



Forging Futures CIO Safeguarding Policy

Forging Futures CIO provides training opportunities and supported employment services for young people and adults with learning disabilities, and/or who are neurodivergent aged 14 – 30.

The purpose of this policy:

- is to protect from harm the young people and adults at risk who receive training and services through Forging Futures
- to provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk
- to provide staff and volunteers with guidance on specific procedures they should follow in response to concerns

Forging Futures believes the safety and well-being of any child, young person or adult at risk to be of the utmost importance and that they have a fundamental and equal right to live free from abuse or neglect regardless of age, ability or disability, race, religion or belief, ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital or gender status.

Forging Futures is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment and an open, listening culture that engages in dialogue with children, young people and adults at risk seeking their views in ways that are appropriate to their age, culture and understanding.

Forging Futures acknowledges that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and is committed to prevent abuse and neglect through safeguarding the welfare of all the children, young people adults at risk involved in our services.

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and adults at risk in England. Including but not limited to:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Care Act 2014 (which provides the statutory framework for safeguarding adults at risk)

(A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from nspcc.org.uk/childprotection and scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction.)

We fully recognise our statutory responsibility for safeguarding: the safety, protection and well-being of all children, young people and adults at risk that Forging Futures supports and interacts with. Safeguarding is paramount and has priority over all other interests.

This policy applies to anyone representing Forging Futures including the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, agency staff, contractors, work placement providers, students and staff from our partner schools, students undertaking work experience or training.

Forging Futures seeks to keep children, young people and adults at risk safe by:

- Valuing them, listening to them and respecting them
- Adopting safeguarding best practice through our policies procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers, covering both children and adults at risk
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring robust safeguarding checks are undertaken
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with staff, volunteers, trainees and partner organisations
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, in line with statutory guidance and involving family members or carers as appropriate
- 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
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations or concerns about staff, volunteers or others appropriately and in line with statutory guidance
- Appointing a nominated designated Safeguarding lead, deputy Safeguarding lead and a lead Trustee for Safeguarding
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing procedures in place
- Ensuring that we provided a safe physical environment for children, young people, adults at risk, staff and volunteers by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- Building a safeguarding culture where staff, volunteers, children, young people, adults at risk and our partner schools and organisations treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

Information-sharing

Forging Futures recognises that effective safeguarding depends on appropriate and timely information-sharing. While we respect the rights of individuals and will seek consent where possible, information may be shared without consent if there is a safeguarding concern, if seeking consent would place a child, young person or adult at risk at further risk, or if it is required by law. All information-sharing will be in line with the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK GDPR, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), and the Care Act 2014 statutory guidance.

*We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice regularly and formally annually.
The policy was last reviewed on: 01.09.25*

Forging Futures Safeguarding Responsibilities

All adults, professionals, staff, and volunteers working for or on behalf of Forging Futures and including students themselves, have a responsibility to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk who access our training and work placement offers as well as to promote their welfare.

Forging Futures adheres to current recommendations which requires the appointment of staff members to the role of designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy safeguarding lead (DDSL). These staff will act on the behalf of Forging Futures in responding to allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse and will make referrals to the statutory authorities.

The expectations of DSL/DDSL are to:

- Ensure the policy is implemented, updated as needed and approved by the trustees
- Ensure all staff/ volunteers remain aware of safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Provide advice/support and training to staff/ volunteers
- Take appropriate action following any expression of concern, disclosure or reported incident and make referrals to the appropriate statutory agency.

Trustee Responsibilities

Trustees have overall accountability for safeguarding within Forging Futures. They must ensure that:

- The DSL and DDSL undergo regular training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are reviewed and approved at least annually
- Safeguarding is embedded across all organisational activities
- Safer recruitment practices are followed in line with the Forging Futures Safer Recruitment Policy to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children, young people or adults at risk

Staff and Volunteer Responsibilities

- Any new member of staff or volunteer working for Forging Futures will be taken through this safeguarding policy and procedures as part of the induction process.
- All staff and volunteers will participate in timely and relevant training appropriate to their role, including both children's safeguarding (e.g. Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership basic training) and adults at risk safeguarding under the Care Act 2014)
- Safeguarding training will be refreshed at least every 2 years, with additional updates as needed
- All staff have a duty to ensure that any suspected incident, allegation or safeguarding concern relating to child, young person or adult at risk is reported using the procedures detailed in this policy.
- If in any doubt about what action to take, employees must seek advice from one of the named Safeguarding Leads or in their absence, the Board of Trustees.

