

Full name of policy:	Safeguarding Children and Adults
Date of approval:	May 2017
Approved by: Signature Name Position	
Version Number	2
Date of next formal review:	May 2018

Name and post of person responsible	Becky Peates People and Policies Coordinator
Frequency of review:	Annual
Dates of previous reviews:	
Policy Reference:	All policies can be located on the Google Drive drive/Approved Policies folder
Total number of pages: (Including appendices and front sheet)	21

Page Break

The Autism Group Safeguarding Children and Adults Policy

1. General Principles

The Autism Group (henceforth TAG) has a duty of care to the children, young people and adults they provide services for; this includes taking the necessary steps to safeguard them.

TAG aims to protect children, young people and adults using our service as well as provide clear, unambiguous guidelines for colleagues (employees, volunteers, students, apprentices, trustees & others who work within our organisation) as to their legal and professional roles. This is to ensure good practice throughout the charity and its special interest groups.

We provide mandatory Safeguarding training for all our colleagues (employees, volunteers, students, apprentices, trustees & others who work within our organisation) regardless of whether they work directly with children, young people, their families and/or carers.

Safeguarding procedures and policies are made available to all colleagues (employees, volunteers, students, apprentices, trustees & others who work within our organisation) we and seek to ensure that we:

- Are aware of what abuse is and how to spot it;
- Have a clear system of reporting concerns as soon as abuse is identified or suspected;
- Respond to abuse rapidly and carrying out investigations confidentially;
- Prevent harm and abuse with a rigorous recruitment and interview process.

TAG puts its service users first providing a safe and secure environment to engage in special interests. It is committed to developing creative and positive ways for young people to communicate whilst recognising the responsibility to use, hold and safeguard information received.

We are mindful that we are in a position of trust and that sharing information unnecessarily is inappropriate. However, there is an expectation that a professional approach and judgment will be used in all matters of safeguarding and confidentiality

Having proper safeguards in place means TAG can promote a safe place for children, young people and adults.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of a range of legislation, guidance and policy relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and improving the wellbeing of children, young people and adults, namely:

The Children Act 2004

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015

The Staying Safe Action Plan 2008

Safeguarding and Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Every Child Matters 2003

Local Safeguarding Children's Board (www.proceduresonline.com/berks/)

Under the legislation a child is classified as a person under the age of 18.

TAG includes vulnerable adults in the scope of this policy. Vulnerable adults are people aged over 18 who are affected by mental ill health, have a learning difficulty and/ or disability, or a physical disability or impairment.

3. Commitment to the policy

TAG is committed to protecting the safety of all its service users, staff and volunteers by providing support and promoting clear lines of communication with staff members.

We will:

- Ensure all staff colleagues (employees, volunteers, trustees & others who work within our organisation), know that there are recognised procedures to be followed should they become aware of an issue of concern relating to Safeguarding
- Provide clear guidelines for actions to be taken where there is a concern
- Provide Safeguarding training to all staff and volunteers, and require any others who work within our organisation to provide evidence of training they have undertaken
- Keep relevant records secure
- Have a clear policy about the handling of allegations of abuse by a member of staff or volunteers, or others working within our organisation
- Handle Safeguarding concerns and referrals sensitively
- Ensure that service users are made aware that there are staff they can approach if they have a safeguarding concern
- Seek to provide opportunities, where appropriate, for service users to discuss safety and respect and assist them to develop skills to equip them
- Seek to establish good relationships with parents/carers and staff from other agencies
- Provide guidelines to staff and volunteers to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse

4. Safeguarding Procedures

The designated staff member for Safeguarding is the People and Policies Coordinator. There is a designated Trustee (Jenny Stephen, as at January 2017)

The Designated Safeguarding Person:

- Is appropriately trained, with updates every two years.
- Acts as a source of support and expertise to the TAG colleagues.
- Encourages a culture of listening to young people to recognise their concerns and feelings.
- Is alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers.

