

Safeguarding Policy



INTRODUCTION

Step Ahead is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all individuals we work with including young people aged 16 and above, young adults and adults including our own staff. This Safeguarding Policy outlines our approach to protecting these individuals from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Step Ahead's policy is to treat everyone equally and fairly, regardless of their gender, sex, sexual orientation, reassignment status, belief or religion, civil partnership, marital status, perceived age, age, colour, race, nationality, ethnic origins or disability. Furthermore, Step Ahead's responsibility is to ensure everyone's safety from any harm, be it physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional, financial, neglect or discriminatory abuse. Step Ahead is committed to following the guidance in The Making Safeguarding Personal Toolkit.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors and partners working with or on behalf of Step Ahead.

Definitions

Young people: Individuals aged 16 to 17

Young adults: Individuals aged 18 to 25

Adults: Individuals aged 26 and over

Safeguarding: Protecting individuals from abuse, harm and neglect

Abuse: The violation of a person's human and civil rights by any other person. It is where someone does something to another person, or to themselves, which puts them at risk of harm and impacts on their health and wellbeing.

Type of Abuse:	Definition:
Discriminatory	Discrimination against someone's protected characteristic.
Domestic	Violence or abuse by someone who is or has been an intimate partner or family member
Organisational	Neglect and poor care practice within organisations
Physical	Physical abuse, restraint, and misuse of medication
Psychological/ Emotional	Subjecting or exposing another person to a behavior that may result in psychological trauma
Sexual	Direct or indirect involvement in sexual activity without a person's consent
Financial	Defrauding, stealing or misusing someone's money or property
Neglect	Failure to respect an adult at risks's privacy, dignity, and individuality
Self-neglect	Neglecting one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings
Modern Slavery	Forced labour and exploitation

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SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

Recruitment and training

- Conduct background checks on all employees
- Provide safeguarding training during induction and provide regular updates
- Recognising abuse
- Staff should be aware of the signs of abuse which may include discriminatory, domestic, organisational, physical, psychological or emotional, sexual, financial, neglect, self-neglect and modern slavery

Reporting concerns

- Report any concerns to the DSL immediately
- Document all details of the concern accurately and securely
- The DSL will assess the concern and take appropriate action, which may include contacting local authorities or the police

Responding to a disclosure:

- Listen carefully and remain calm
- Reassure the individual they did the right thing by speaking up
- Do not promise confidentiality, explain the need to report the disclosure

In addition to general safeguarding procedures, the following specific measures apply to young people aged 16 to 17:

- Parental/ Guardian consent: Obtain consent from parents or guardians for activities involving young people
- Supervision: Ensure appropriate supervision for activities involving young people
- Age-appropriate communication: Use language and methods of communication suitable for young people
- Safe environment: Ensure all environments are safe and suitable for young people, conducting regular risk assessments

Safeguarding Step Ahead employees

All Step Ahead employees have the right to feel safe where they work. Other people should not hurt or abuse them, including colleagues.

The following are strictly prohibited:

- Befriending candidates or learners on a personal basis on social media sites
- Distributing telephone numbers
- Sarcasm, insults or belittling comments towards candidates or learners are not allowed in any way.
- Personal relationships with candidates or learners are not permitted in any way.

It is also essential to be mindful of:

- Locations of one-to-one meetings. Try to ensure they take place in a mutually agreed place at a neutral location.

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- Maintain professional boundaries whenever carrying out work on Step Ahead's behalf. Uphold confidentiality in line with GDPR within certain remits when required by the situation but be careful not to promise to keep secrets or ask others to do so in line with the Safeguarding Policy.
- If at any point you feel unsafe in anyone's company, inform your line manager or the DSL.

Staff also undertake e-learning on their induction covering the following topics. A central log of completion and refresh dates is maintained on the HR system.

- Disability Awareness & Inclusion
- Environmental Awareness
- Equality Diversity & Inclusion
- GDPR UK: Essentials
- Health & Safety for Home Workers
- Modern Slavery
- Resilience

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Management: Ensuring the implementation of this policy and providing necessary resources and training. Ensuring the Safeguarding Team store all documentation related to safeguarding concerns in the designated Safeguarding folder which guarantees strict access controls in accordance with current relevant legislation and guidance.