General safeguarding advice

- Always maintain a professional manner when working with children, young people or adults at risk. Do not become their 'friend' – maintain clear boundaries.
- Do not accept a child, young person or adult at risk as a friend on any social networking site that you use.
- Always keep a record of any text or email exchanges with a child, young person or adult at risk
- Always be aware that your comments or actions may be perceived differently than intended, please always be aware and sensitive to this.
- Avoid one-to-one meetings in private or secluded locations. Where it is necessary to meet an adult at risk, ensure the meeting is held in a public, open space (e.g., shops, cafes, or other visible areas) and follow the Lone Worker Policy at all times. Staff do not meet children or young people one-to-one.
- Avoid detailed discussions about your personal experiences or sensitive topics eg. Alcohol, relationships etc
- Never speak to the press about a child, young person or adult at risk.

Responding to a disclosure or a concern

When a member of staff observes or is informed of a concern that is not an immediate risk, does not need urgent medical attention, and does not involve a criminal act, then a report must be made using the concern form and a phone call should be made to the DSL or DDSL.

In a safeguarding context it is essential that children, young people and adults at risk are listened to and taken seriously. If a child, young person or adult at risk (either as a victim or as a third party) discloses to a member of staff, they must not be promised that the matter will be kept confidential. Instead, the staff member should explain that, depending on what is said, information may need to be shared with the DSL and/or other relevant statutory agencies. The individual should be reassured that the matter will be dealt with as confidentially as possible by caring, experienced people whose role is to act in their best interests.

Guidance

While it is not easy to give precise guidance, the following should act as a guide if a child, young person or adult at risk makes a disclosure:

- Accept what is said (it is not your responsibility to decide if it is true)
- Keep calm
- Show you care – give your full attention
- Reassure the person that they are right to tell, and that their feelings are important – acknowledge their courage, but do not promise ‘everything will be alright’ as outcomes cannot be guaranteed
- Let them know you will need to tell someone else. Children, young people, and adults at risk must never be promised secrecy and should be assured that information will only be shared with key people who can help keep them safe
- Take the time needed – respect pauses and don’t interrupt, let them go at their own pace
- Where necessary, clarify what has been said to you by repeating their words back to them
- Do not make value judgements about the situation or the people involved
- Do not ask leading questions or press for details – this may affect later investigations

Recording Concerns

- Make detailed notes as soon as possible – preferably within one hour – and contact the DSL or DDSL
- Records/reports must be completed on the same day of the incident or concern, before leaving the workplace
- Any handwritten notes must be signed and dated by the staff/volunteer recording them and given to the DSL/DDSL for secure storage
- Individual staff should not take photographs of any injuries on personal devices. If it is safe and appropriate to view injuries, a clear written description should be included in the report
- Records/reports must be respectful, factual, clear and concise with no subjective content, value judgements or personal interpretations
- The actual words used by the child, young person or adult at risk should be reported directly
- Important information such as dates, times, names and roles of those involved, and the location of incidents should be included if known

- Include a description of what was happening immediately before the disclosure
- Do not discuss your concerns with other staff, volunteers or anyone other than the DSL or DDSL
- It is the responsibility of the DSL or DDSL to ensure any relevant statutory or partner agencies are made aware of the disclosure and of the action taken, in line with information-sharing guidance, the **Data Protection Act 2018** and **UK GDPR**

Responding to a Disclosure – Step-by-Step Guide

1. Receive the Disclosure / Observe Concern

- Stay calm and listen carefully.
- Do not make value judgments or promise confidentiality.
- Reassure the individual that you will take the matter seriously and explain that information may need to be shared.

2. Record the Concern Immediately

- Use the official concern form.
- Include dates, times, names, roles, location, activity before disclosure, and the exact words used by the child, young person, or adult at risk.
- Sign and date all handwritten notes and pass them to the DSL/DDSL.

3. Report to DSL or DDSL

- Make a phone call or in-person report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL (DDSL) as soon as possible.
- Do not discuss the concern with other staff or volunteers.

4. DSL/DDSL Actions

- Assess the situation and determine whether a referral to statutory authorities is required (Children's Social Care, Adult Safeguarding Team, or police if a criminal act is suspected).
- Keep secure records of all actions and communications.

5. Follow-Up and Support

- Ensure the child, young person, or adult at risk is supported appropriately.
- Inform relevant partner agencies or family members only when appropriate and in line with information-sharing guidance.
- Monitor the situation to ensure actions have been completed and the individual remains safe.

