



Safeguarding Policy

Policy information

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Why do we need this policy?

Spread a Smile is a registered charity in England and Wales (1152205) and provides entertainment and special events (both virtually and in-person) for children and young people with serious illness, and their families.

Spread a Smile is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of everyone who uses our services. We recognise that we have a responsibility to protect the welfare of children and adults and to ensure that they are protected from harm.

Who needs to follow this policy?

This policy covers all work and services carried out by us. Therefore, all Spread a Smile representatives (staff, non-salaried staff, volunteers and trustees) must follow this policy, and it is their responsibility to:

- Read and understand this policy.
- Seek guidance from the designated safeguarding team if further clarification is needed.
- Confirm that they have read, understand, and agree to follow this policy.

This policy outlines the shared responsibility we have across Spread a Smile to protecting children and adults that access our services.

What is the purpose of this policy and how will we implement it?

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- Spread a Smile has appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure that the welfare of children and adults is promoted, and that they are protected from harm.
- All Spread a Smile representatives have a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and the actions that they must take to prevent and respond to harm to self and others.

We will implement this policy by:

- Creating a culture where children and adults are valued and their right to safety and respect is upheld.
- Ensuring the safety of children and adults who interact with Spread a Smile by effectively managing risks to minimize potential harm.
- Working collaboratively with other organisations to ensure that children and adults are safeguarded and protected.
- Informing partners, beneficiaries and the general public of our approach to safeguarding and protecting children and adults.
- Providing all staff, volunteers and trustees with the overarching principles and procedures that guide our approach to safeguarding and protecting children and adults.

In doing so, we will establish a 'safe space' for all.

Creating a Safe Space

Ensuring we all feel safe

A 'Safe Space' is a place or **environment** in which a person or category of people can **feel confident** that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment or any other **emotional or physical harm**.

Creating a Safe Space 'In Real Life' (IRL)

All Spread a Smile representatives must be familiar with and agree to follow this policy. We will also ensure that:

- Key hospital partner contacts have a clear understanding of our safeguarding responsibilities and what action we will take to fulfil these.
- All volunteers read and sign our volunteer agreement.
- Anyone who accesses our services understands their responsibilities in respect of creating a safe space.

Creating a Safe Space 'in a Digital Setting' (IDS)

All digital sessions are facilitated via Zoom by a trained member of staff. A Spread a Smile Visit Manager will take responsibility for ensuring the zoom settings are appropriate for the nature of the session.

Information will be sent out prior to the session to ensure that all children and their families are aware of the steps Spread a Smile will take to create a safe space online.

We have a clear operating procedure and Visit Managers receive digital safeguarding training to ensure they are equipped to deal with any concerns that may arise during the session. All participants, their families, professionals and Spread a Smile representatives will be provided with information about what will happen in the event of a concern and how to raise any concerns that they may have.

Understanding safeguarding

Where can abuse occur?

Abuse or harm may consist of a single or repeated act and can occur anywhere, including:

- In a family home
- In residential care
- In the community, including artistic and sporting activities
- In educational and health settings
- Online

Who can abuse?

Anyone can abuse, regardless of whether they are a:

- Family member
- Child or adult
- Professional or another person in a position of responsibility
- Someone who is known to them
- Stranger

Safeguarding children

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding means:

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

Who is a 'child'?

For the purposes of this policy the definition of a 'child' or 'young person' is anyone aged under 18 years of age, as supported by legislation and guidance across the UK. This includes infants and unborn babies.

What is child abuse?

Child abuse and neglect is the maltreatment of a child in any form. The main types of child abuse are:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual (including child sexual exploitation)
- Neglect

However, there are other forms of abuse, including:

- Financial or material
- Domestic (including so-called 'honour based' violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation)
- Modern slavery
- Child trafficking
- Criminal exploitation
- Radicalisation
- Online / digital abuse

This is not an exhaustive list and there is not necessarily a clear dividing line between one type of abuse and another.

A person or persons may abuse or neglect a child either by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Child abuse includes the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others, such as being exposed to domestic abuse.

Which children might be abused?