- Has an understanding of locally agreed processes for providing early help and intervention.
- Keeps detailed written records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely.
- Refers cases of suspected abuse to social care or police as appropriate.
- Develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies including the Local Safeguarding Boards (Children's and Adult's).
- Ensures that all staff sign to indicate that they have read and understood the Safeguarding policy.
- Ensures that the Safeguarding Policy is regularly reviewed and updated annually.
- Keeps a record of staff attendance at child protection training
- Makes the Safeguarding Policy available publicly, on the TAG website or by other means.
- Ensures parents are aware of TAG's role in safeguarding and that referrals about suspected abuse and neglect may be made.
- Works with the nominated Trustee to ensure cases concerning a member of staff are referred appropriately to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and/or the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

The Trustees, along with the designated staff member will monitor the policy and procedures and will identify issues of training and implementation.

Any Safeguarding concerns must be brought to the attention of the designated staff member as soon as is practicable. All steps taken will be documented.

Investigations will be undertaken, where appropriate, by the designated staff member, or nominated deputy (in the absence of the designated staff member due to sickness, Annual Leave or involvement). Investigation should not be undertaken by other staff or volunteers, or others working within our organisation. The designated member of staff should discuss any investigations with the Chair of Trustees at the first available opportunity.

5. Procedures for TAG Staff, Volunteers, and others working within our organisation

TAG's Safeguarding Procedure and how to respond to disclosure of alleged abuse is summarised on a flow diagram. (see Appendix 1)

If a service user, or any other person attending TAG services tells a member of staff, a volunteer, or other working within our organisation that abuse is taking place this will be acknowledged, taken seriously and listened to.

As soon as it becomes clear that a service user is talking about a situation of abuse, you should try to gently stop them and inform them that they if they continue you have a legal obligation to pass the information on to either the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Designated Trustee. You cannot promise confidentiality.

The service user should be assured that the matter will be discussed only with the people who 'need to know' about it, i.e. Social Worker, and Police Officer that specialises in child protection/protection of vulnerable adults.

Do not ask too many questions. Listen carefully, acknowledge the seriousness of the situation and let them know you understand. Do not ask leading questions. As soon as possible write down the details of what has been told to you using the TAG Safeguarding form (see Appendix 3)

You must not, under any circumstances, investigate any accusations or take any further action yourself. This includes contacting parents or outside agencies.

Contact the designated staff member who will ask you to explain the situation and write details.

If you suspect that a service user is suffering abuse, you must discuss these concerns with the designated member of staff.

The policy, procedures and contact details of this Safeguarding policy will be publicly available, for example on the website.

6. The Appointment of Staff

The recruitment and selection process for prospective employees will include:

- All applicants to complete an application form

- All staff interviews to take place with a panel of at least two members. Safeguarding questions to be included in the interview.
- Before employment can begin, references must be obtained. (In the event this is not practicable, staff will be closely monitored/supervised by a senior member of TAG)
- All staff and volunteers will be subject to an enhanced DBS check. Anyone applying for a job or volunteering opportunity will be informed of this at application stage. (Staff or Volunteers who have not yet received their DBS will be subject to close monitoring by a senior member of TAG)
- All recruitment advertising will include a statement of TAG's commitment to the Safeguarding
- All others working within our organisation will be required to provide evidence of satisfactory DBS check
- Failure by a member of staff or volunteer to present evidence of a satisfactory DBS check, within 12 weeks of application, may result in Disciplinary action, including possible dismissal. TAG may ask staff and volunteers who have not received their DBS certificate for details in order to check the DBS application tracking.

7. Allegations of abuse against a member of staff

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a young person to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events do happen.

A young person may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so, we must accept that some professionals do pose a serious risk to young people and we must act on every allegation.

Staff, volunteers, or others working within our organisation who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress.

Precautionary suspension without prejudice is not the default option and alternatives to suspension will always be considered. In some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that children, young people and adults are protected.

Staff, parents, volunteers, and others working within our organisation are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of a person who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing, including content placed on social media sites.

In the event that the allegation is about the designated staff member, the Chair of Trustees will undertake the investigation

8. Training and support

TAG will ensure all staff, volunteers, and others working within our organisation have training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse and neglect and to know what to do if they have a concern.

New staff volunteers, and others working within our organisation will receive an explanation during their induction which includes the Safeguarding Policy, reporting and recording arrangements, the staff Code of Conduct and details for the designated member of staff.

All staff, volunteers, and others working within our organisation will receive training that is updated annually and the designated member of staff will receive training updated at least every two years, including training in inter-agency procedures.

