

SAASSBMK DOCUMENT IDENTITY			
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Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect children and young people who access SAASSBMK from harm. This includes the children of adults who access our service.

We aim to provide staff and volunteers as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding children and young people.

A child is defined as anyone aged below 18 years.

Sexual Assault and Abuse Support Service Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes (SAASSBMK) recognises that all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm and abuse.

Scope

This policy is mandatory and applies to anyone working on behalf of SAASSBMK, including the Board of Trustees, staff, external supervisors, consultants, sessional workers and volunteers. It is essential that everyone is aware of its central messages and any duties/responsibilities it places on them.

Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up based on legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation is available from <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/england>
Article 19 of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child states that in all respects, all measures shall be taken to:

“Protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardians or any other person who has the care of the child.”

This commitment stands irrespective of sex, race, religion, language, culture, disability, medical or psychiatric condition.

The Children Act 1989 defines a child as a person under the age of 18 years. SAASSBMK provides support to young people aged 16-18 years but due to the ‘Gillick Competency’, the ‘Fraser Guidelines’ and section 8 of the Family Law Reform Act (1969) young people aged 16-18 have the same rights to confidentiality as adults. Gillick Competency and Fraser Guidelines help people who work with children to balance the need to listen to children’s wishes with the responsibility to keep them safe. The caveat to this is that mandatory reporting for under 18’s still exists if there is a concern about coercion, power imbalance or vulnerability.

SAASSBMK will follow the Adults at Risk Safeguarding Policy and Procedures in relation to 16-18 year olds, where the above mentioned guidelines are applicable.

We believe that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practice in a way that protects them

We recognise that:

- The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take. All children regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers, and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

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

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them
- Appointing a nominated children and young people safeguarding lead, a deputy, and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies and procedures
- Developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training, and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers are aware of and follow our policies, procedures, and behaviour codes confidently and competently.
- We will ensure that all staff and volunteers are trained on both physical and behavioural signs of physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect. This forms part of the core training programme which all staff members and volunteers are required to undertake prior to their work commencing with SAASSBMK. This information is made available at all times to all persons working on behalf of SAASSBMK. Further information and refresher training is provided as and when necessary, i.e amendments in the law/codes of good practice or any changes as a result of policy reviews, a minimum of once a year.
- Recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Recording, storing, and using information professionally and securely in line with data protection legislation and guidance
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and young people and their families
- Ensuring that children, young people, and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern using our safeguarding children and young people
- Procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who

need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately.

- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy in place to deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for children, young people, staff, and volunteers by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- Building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people, and their families treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns

Definition of Child Abuse

SAASSBMK believes that the protection of children from harm and abuse is of paramount importance and will take all relevant action in relation to its duty to protect children from harm. The Children Act 1989 introduced 'significant harm' as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in the best interests of children and defined significant harm as:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse.
- Sexual abuse.
- Neglect

This definition was clarified in section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (implemented on 31st January 2005) so that it may include. *"impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another"*.

Definition of Child Sexual Exploitation

The definition of Child Sexual Exploitation as set out in Safeguarding Children and Young people from Sexual Exploitation: Supplementary Guidance to Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government, 2009) is:

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, context and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

SAASSBMK operates a confidential service but if there is a reasonable suspicion that a child is suffering or likely to suffer from abuse, confidentiality can be breached. In this event the designated safeguarding officer is expected to discuss the action they need to take with the service user, unless it is highlighted that this action would place the child at greater risk.

SAASSBMK has statutory responsibilities in respect of child protection and this policy has been drawn up on basis of these laws.

Procedural Guidance

How to respond to signs or suspicions of signs of abuse where the abused person is a service user:

- If the abuse is not current and there are no ongoing child protection issues for the service user or others known to the service user – no further action is required.
- If the abuse is ongoing and there is the possibility that others may be at risk from the abuser, workers should explore this with the service user who should be encouraged to consent to sharing the information. Before such sharing takes place, the issue should be taken to supervision and discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Officer.

How to respond where there is a suspicion that a service user is abusing a child:

- Workers must take the issue to supervision and a Designated Safeguarding Officer. In considering any action, the best interests of the abused child and the best interests of the service user will be considered.

How to respond when a service user knows rather than suspects that a child is being abused:

- Regardless of whether this relates to the service user's own child or another known child, workers must take the issue to supervision and a Designated Safeguarding Officer. SAASSBMK will consider what is in the best interest of the child/children including exploring issues of the adult's responsibilities towards children, the best interests of the service user and informal discussions with Social Services and/or the Police.

Designated Safeguarding Officers should aim to discuss a decision to breach confidentiality without service user consent with the Designated Safeguarding Lead before taking action, if possible.

