

# Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

**Title of Policy:** **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

- Purpose of Policy:**
- a) To protect children and young people whether or not they either directly or indirectly use Relate services.
  - b) To lay out Relate's commitment to child protection and safeguarding children and young people and the overarching principles which guide it.
  - c) To give confidence to clients, everyone involved in delivering services for Relate, and other stakeholders, in what to do if they feel there may be something which could affect the safety and welfare of a child or children.
  - d) To outline a proactive approach which ensures this policy is made real.
- Type of Policy:** This is a corporate policy – i.e. it applies across all areas of Relate activity. It supports the implementation of a legal duty and to ensure best practice.
- Who is this policy for:** All staff and volunteers, regardless of their role within Relate;  
Partner organisations to Relate;  
Clients (past, present and future) of Relate services;  
Children and young people under the age of 18 who may or may not come into contact, either directly or indirectly with Relate services.
- Date policy approved:** 08.06.17
- Review Date:** This policy will be reviewed annually and whenever there are changes in legislation or when new guidance is issued.
- This policy replaces:** This replaces a version revised in March 2016.
- This policy should be read alongside:** Relate policies on: whistleblowing; equality and diversity; adult safeguarding; confidentiality; data protection; use of social media; safer recruitment; information sharing; supervision; disclosure and barring; lone working.
- Lead Director:** Ben Collins, Director of Services
- Policy Lead / Author:** Dee Holmes, Relate National Safeguarding Officer

### Key principles

- We understand, that as a provider of relationship support, **we will come across things which affect the welfare and safety of children and young people;**
- **We also understand that we may often be the first agency to become aware of these issues. As such we take our duty to act on these concerns extremely seriously;**
- **We recognise that the welfare of the child is paramount,** as enshrined in the Children Act 1989;
- **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility:** for services to be effective, every person involved in Relate should play their full part;
- **We will take a child-centred approach:** for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children;
- **We will ensure that our approach is child centred** in terms of language and style;
- For our approach to be truly effective, **working together with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies, is essential;**
- **All concerns are shared as soon as practicably possible with an appropriate senior member of staff,** and recorded and dealt with appropriately;
- For our approach to be truly effective, **we must always seek to support an open, transparent and supportive culture.**

### Relevant legislation and guidance

This policy is based on law as they apply in England and Wales, and guidance which aims to protect children, in particular:

- Children Act 1989;
- Children Act 2004;
- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006;
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Sexual Offences Act 2004;
- Data Protection Act 1998;
- Information Sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers. HM Government 2015;
- Working together to safeguarding children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. HM Government 2015;
- Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act (2014);
- All Wales Child Protection Procedures;

There are links to more detailed guidance on each of these within the attached implementation checklist.

## Equality statement

In our approach to keeping children and young people safe, we will make sure that all children and young people have the same protection regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity. We understand that for any of these considerations, we may need to tailor our approach accordingly.

## Our approach

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

1. At the local level, Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and their equivalent in Wales coordinate, and ensure the effectiveness of, work to protect and promote the welfare of children. Each local board includes local authorities, health bodies, the police and others, including the voluntary and independent sectors. The LSCBs are responsible for local child protection policy, procedure and guidance.
2. As such, in all instances of concern regarding the safety of a child or young person, every effort should be made to work alongside Local Safeguarding Children Boards or their equivalent in Wales wherever possible.
3. In order to reflect statutory guidance on safeguarding children and young people, Relate will have arrangements in place which address the following areas:
  - a. A clear line of accountability designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
  - b. A designated Board member to take leadership responsibility for the organisation's safeguarding arrangements.
  - c. A culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and the development of services.
  - d. Clear whistleblowing procedures.
  - e. Arrangements which set out clearly the processes for sharing information, with other professionals and with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

- f. A designated safeguarding lead to support staff working across Relate to recognise the needs of children, including rescue from possible abuse or neglect. This role is specifically defined in their job description. They will be given sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their child welfare and safeguarding responsibilities effectively.
  - g. Safe recruitment practices for individuals we permit to work regularly with children, including policies on when to obtain a criminal record check.
  - h. Appropriate supervision and support for staff, including undertaking safeguarding training.
  - i. Ensuring that our staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and creating an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role.
  - j. Giving our staff a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with child protection and young people's safeguarding responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's safety or welfare .
  - k. Regularly review all staff practice to ensure they improve over time.
  - l. Have clear policies in line with those from the LSCB for dealing with allegations against people who work with children. Such policies should make a clear distinction between an allegation, a concern about the quality of care or practice or a complaint. An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:
    - behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
    - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
    - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
4. In order to ensure this policy is properly implemented we will have an associated action plan for use across the organisation and reviewed at regular intervals.