation.
- Value them, listen to them and respect them.
- Recognize that some disabled children may have speech and language issues that make it difficult for them to tell others what is happening.
- All staff and volunteers will be recruited by following our safe recruiting guidelines and ensure all necessary checks (including Disclosure and Barring Service) are made.
- Share information about child protection and good practice with children, parents/carers, staff and volunteers.
- Share information with relevant agencies and involve parents and children appropriately.
- Provide effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

3. What to do if abuse is suspected or disclosed.

If abuse is disclosed, the recipient must stay calm, listen and reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling and will not ask leading questions. Be honest with the child about who you will need to talk to in order to keep them safe.

It is not the role of volunteers or staff at Gympanzees to investigate the allegation of abuse, and so decide whether or not it has taken place, but it is their responsibility to act on the disclosure. It must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) (Elizabeth Scholey) or her deputy (Stephanie Wheen).

If abuse is disclosed, the safeguarding officer will contact First Response and discuss the situation with them and act on their advice.

If abuse is suspected, the DSO will discuss the concerns and seek guidance from First Response before actual reporting any child protection issues.

In all situations the parents/carers will be informed, unless to do so would put the child in danger.

Confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

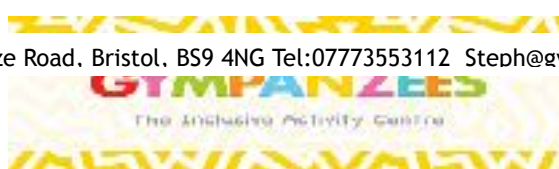
4. Alleged abuse by staff or volunteers.

Gympanzees does not believe that it is in anyone's interests for staff or volunteers with knowledge of wrongdoing to remain silent. It will take any reports of wrongdoing seriously and will support those who report the concerns as well as those about whom the allegation is made.

An allegation or concern must be taken to the DSO or deputy DSO. If it concerns either of these people it will taken directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

5. Record Keeping.

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Any person receiving disclosure or having safeguarding concerns must make an accurate record as soon as possible, noting what has been said or seen, putting the event in context and giving the date, time and location. These records must be signed and dated. Any decisions made about this event will be recorded along with the reasons for making those decisions.

All hand written records will be retained even if they are later typed for more formal reporting. All written records of concerns must be stored even if there was no immediate onward referral as advised by First Response.

All records will be stored in a secure space and will remain confidential.

7. Training.

All staff, volunteers and trustees of Gympanzees will be made aware of this policy and asked if they have read and understood it. They will be signposted to training and training materials e.g. NSPCC Child Protection Course: an online introductory module in safeguarding for anyone working with children.

8. Review.

Gympanzees is committed to review this policy annually or in response to any changes in legislation or after any significant event within our organization.

Useful Contacts:

1. DSO: Elizabeth Scholey. Tel 07773 132748. email:liz.scholey@hotmail.com
2. Deputy DSO: Stephanie Wheen. Tel 07773 553112. Email:steph@gympanzees.org
3. First Response: 0117 903 6444. For advice re concerns/allegations
4. LADO: 0117 903 7795 or 07795 091020. For staff/volunteer allegation
5. NSPCC 24 hr helpline: 0800 800 5000
6. Childline: 0800 1111 (open 24 hrs)
7. South West Child Protection Procedures (online guidance) www.swcpp.org.uk
8. Bristol Safeguarding Children Board (training) 0117 353 2505

E.S.Scholey 12.11.2017

Appendix A. - Legislation and Legal Guidance

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: Ratified in the UK in 1991

Provided a child centred framework for the development of children's services, recognizing their right to expression and reception of information.

Children's Act 1989

Provides the legislative framework for Child Protection in England. It's key principals are:

- The paramount nature of the child's welfare.
- The expectations and requirements around duties of care to children.

Adoption and Children's Act 2002.

Extended 'harm' to include witnessing domestic violence

Children's Act 2004.

Strengthened the 1989 act by:

- Created the Children's Commissioner for England

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- Increased the duties of local authorities to promote children's welfare
- Updated legislation on physical punishment whereby Actual Bodily Harm was no longer considered reasonable punishment.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

Created a body making 'barring' decisions about individuals working with children.

Protection of Freedoms Act 2017.

Merged the Independent Safeguarding Authority with Criminal Records Bureau to create the single public body, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Equality Act 2010

Puts a responsibility on public authorities to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. No child shall be treated less favourably than any other.

Children and Families Act 2014

Replace Special Educational Needs assessments with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans for children, young people and families from birth to 25 years.

Digital Economy Act 2017.

Make it a requirement of online pornography sites to prevent access by under 18's. It also requires online services to block extreme pornography.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015.

Created a set of procedures to deal with concerns from agencies and professionals who are:

- Alert to potential indicators of abuse.
- Alert to the risks abusers may pose to children.
- Share and analyse information to aid the assessment of the child's need.
- Take part in taking actions and reviewing outcomes for the child.
- Work co-operatively with parents, unless that is inconsistent with ensuring the child's safety