9. Record keeping

Confidential records will be kept for all stages of alleged or suspected abuse. Staff should report using the TAG Safeguarding form. These will be kept securely by the designated staff member and must not be accessed without expressed permission. No records of alleged or suspected abuse must be kept by other staff, volunteers, or others working within our organisation; this includes electronic communications which must be deleted.

10. Whistle blowing

In certain circumstances, staff, volunteers, others working within our organisation, or service users or others who have contact with TAG may feel they are unable to follow the organisation's standard procedures e.g. because they feel their position in the organisation would be in jeopardy, they would be subject to intimidation, or that the person of concern is the designated staff member to whom they should report such matters and there is no one senior to refer to. They should then follow the Whistle blowing Policy by contacting a nominated person within the organisation (the Chair of Trustees) or an umbrella organisation to which the organisation is affiliated.

The Policy may also be used in circumstances when the matter has been raised under appropriate organisation procedures for referring Safeguarding concerns, but the referrer considers that the designated staff member or Chair of Trustees have not taken the concerns seriously or acted appropriately with relation to them. In such circumstances, referrers are encouraged to contact the named responsible person for 'whistle blowing' for the organisation or a LADO directly for discussion and advice.

11. Prevent

Prevent is part of the UK's counter terrorism strategy, preventing people from becoming involved in terrorism and supporting terrorism. The purpose of Prevent is to raise awareness with our young people. All TAG staff, volunteers, and others working within our organisation are trained in Prevent, especially around identifying signs of a young person being drawn into supporting terrorism. If they should have any concerns they know to report it directly to the designated staff member in the same way they would any safeguarding concerns.

12. Annual review by the Trustee Board

The designated member of staff will present an annual report on Safeguarding to the Board of Trustees. The Board will use this as the basis for their annual review of the Policy and Procedures.

Appendix 1

TAG Safeguarding Procedure

How to respond to a disclosure of an alleged incident of abuse:

Page Break

Appendix 2

The following definitions come from the DfES in their "Safeguarding Children" guidance.

Physical abuse

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child.

Sexual abuse

Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve:

- physical contact including penetrative or non-penetrative acts
- non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material, or watching sexual activities
- encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, including involvement in prostitution

Emotional abuse

The persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child. This may involve:

- conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children

- causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger
- the exploitation or corruption of children

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's physical and psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. It may involve:

- failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing
- failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger
- failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- neglect of a child's basic emotional needs
- failing to ensure satisfactory education

Additional forms of abuse relevant to vulnerable adults are:

Financial abuse

This includes theft, fraud, exploitation, the misuse of possessions and pressure applied in relation to financial transactions.

Discriminatory abuse

This is based on a person's disability and includes making hurtful comments and harassing them.

Supplementary Guidance

Staff should be aware that issues around the following should be regarded as issues for Safeguarding and Protecting Young People.

- Fabricated or induced illness
- Female Genital mutilation
- Forced marriage

Page Break

Appendix 3

TAG Safeguarding Form

This form is CONFIDENTIAL

Immediately after completion, it should be placed in a sealed envelope marked IN CONFIDENCE, dated, then given to designated staff member (the People and Policies Coordinator)

.

IMPORTANT: the contents of this form and the discussions leading to its completion must remain confidential and should not be discussed with any members of staff, volunteers, or others working within our organisation.

Date of reporting	
Time of reporting	
Immediate action required	Yes [Symbol] <input type="checkbox"/> No [Symbol] <input type="checkbox"/>
Reasons for immediate action	
Name of person reporting the disclosure	
Name of the person who is the subject of the disclosure (if different from the above)	
Contact details of subject	
Outline of concern/needs disclosed (if required, please resume on the continuation sheet provided)	
Does this person know this disclosure has been reported?	Yes [Symbol] <input type="checkbox"/> No [Symbol] <input type="checkbox"/>
Have the parents been informed that disclosure has been reported? (where relevant)	Yes [Symbol] <input type="checkbox"/> No [Symbol] <input type="checkbox"/>
Has the person given their consent to share information?	Yes [Symbol] <input type="checkbox"/> No [Symbol] <input type="checkbox"/>

Additional background information of subject of disclosure (if required, please resume on the continuation sheet provided)	
--	--

Page Break

CONTINUATION SHEET – TAG Safeguarding Form		
Subject Name (PLEASE PRINT)		
Your Name (PLEASE PRINT)		
Date	Comments / Action	Signature

Action:

Action required:	To be done by	Signature & Date done
1.		
2.		
3.		

