

Refugee Futures



Safeguarding Children Policy

Date of last review by the Board: November 2023

This policy will be reviewed at an earlier date if a safeguarding incident occurs or due to law changes and as further knowledge is obtained. Senior Management and the Trustees of Refugee Futures will review this policy and good practice at regular intervals and communicate any changes to staff as appropriate.

No.	Reason	Date	Who
1	Initial Draft	September 2021	JW
2	Approved with alterations	June 2022	Board of Trustees
3	Review – Appointment of new Designated Safeguarding Lead	November 2023	Board of Trustees

Designated Safeguarding Officer – Jess Wratten (Programme Manager). Can be contacted via email jess.wratten@refugeefutures.org or on 07542015870.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (trustee) - Ruth Hicks (Vice Chair, Board of Trustees). Can be contacted via email at Safeguarding@refugeefutures.org.

1. Introduction

This policy and code of conduct applies to all employees, Trustees, self-employed contractors (including freelancers) and volunteers working on behalf of Refugee Futures LTD. For the purposes of this policy, any reference to staff in this policy includes anyone working on behalf of Refugee Futures LTD.

This policy and code of conduct is related to our expectations of safeguarding best practice when indirectly working with Children. A child is defined as someone under the age of 18.

We want to ensure that Refugee Futures carries out all its safeguarding responsibilities when providing a wide range of activities for clients. Although we currently provide services for adults over the age of 18, we understand that we may indirectly work with Children.

This document outlines our expectations for anyone working on behalf of Refugee Futures. It outlines our expectations of your behaviour and that of your colleagues. It explains your personal responsibility to act within the boundaries laid out, and your responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns about a child. It also outlines what to do if you have concerns regarding behaviour by any third party or partnership organisation that Refugee Futures is affiliated with.

We will ensure you have access to this policy at the earliest opportunity.

2. Definitions

A child is defined as someone under the age of 18.

What is Child Protection?

Child protection relates to action taken to prevent children suffering harm or further harm caused by deliberate abuse and / or neglect.

Whilst we all may contribute to child protection by being alert and passing on our concerns to the authorities, child protection work can only be carried out by specific professionals such as Social Workers and Police officers.

What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding is about managing a safe environment for children and young people to Access. It combines an approach to safety that draws together both reactive and preventative approaches to the management of children's safety and well-being. It describes a wider set of actions and responsibilities designed to promote children's wellbeing.

Safeguarding includes child protection, but also involves keeping children safe from accidents, bullying, crime and issues such as ensuring safer recruitment of staff and volunteers and safe practices at work are in place. Any group or organisation that works with children and young people should be able to deal with situations when they arise, but also be able to take all reasonable steps to prevent, wherever possible, situations arising in the first place.

The main areas of child abuse are:

- **Physical abuse**

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent/carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

- **Emotional abuse**

Is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, (including cyber-bullying) causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

- **Sexual Abuse**

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

- **Neglect**

Is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment).

Please see the Government publication - Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2019 for further information on the categories of abuse:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/830121/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_060919.pdf

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children.

3. Context

The work of Refugee Futures is usually undertaken in the community within Church grounds, Community centres, other charity or business premises which will form part of our outreach work with adult Asylum Seekers and Refugees. There may be children on these premises as part of other community groups or indeed the children of the adults that we are working with may from time to time be present with their parents or guardians.

Staff should not:

- Use their position to gain access to information about children for their own advantage.
- Use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine children.
- Use their status and standing to form or promote a relationship with a child which is of a sexual nature.

4. Staff code of conduct

Anyone working on behalf of Refugee Futures will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

1. Reading and implementing this policy.
2. Sharing information about child protection and good practice with other representatives of Refugee Futures.
3. Sharing information about any safeguarding concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO). Contact details for the DSO can be found on page 1 of this policy.
4. Comply with the duty to disclose / whistle blow if they witness anything which raises concern.
5. Representatives of Refugee Futures must be committed to creating a safe environment.
6. People representing Refugee Futures should at all times show respect and understanding for an individual's rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the ethos and principles of Refugee Futures.
7. Treating young people with respect and dignity.
8. Always listening to what a young person is saying.
9. Using appropriate language with young people.
10. Dress appropriately for working with young people and avoid wearing revealing clothing. No aspect of dress or appearance should be politically motivated, sexually provocative, discriminatory, insensitive or offensive.
11. Ensure confidentiality: Staff may be privy to personal information relating to children and their families during their work. This information should not be shared other than with relevant members of staff only on a need to know basis.

People representing Refugee Futures must never:

1. spend time alone with children, we do not offer a service to children. If a client brings their child to a community setting, we can never accept duty of care for that child and the parent or guardian must remain present with their child at all times.
2. engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games, including horseplay.