Any child can be abused regardless of their age, gender, race, perceived abilities, sexual orientation, religion or socio-economic status. However, some children and young people are at increased risk from harm and abuse, including those who are:

- Considered to have disabilities and/or special educational needs
- Young carers
- Frequently missing from home
- Subject to familial/parental substance misuse
- Subject to mental health issues or domestic abuse
- Misusing substances themselves
- Or have been in local authority care or who are privately fostered
- Babies under the age of one

Safeguarding adults

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

Adult safeguarding is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time ensuring the adult's wellbeing is promoted including having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action.

The Care Act 2014 outlines how safeguarding duties apply to an 'adult at risk'; however, at Spread a Smile, we recognise that any adult can be vulnerable and therefore at risk of harm or abuse.

Who is an 'adult'?

For the purposes of this policy the definition of an 'adult' is anyone aged 18 years of age or over.

What is adult abuse?

Adult abuse can include:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Psychological or emotional
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Financial or material
- Domestic (including so-called 'honour based' violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation)
- Modern slavery
- Discrimination
- Organisational or institutional
- Self-neglect
- Online / digital abuse

Recognising signs of abuse

It can be very hard for children or adults to speak out about abuse. Often, they fear there may be negative consequences if they tell anyone what's happening to them. Therefore, it is vital that children and adults can speak out and that whoever they tell takes them seriously and acts on what they've been told.

However, even if a child or adult doesn't tell someone directly about what's happened to them, there may be other indicators that something is wrong. For example, Spread a Smile representatives may become aware of, or suspect, harm or abuse if they:

- Witness a potentially harmful act (for example, a child being smacked or roughly handled)
- Are told something indirectly by a child, parent or carer or someone else that leads to suspicion of harm or abuse to the child
- See suspected evidence of harm or abuse (for example, an unexplained physical injury)
- Notice a pattern of concerns over time (for example, someone regularly appearing unkempt)

On other occasions you may simply have a 'gut feeling' – it is important that you do not ignore this – instead, speak to a Visit Manager, who will pass the concerns on to a Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Roles and responsibilities

All staff and representatives

All Spread a Smile representatives (staff, volunteers and trustees) must act in accordance with the '3 R's' of safeguarding and it is their responsibility to:

- **Recognise** possible abuse by knowing what to look out for and always being vigilant, adopting an 'it could happen here' mindset.
- **Respond** immediately to possible concerns – remember, safeguarding is everybody's business.
- **Report** your concerns to the appropriate person or organisation.

Professional boundaries

It is vital that all staff maintain relationships that are strictly professional with the people who access our services. As per the employee code of conduct (See Employee Handbook), staff must not under any circumstances:

- Accept gifts or money from patients/families
- Offer gifts of any kind to patients, except for those expressly agreed with Spread a Smile prior to entertaining children
- Make promises and/or visit patients, or their families in their own home
- Invite patients or their families to visit their home
- Give out any personal contact details or social media handles to patients or their families.

We understand that working with children and families who are experiencing distress can sometimes provoke emotional responses and the desire to be as supportive and helpful as possible. However, failing to maintain relationships that are strictly professional can result in confusion and misunderstandings, and lead to children and families, as well as the people working with them, being placed in vulnerable situations.

As such, maintaining professional relationships with the people who use our services safeguards them and us (both as individuals and as an organisation).

Designated safeguarding officers / leads

Designated and lead safeguarding officers must model and promote an effective safeguarding culture within the organisation by acting in accordance with this policy. They must ensure that all staff and representatives are aware of how to prevent and respond to safeguarding concerns and ensure that staff receive relevant training and any other information / support

to assist with safeguarding. They must also work in partnership with external agencies to effectively manage referrals and share operational information with trustees.

Trustees

Trustees have primary responsibility for safeguarding in the organisation. They have a duty of care to the charity, and they must take steps to safeguard and take responsibility for the children and families with whom the charity works.

Trustees must ensure that safeguarding is a standing agenda item at trustee meetings, with discussions being recorded in meeting minutes and in line with GDPR policies. All safeguarding concerns must be shared in CEO reports.