Name of Social Care Worker Referral made to:		

Outcome:

Action Outcome:	Signature & Date done
1.	
2.	
3.	

Review:

Action Reviewed:	Further action	Signature & Date done
1.		
2.		
3.		

Page Break

Appendix 4

Reporting Concerns:

If you are concerned about a child's welfare or worried they are being abused, you can make a referral to:

Details of all Berkshire Local Safeguarding Children's Boards:

www.proceduresonline.com/berks/

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Children: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) - 01628 683150 (Office hours only) or 01344 786543 (Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team)

Adults: 01344 786543

Reading Borough

Children: Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) - 0118 937 3641 (Office hours only) or 01344 786543 (Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team)

Adults: 0118 937 3747

Bracknell Forest Council

Children: Duty and Assessment Team - 01344 352020 or email childrens.social-care@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Adults: 01344 786543

Wokingham Borough Council

Children: Referral and Assessment Team - 0118 908 8002 or email triage@wokingham.gcsx.gov.uk

Adults: 01344 786543

West Berkshire Council

Children and Families Social Care Services - 0118 908 8002 or email child@westberks.gov.uk.

Adults: [0118 974 6772](tel:01189746772)

Slough

Children's Services Trust - 01753 690450

Adults: 01753 475111 (option 1)

Oxfordshire

Children: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) - 0845 0507666

Adults: 0845 050 7666 or 0800 833408 (Out of hours emergency)

Buckinghamshire County

Children: First Response Team - 0845 4600 001

Adults: SAFR - 0800 137 915/ Emergency

Out of Hours Social Work Team: Tel: 0800 999 7677

Alternatively you can call

ChildLine for advice on 0800 1111 or email them by visiting www.childline.org.uk

Or

NSPCC helpline – help@nspcc.org.uk or 0808 800 5000

Page Break

Appendix 5

Good practice guidelines and staff code of conduct

Core Principles

- The welfare of service users is paramount.
- Staff, volunteers, and others working within our organisation are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Staff, volunteers, and others working within our organisation should work, and be seen to work in an open and transparent way.
- Staff, volunteers, and others working within our organisation should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager or another senior member of staff over any incident, which may give rise to concern.
- Records should be made of any such incident and of decisions made/further actions agreed.
- Staff, volunteers, and others working within our organisation should apply the same professional standards in keeping with TAG's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- All staff should know the name of their designated person for safeguarding, be familiar with safeguarding arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect service users.
- Staff, volunteers, and others working within our organisation should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines, including this code of conduct, could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards service users we need to agree standards of good practice which form a code of conduct for all staff. Good practice includes:

- Treating all service users with respect.
- Setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately.
- Involving service users in decisions that affect them.
- Encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among service users.
- Being a good listener.
- Being alert to changes in service users' behaviour and to signs of abuse and neglect.
- Recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse.
- Reading and understanding TAG's Safeguarding Policy and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, behaviour, physical contact and information- sharing.
- Asking the service user's permission before initiating physical contact, such as administering first aid.
- Maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between service users and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language.
- Being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some service users lead to an increased risk of abuse.
- Referring all concerns about a service user's safety and welfare to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Following TAG's rules with regard to communication with service users and use of social media and online networking.

Page Break

Appendix 6

Physical Contact

Some of our young people either do not understand, or are still learning to understand the appropriateness of physical contact.

It can be appropriate for young people to be given some physical contact and comfort, but this must always be offered with the following caution:

- Always ensure there are other adults around.
- Never show favour to individual young people.
- Never touch a young person in the area between the waist and mid thigh or near the chest.

- Never touch a young person in a way that could be mis-interpreted as being anything other than friendly appropriate support.
- Where a young person tries to get closer than appropriate, the message should always be along the lines of, "I like you and I enjoy being with you, but I would rather you held my arm/hand like this".
- Some very active young people sometimes calm down and focus when they receive physical contact e.g. a hand laid the back of the neck. In this case such a support mechanism must be written on the young persons registration form.
- Cuddles should be short and side by side.
- Never kiss a young person, and do not encourage young people to kiss adults other than their parents.
- Tickling is not appropriate.