3. do things of a personal nature for a child or a young person. If a young person requests help with personal matters i.e. using the toilet, changing clothes etc staff must always refer them to their parent.
4. allow, or engage in touching of any kind. Physical contact It is not expected that Refugee Futures staff will need to have any level of physical contact with any child/young person in the course of their work. Except in the incident that first aid is administered, although it would be best to talk the parent through this process.
In an emergency or first aid scenario staff must:
 - Be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child or an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described.
 - Consider alternatives where contact becomes necessary and ensure another staff or adult is present
 - Always explain to a child the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take unless their safety is at immediate risk.
 - Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact will be open to scrutiny.
5. be aware that any actions may be misinterpreted no matter how well intentioned.
6. never draw any conclusions about others, simply take note of the facts that you are presented with.
7. never exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues or make suggestive remarks or gestures about, or to a child or young person, even in fun.
8. never give their personal information or contact details to children or young people or make contact with them for personal reasons. Likewise, never hold the personal contact details of a child.
9. not become 'friends' with or 'follow' children or young people on social media.
10. not take pictures of young people or make images of children/young people available on the internet.
11. not discuss your own personal relationships with or in the presence of children.
12. not discuss a child's personal relationships.
13. never allow volunteers from Refugee Futures or supporting organisations to be unsupervised with children or young people.

5. What to do if you are concerned about a child

Contact the DSO (contact details can be found on page 1 of this policy).

This person will be responsible for matters relating to safeguarding that occur during the delivery of Refugee Futures programmes.

If anyone representing Refugee Futures has concerns about a young person or suspects that a young person is being abused, he/she/they should speak to the DSO at the first available opportunity and voice their concerns.

All events that are being delivered on behalf of Refugee Futures will ensure that the DSO is 'on call' in the event of such an incident.

Regard should be given to the confidential nature of such circumstances and concerns must not be discussed with anyone else at this stage.

The DSO will:

1. Assess the situation and decide on next steps.
2. Consult with **Thirtyone:Eight helpline: 0303003111** if needed. Refugee Futures has paid for this membership and will use the support when needed.
3. Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead of actions taken.
4. If there is any doubt that a child or young person is being abused or neglected the DSO to inform Children's Social Care or the Police.

To report concerns:

During working hours contact:

The Children's Hub Contact, Hartlepool & Stockton-on-Tees, Civic Centre - Level 2, Victoria Road, Hartlepool TS24 8AY

Tel: 01429 284284 / 01642 130080

Email: HSSCP@hartlepool.gov.uk

Out of hours contact:

Emergency Duty Team

Tel: 01642 524552

In an emergency contact the Police on: Tel: 101 or 999

6. What to do if a child makes a disclosure to you?

It is highly unlikely that a young person will make a disclosure to a staff member of Refugee Futures however should this situation occur then:

1. Don't ignore them or tell them to go away because you're busy – they may have been building up to telling someone for some time.
2. At the outset you must explain to them that you cannot promise to keep what they may tell you secret. You can promise that only those who need to know will be told and that they will be the people who can help to protect the young person. Do not make any other promises.
3. Listen without interruption.
4. Do not ask investigative or leading questions.
5. Repeat back the information that they have been told to ensure accuracy.
6. Thank them for choosing to speak to you.
7. Make them aware that you will have to inform someone else as you are concerned as long as this doesn't put them at further risk.
8. Inform the DSO.
9. Record factual information on an incident form - As soon as possible afterwards and on the same day, record, in writing, your conversation with the young person. Try to remember exact words. Do not use your own words in case you have misconstrued what the young person was trying to say.

10. Await support and further instruction from the DSO.
11. The situation may cause you to react emotionally and try not to show this to the young person. The DSO will offer you a debrief and pastoral support with this.

7. What happens if an allegation of abuse is made against you?

If a serious allegation of abuse is made against you, the DSO will consult our safeguarding support and advice line externally with ThirtyOne:Eight and will report this to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the Local Authority where the concern was made about you. Allegations management procedures will be followed.

8. Whistle Blowing

If you have serious concerns about the conduct of any staff member in connection with Refugee Futures, you must first report this to the DSO. If your concern is about the conduct of the DSO, you should report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If your concern is with one or all of the three roles mentioned you should report your concerns to the LADO and or the NSPCC.

The Hartlepool and Stockton LADO is Phil Curtis Email: Phil.curtis@hartlepool.gov.uk

The Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Children's Hub on **01429 284284 / 01642 130080** or out of office hours call **01642 524552**.

In an emergency, please contact the Police on **101** or **999**.

Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSSCP)

NSPCC

Call us on 0808 800 5000, email help@nspcc.org.uk or fill in our online form.
<https://www.hsscp.co.uk/>

Examples of serious concern include:

- Staff member behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he/she is unsuitable to work with children or in a way that indicates he/she would pose a risk of harm if working regularly or closely with children.

There are 3 potential outcomes from the allegation:

- No further action after initial consideration
- Criminal investigation
- Disciplinary investigation