As per the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy Ethical Framework for Counselling Professionals, *"In exceptional circumstances, the need to safeguard our clients or others from serious harm may require us to override our commitment to*

making our client's wishes and confidentiality our primary concern. We may need to act in ways that will support any investigations or actions necessary to prevent serious harm to our clients or others. In such circumstances, we will do our best to respect the parts of our client's wishes or confidences that do not need to be overridden in order to prevent further harm."

How to respond when the suspected abuse is by SAASSBMK staff, sessional workers or volunteers towards a child/young person.

If the information regarding the risk to a child/young person relates to suspected abuse by a worker of SAASSBMK, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should immediately be informed, and they will take appropriate action.

If the allegation concerns the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the concern should be taken to the CEO. If the allegation concerns the CEO, the concern should be taken to the Chair of Trustees.

The worker of SAASSBMK will be suspended immediately pending investigation, on the authority of local authority Safeguarding Board, a member of the Board of Trustees, the CEO and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (where the relevant person is not suspected). This is not an assumption of guilt but serves to allow the appropriate investigation to take place and protects the individual from further allegations.

The steps outlined above will be followed in the same way as if the allegation concerned a perpetrator from another setting.

Raising Complaints/Whistleblowing

See also: Complaints Policy and Whistleblowing Policy

SAASSBMK are committed to ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place. Details of how we respond if a member of staff, volunteer, trustee, service user, or member of the public believes that a SAASSBMK member of staff, volunteer or trustee has behaved in a way that has caused harm to a child or young person or exposed a child or young person to harm or behaved in a way that indicates that they are unsuitable to work with children and young people, either in their present role or in any capacity, are escalated through the established safeguarding processes supported by the Whistleblowing Policy.

Support for those who report abuse

All those making a complaint or allegation or expressing concern, whether they be staff, service users, carers or members of the general public should be reassured that;

- They will be taken seriously.
- Their comments will be treated confidentially wherever possible, but their concerns may be shared if they or others are at significant risk;
- If service users, they will be given immediate protection from the risk of reprisals or intimidation.
- Workers will be given support and afforded protection, if necessary, in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Children and young people have the right:

- To be made aware of this policy;
- To have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously;
- To receive fair and respectful treatment throughout;
- To be involved in any process as appropriate; and
- To receive information about the outcome.

Note Keeping and Destruction

Guidance on receiving a disclosure can be found within the safeguarding training. Any meetings or discussions as a result of a suspicion or disclosure of abuse of a child/children will be recorded on a Disclosure Form and uploaded on the Database. Dates, times, names of persons present, descriptions of the suspicion or verbatim account of the disclosure and action and outcome will be recorded and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed.

This will be done with the knowledge of the person making the allegation or disclosure or sharing their concerns. This information is kept for 5 years and if any of the information is used as evidence and shared with the relevant authorities then it will be kept in line with their policies and procedures.

The Principle Of Confidentiality

See also: Confidentiality Policy

Before any work takes place with service users, they are all spoken to with regards to limits of confidentiality and significant risk to a child. The worker explores this with the service user individually to ensure they clearly understand the limits of confidentiality and SAASSBMK's ethos to be committed to safeguard children. This is also documented in a written contract.

All matters of suspicion must be taken to a Designated Safeguarding Officer at the earliest convenience. All decisions will be taken after informed discussions (to include the worker and Designated Safeguarding Officer as a minimum) with the best interests of the young person in mind. If the Designated Safeguarding Officer is absent and is not contactable, then another Designated Safeguarding Officer or the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be contacted in their absence.

Recruitment, Training and Self Care

See also: DBS Policy, Recruitment Policy and Training and Development Policy

All volunteers and staff are required to undergo an appropriate DBS check to ensure their suitability of involvement with SAASSBMK before they begin work. In addition to this all SAASSBMK workers must participate in our core safeguarding training on a yearly basis.

All workers that may be impacted by any child safeguarding concerns or disclosures are offered extra supervision, line management and time with a Designated Safeguarding Officer or the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure they feel supported and equipped for their role.

Designated Safeguarding Personnel

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- Co -CEO – Zoe Bell (CYP) zoe@saassbmk.org.uk 0787107774
- Head of Services – Sally Davies (Adult) ; sally@saassbmk.org.uk; 07970 070320

Children and Young People Designated Safeguarding Officer (CYP DSO):