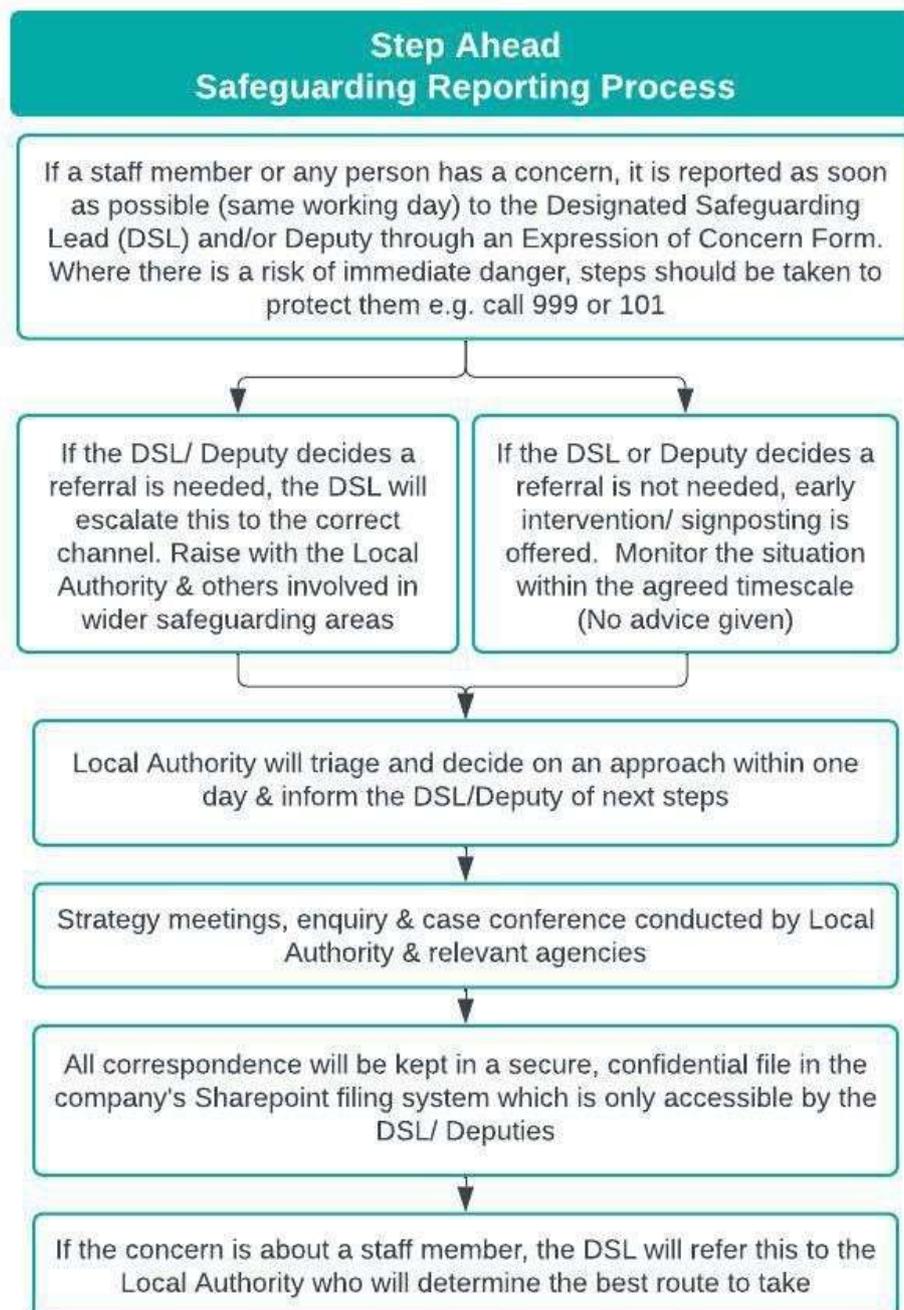
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Emily Bunu, emily@stepahead.co.uk Overseeing safeguarding practices, acting as the main contact for concerns, and liaising with external agencies. Planning and implementing training for all employees. Carrying out investigations appropriate to welfare concerns reported and liaising with external bodies such as the safeguarding board.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL): John Whitehouse, john@stepahead.co.uk and Joshua McIntosh, joshua@stepahead.co.uk Dealing with all the above in the absence of the DSL.

Staff: Following safeguarding procedures, reporting concerns, and participating in training.

RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Grievance Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Prevent Policy
- Modern Slavery Policy
- Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Use of Emails, Internet and Voicemails



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