ALLEGATIONS MADE AGAINST STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

When any form of complaint is made against an employee or volunteer, it must be taken seriously. Complaints may relate to harm or risk of harm to children, young people or adults at risk.

The complaint should initially be dealt with by the most senior staff member on site at the time the complaint is made. If the complaint is against the most senior member of staff on site, then the DSL or Chair of Trustees must be informed immediately.

The senior staff member must report the complaint immediately to the DSL providing full details of the circumstances. The DSL may contact the Local Authority Designated Office for allegations concerning children or the Safeguarding Adults Team for allegations involving adults at risk. Further information can be found here:

The DSL or trustees may suspend the person involved from duty and/or the premises while a full investigation is undertaken. Suspension is a precautionary measure *does not imply in any way that the person suspended is responsible or is to blame for any action leading up to the complaint. The purpose of any such suspension is to enable a full and proper investigation to be carried out in a professional manner.*

It is the responsibility of the DSL or Board of Trustees to decide whether to inform Social Services and/or the Police, depending on the nature of the allegation.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND WHISTLE BLOWING

Forging Futures operates a confidentiality policy. However, information raising concern about the safety or welfare of a child, young person, or adult at risk will never be kept confidential.

Staff or volunteers with concerns about anyone providing services to children, young people, or adults at risk should report this initially to Robyn McDonald, or if appropriate to the DSL or a Trustee. They will be fully supported throughout the process.

All staff have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies to safeguard children, young people, and adults at risk, in line with HM Government's Information Sharing Guidance, the Children's Trust, and the SSCP.

Legal protection: The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects staff who raise safeguarding concerns in good faith. Staff should also follow the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR; these laws are not a barrier to sharing information when failure to do so would place a child, young person, or adult at risk of harm.

SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY STATEMENT

Forging Futures is committed to ensuring that all staff, volunteers, and anyone working on our behalf are suitable to work with children, young people, and adults at risk. We follow robust safer recruitment practices, including identity verification, reference checks, and disclosure and barring checks (DBS) where required by law.

Our Safer Recruitment Policy sets out the full procedures and standards to prevent unsuitable individuals from being appointed to roles where they may have contact with vulnerable groups. All staff and volunteers are expected to adhere to these procedures.

This policy, including updates listed in Appendix 3 for 2025, is approved by the Board of Trustees and will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or local guidance changes.

Appendix 1 - SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION

Indicators of Abuse or Neglect

Disclaimer: The presence of one indicator alone does not necessarily confirm abuse. Indicators should be considered in context, and any concern must be reported immediately using the safeguarding procedures outlined in this policy. Abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events. Multiple issues often overlap, and abuse can occur in family, institutional, or community settings. Abuse may also occur online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse.

1. Children, Young People, and Adults at Risk

Definition of Abuse: Abuse is the maltreatment of a child, young person, or adult at risk. It may involve inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. It can be carried out by a parent, carer, professional, peer, or another adult. Adults can also experience abuse in institutional or community settings, including neglect, physical, sexual, emotional, financial, or institutional abuse.

2. Types of Abuse and Indicators

a) Physical Abuse – Physical harm caused by hitting, shaking, burning, poisoning, drowning, suffocating, or other acts. Fabricating illness or deliberate neglect also constitutes physical abuse. Indicators (Children/Young People): injuries inconsistent with explanation, bruises, burns, fractures in unusual places, untreated injuries or illness, reluctance to participate in activities, cutting, slashing, or drug misuse. Indicators (Adults at Risk): unexplained injuries, burns, or bruises, frequent accidents or repeated medical visits, signs of restraint or improper use of medication.

b) Sexual Abuse – Forcing or enticing a person to take part in sexual activity without informed consent. May involve physical contact or non-contact activities such as grooming or online exploitation. Can be perpetrated by adults or other children. Indicators (Children/Young People): allegations of sexual abuse, age-inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour, sexualised drawings, play, or language, severe sleep disturbances or phobias, child sexual exploitation (CSE) signs. Indicators (Adults at Risk): unexplained injuries in genital areas, withdrawal, anxiety, or fear of specific individuals, inappropriate sexual behaviour or sexualised language, signs of grooming or sexual exploitation.