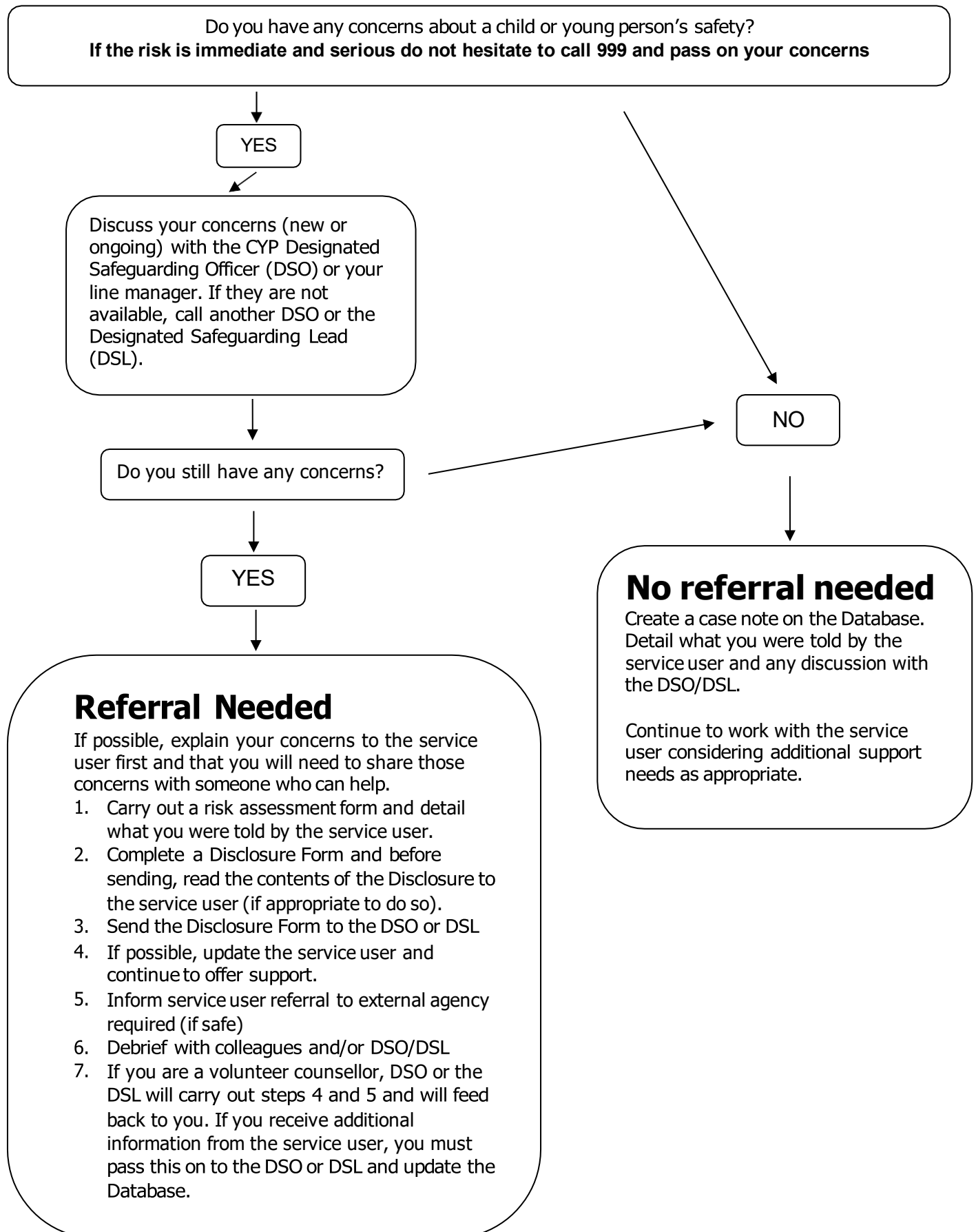
- CYP Counselling Co-ordinator – Lili Stemson; lili@sashbucks.org.uk; 07749051468

Other Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO):

- Therapeutic Service Manager – Gemma Stevenson; gemma@saassbmk.org.uk; 07514 623110
- DV Counselling Co-ordinator – Zahara Kayani; zahara@saassbmk.org.uk; 07514 623 102
- Therapeutic Services Support Worker – Sarah Dunmur; sarah@saassbmk.org.uk 07912 497 433

The DSL and DSO's should ensure that they receive the appropriate level of Adult and Child Safeguarding training which is updated on an annual & bi-annual basis.

Appendix A – SAASSBMK's CYP Safeguarding Flow Chart



Appendix B – Safeguarding Children and Young People Contact Details

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

First Response Team/MASH on:

Working Hours: 01296 383962

Out of Hours: 0800 999 7677 (Emergency Duty Team)

Email: secure-cypfirstresponse@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Online: https://account.buckscc.gov.uk/service/Report_a_concern_about_a_child

The Police on:

Emergencies 999

Non Emergencies 101

MILTON KEYNES

First Response Team/MASH on:

Working Hours: 01908 253169 or 01908 253170

Out of Hours: 01908 265545 (Emergency Duty Team)

Email: children@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Online: www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/children-young-people-and-families/childrens-social-care/worried-about-child

The Police on:

Emergencies 999

Non Emergencies 101

Other Useful Numbers:

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: 0800 800 5000

NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line: 0800 0280285