Appropriate touches include:

- Hand shakes
- Shoulder hugs
- Linked arms
- Guiding young people through gentle touch to the arm or upper back

Staff must always be aware that young people interpret and react to touch in different ways. Some young people can be over-demonstrative and try to demand a great deal of affection and physical contact, whilst others shy away from or have a dislike of physical contact. We must never assume that a young person will accept a touch that is meant as a friendly gesture.

Wherever a member of staff feels uncomfortable about the way in which a young person is using physical contact, this must be immediately discussed with a senior member of staff and recorded. This may need to be taken further into the Child Protection arena.

If a young person makes an impulsive emotional approach and this type of approach is inappropriate, or regular, seek advice from a senior member of staff.

Although TAG has a general policy of 'No Physical Contact' there may be the occasional time when all other avenues have been explored.

TAG staff have a 'duty of care' to all those attending services. If a young person is becoming a danger to him/her self or others, we cannot do nothing. Obviously our first line of approach will be verbal, using a variety of de-escalation techniques, interventions and instructions.

Where these have not worked, there may be the need to intervene physically to stop someone putting themselves or others in danger. Examples of these could be:

- A young person running towards a busy road
- An angry young person about to hurt someone
- A serious fight
- A young person damaging TAG property or that belonging to the venue where services are taking place

Where this might happen the intervention must be using minimal force, and only enough to stop the incident.

The young person must be made aware of what is going to happen if the situation does not stop.

In an escalating or dangerous situation, reasonable, calm and considered responses could be:

- Blocking a young person's path
- Leading by the arm
- Guiding young person away with hand in centre of the back
- Such an incident must be reported fully in writing to the People and Policies Coordinator at the first opportunity, preferably the same day and never more than 24 hours after the incident.

Page Break

Appendix 7

Communication with service users (including the use of technology)

Communication between service users and staff, volunteers, and others working within our organisation, by whatever method, should take place within clear and

explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites, social networking sites, online gaming and blogs.

Staff, volunteers, and others working within our organisation should also be circumspect in their communications with service users so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming.

Staff, volunteers, others working within our organisation should not establish or seek to establish social contact with service users, or their families, for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship.

Staff, volunteers, and others working within our organisation must be aware that social contact, in certain situations, could be misconstrued as grooming.

Staff, volunteers and others working within our organisation should:

- not share any personal information with a service user.
- Not give personal contact details to service users , including their mobile telephone number, e-mail address; social network sites, gamer tags or web pages
- communicate with service users in an appropriate and professional manner, making sure that parents have given permission for this form of communication to be used only make contact with service users for professional reasons
- not use internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to a service users
- not have images of service users stored on personal cameras, devices or home computers.
- not make images of service users available on the internet
- Be cautious in their contact with ex-service users, as there is still a professional relationship and there may be contact with current service users.
- have no secret social contact with service users
- always approve with line manager any planned social contact,
- advise line manager of any regular social contact they have with a service user or parent which may give rise to concern
- record any situation which they feel might compromise TAG or their own professional standing and report to the People and Policies Coordinator

- Lock down their social media profile to ensure that data and images are not freely available. Seek advice if you are unsure how to do this.
- Be aware that images of others should be protected and be treated as carefully as you would your own

Staff, volunteers, and others working within our organisation must deny current or recent service users access to your profile so you do not put yourself in a vulnerable position.

If a service user does gain access to the profile of a member of staff, volunteers, or others working within our organisation by fraudulent means (impersonation or hacking) line manager should be informed immediately.

Where staff, volunteers, and others working within our organisation who are also parents of service users, or personal friends who are parents service users, social networking is acceptable but caution must be exercised so that professional standards are maintained and they do not compromise themselves or TAG.

Under no circumstances should staff seek out service users and/or share their own gamer tags/ID with service users, or to play online games.

Photography and images

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of young people do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse young people through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place.

To protect service users we will:

- Seek their consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or publications).
- Seek a signed parental consent at registration, which they may rescind, in writing at any time.
- Use only the service user's first name with an image.
- Ensure service users are appropriately dressed.
- Encourage service users to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.