c) Emotional / Psychological Abuse – Persistent emotional maltreatment causing adverse effects on emotional development or mental well-being. Includes humiliation, threats, overprotection, or preventing normal social interaction. Indicators (Children/Young People): mood changes, withdrawal, depression, aggression, nervousness or hyper-vigilance, sudden underachievement or lack of concentration, inappropriate relationships with peers/adults, attention-seeking behaviour. Indicators (Adults at Risk): withdrawal, anxiety, low self-esteem, fear, agitation, or unusual dependence on carers, isolation from friends, family, or social networks, threats or intimidation.

d) Neglect – Persistent failure to meet basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of health or development. Indicators (Children/Young People): constant hunger or tiredness, poor hygiene or inappropriate clothing, untreated medical problems, running away, stealing, or scavenging. Indicators (Adults at Risk): malnutrition or dehydration, poor personal

hygiene or unkempt appearance, unsafe living conditions or lack of medical care, withdrawal from usual activities.

e) Other Forms of Adult Abuse (Adults at Risk) – Financial or Material Abuse: theft, fraud, exploitation of property or assets. Institutional Abuse: poor care practices, rigid routines, lack of dignity, lack of privacy. Discriminatory Abuse: abuse based on race, gender, disability, religion, or sexual orientation.

Note to Staff/ Volunteers: Indicators should never be interpreted in isolation. Any concerns, however minor they may seem, must be reported immediately to the DSL or DDSL following the procedures in this policy. Children, young people, and adults at risk may experience multiple types of abuse simultaneously.

Appendix 2 – Safeguarding Information

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Grooming

Definition:

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse where a child or young person is manipulated, coerced, or forced into sexual activity in exchange for something they need or want, such as attention, gifts, money, or affection. Grooming is the process used to gain a child's trust to manipulate, exploit, or abuse them, which can occur both in person and online.

Indicators (Children and Young People):

- Spending excessive time online or on social media, often in secret
- Receiving unexplained gifts, money, or favours from adults or peers
- Having older "friends" or unexplained relationships with adults
- Sudden changes in mood, behaviour, or appearance
- Missing from school, work placements, or home without explanation
- Risk-taking behaviours, self-harm, or substance misuse
- Sexualised behaviour or language beyond age-appropriate norms

Indicators (Adults at Risk in a similar context):

- Being coerced or manipulated into sexual activity
- Exploitation of trust, dependence, or vulnerability by another person
- Unexplained absences or isolation from social networks

Staff Guidance:

- Any suspicion or disclosure of CSE or grooming must be reported immediately to the DSL or DDSL.
- Staff should not attempt to investigate themselves or confront the alleged perpetrator.
- Record all relevant information factually, including dates, times, individuals involved, and observations, following the procedures in Appendix 1.
- Always act in the best interests of the child or adult at risk, maintaining confidentiality only as far as it does not prevent safeguarding.

Note: CSE and grooming can occur online as well as offline. Staff should remain vigilant about social media, messaging apps, and other digital platforms.

Appendix 3 Policy Updates – 2025

The following updates have been made to ensure this policy is fully compliant with statutory guidance, Charity Commission requirements, and Surrey safeguarding procedures:

1. Raising a Concern or Making a Referral

Staff and volunteers must follow Surrey safeguarding referral pathways:

For Children & Young People (under 18):

- Surrey Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): Tel: 0300 470 9100 | Email: cspa@surreycc.gov.uk
- Out of hours: 01483 517898

For Adults at Risk (18+):

- Surrey Adult Social Care Safeguarding Team: Tel: 0300 200 1005 | Email: ascmarsh@surreycc.gov.uk
- Out of hours: 01483 517898

Allegations Against Staff (Children's Workforce):

- Must be reported immediately to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Surrey LADO: Tel: 0300 123 1650 | Email: lmad@surreycc.gov.uk

If there is an immediate risk of harm dial 999.

2. Training & Updates

- All staff and volunteers must complete safeguarding training appropriate to their role.
- Children's safeguarding training will follow Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) standards.
- Adults safeguarding training will follow Care Act 2014 and Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) guidance.
- Full safeguarding training will be refreshed at least every 2 years.
- In addition, annual refresher sessions or updates will be provided to ensure ongoing awareness of current issues and local procedures.

3. Staff and Volunteer Handbook

This safeguarding policy must be read alongside the Forging Futures Staff and Volunteer Handbook, which sets out:

- Professional conduct and boundaries.
- Safe working practices.
- Technology and online safety guidance.

4. Online Safety

Forging Futures will:

- Provide guidance and training on safe online behaviour.
- Ensure staff and volunteers do not have private online contact with learners.
- Address online safeguarding concerns in line with Surrey SSCP/SSAB guidance.