Trustee safeguarding leads should:

- Provide a sounding board for DSLs and DSOs to consider the most appropriate course of action to take where there is a safeguarding concern
- Support the DSLs and DSOs to use local procedures appropriately (e.g. for referral or escalation)
- Ensure that appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures are in place
- Undertaking ongoing monitoring and reviewing to ensure that safeguards are being implemented and are effective
- Support DSLs and DSOs if an incident has occurred

What should I do if I have concerns about a child or adult?

If you believe there is imminent risk of harm, or if a child or adult has been injured, you should:

1. Immediately phone emergency services (**999**)
2. Follow the advice given
3. Inform a DSL or DSO

For all other concerns about a child or adult, you must contact a Visit Manager, a DSL, or a DSO immediately, and always within 24 hours.

Laura Walter Director of Services	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	07908721163 laura@spreadasmile.org
Roxane Caplan Director of Strategy and operations	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	07957 631142 roxane@spreadasmile.org
Jasmin Haldin Operations Manager	Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)	07428192886 jasmin@spreadasmile.org
Ellen Walker Head of Family Events	Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)	07428 202243 ellie@spreadasmile.org
Vanessa Crocker Co-Founder and Trustee	Trustee Safeguarding Lead	07973379063 vanessa@spreadasmile.org
Josephine Segal Co-Founder and Trustee	Trustee Safeguarding Lead	07966136078 josephine@spreadasmile.org

All staff

It is recognised that children or adults may tell Spread a Smile representatives about abuse or neglect. In these situations, it is important to remember that the primary role is to listen and not to investigate, and that you should:

- Only ask open questions (see appendices for further details)
- Respond with care and compassion
- Provide the necessary time and attention

DSLs and DSOs

DSLs and DSOs must address the concern internally or refer it to the appropriate services, depending on its nature. If further action is required, they must liaise with the relevant professionals, such as NHS staff, local authorities, and/or the police. DSLs and DSOs are also responsible for recording concerns.

All safeguarding concerns must be safely and securely recorded on monday.com in line with GDPR policies.

Appendices

Our commitment to safeguarding

At Spread a Smile the voice of the child is paramount. We model the principles of The Care Act (1989 & 2004) and The UN Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights. By ensuring that all children who encounter our organisation understand the following principles:

- All children have the right not to be harmed
- All children have the right to be listened to
- All children have the right to get help

The Equalities Act 2010 sets out clearly that everyone has the right to be protected from harm.

Safeguarding means protecting the rights of children, young people, and adults from abuse, neglect, and maltreatment, and enabling them to live in safety. To safeguard is to ensure that children and young people grow up with the provision of safe and effective care, and to advocate and take action to enable them to have the best outcomes.

Our Safeguarding commitment isn't just to the children with whom we may come into contact but also their families, professionals that we work with, the wider community and all individuals that represent Spread a Smile.

Whether in person or via 'digital delivery' we endeavour to create a 'Safe Space'. A Safe Space is **an environment where all individuals feel safe** from physical and emotional harm and if that feeling of safety is changed there is a mechanism for them to raise any concerns that will be listened to and appropriate action taken.

We ensure that we adopted the 6 principles outlined in the Care Act 2014:

- Empowerment
- Prevention
- Promotion
- Protection
- Partnership
- Accountability

By being alert, responsive and with an open mindset of 'it could happen here' we model behaviours that aim to promote safeguarding best practice.

Asking open questions

It is not your responsibility to investigate or verify concerns of harm or abuse. However, you may need to ask questions to clarify the information you have been given (e.g. “you’ve told me that you’re hungry because you haven’t had any breakfast today or tea last night, have I understood that right?”; or “I can see you have a bruise on your leg, how did you get that?”).

However, any questions should be limited to ensuring you have understood. Asking further questions, specifically asking leading questions (e.g. “did your brother do this?”; or “Did someone hurt you?”) can seriously impact any subsequent investigation or legal action.

Supporting documents

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents:

- Employee handbook
- Safeguarding flowchart
- Safer recruitment process
- DSL and DSO role description
- Social media policy
- Complaints policy and procedure
- User guide agreement
- Virtual safety policy
- Managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- Photography and sharing images guidance
- Managing complaints