



**Date: 02.01.2024**

## **Child Safeguarding Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

New Path Therapy is committed to creating a safe and supportive environment for all clients, including children and young people. This Child Safeguarding Policy outlines our commitment to protecting the welfare and well-being of children and young people who access my counselling and psychotherapy services.

I provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and emotional development of the individual child. I support the children's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.

I aim to provide an environment in which children and young people feel valued and respected, and confident to approach me if they are in difficulties, believing they will be effectively listened to.

A copy of "What to do if you're worried a child is being abused" is kept with this policy and an additional copy is available for you to read if required. This sets out the guidelines for how I must record any incidents and disclosures and the procedures we must follow.

### **2. Legal Framework**

The practice operates within the legal framework provided by the following legislation:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017

Along with:

- HM Government: Working Together to Safeguard Children A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children July 2018

- HM Government: What to do if you are worried a child is being abused: A Guide for Practitioners, 2015
- BACP Good Practice in Action 031 Legal Resource Safeguarding children and young people within the counselling professions in England and Wales.

### **3. Policy Statement**

New Path Therapy recognises the importance of safeguarding children and young people from harm, abuse, and exploitation. I am committed to taking all necessary steps to prevent harm and promote the welfare of children and young people accessing my services.

I am aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse: physical, emotional and sexual, and those of neglect:

- Physical Abuse - can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, punching, kicking, scalding, burning, drowning and suffocating. It can also result when a parent or carer deliberately causes the ill health of a child in order to seek attention through fabricated or induced illness.
- Emotional Abuse - is where a child's need for love, security, recognition and praise is not met. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of someone else such as in Domestic Violence or Domestic Abuse. A parent, carer or authority figure is considered emotionally abusive when they are consistently hostile, rejecting, threatening or undermining toward a child or other family member. It can also occur when children are prevented from having social contact with others or if inappropriate expectations are placed upon them. Symptoms that indicate emotional abuse include:
  - Excessively clingy or attention seeking.
  - Very low self-esteem or excessive self-criticism.
  - Withdrawn behaviour or fearfulness.
  - Lack of appropriate boundaries with strangers; too eager to please.
  - Eating disorders or self-harm
- Sexual abuse - involves 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. This may include physical contact both penetrative and non-penetrative, or viewing pornographic material including through the use of the internet. Indicators of sexual abuse include allegations or disclosures,

genital soreness, injuries or disclosure, sexually transmitted diseases, and inappropriate sexualised behaviour including words, play or drawing.

- Neglect - is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs which can significantly harm their health and development. Neglect can include inadequate supervision (being left alone for long periods of time), lack of stimulation, social contact or education, lack of appropriate food, shelter, appropriate clothing for conditions and medical attention and treatment when necessary.

If New Path Therapy has reason to believe that any child in our care needs protection in any way I will:

- Refer a child, if there are concerns about possible abuse, to the Children and Young People Services Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Referrals will be made in writing, following a telephone call. Under these circumstances, I will share information relating to your child with MASH and the Police if requested. If the concern relates to me or another adult in my setting, I will follow my 'Allegations of Abuse' procedure.
- Keep written records of concerns about a child, even if there is no need to make an immediate referral. I will ensure that all such records are kept confidential and securely, separate from a child's records.
- Liaise with other agencies and professionals.
- Attend case conferences, or other multi-agency planning meetings, as necessary
- Ensure that any child currently with a child protection plan who is absent without explanation is referred to their Social Worker, Social Care Team.

I will notify our local child protection agency (MASH) if a child confides in me. I will:

- Show that I understand what they are saying and that I take their allegations seriously
- Encourage the child to talk, without asking leading questions or interrupting when a child is recalling a significant event
- Record the concern and the child's comments in writing, in their own words as far as possible. The record will contain
  - The child's name
  - The child's date of birth

- The date the record is made
- A note of the child's non-verbal behaviour
- A body map, if appropriate, to record any visible injuries or marks
- My name and signature
- Inform the child that I cannot promise not to share this information but that everything I do will be in the interest of their safety
- Seek advice from MASH and, if necessary, make a referral.

#### **4. Confidentiality**

- I recognise that all matters relating to safeguarding are confidential.
- I will disclose any information about a child on a need-to-know basis only, referring to 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' and the 'Information Sharing Guide'
- I am aware that I have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.
- I am aware that I cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise their safety and well-being.
- I undertake to share an intention to refer a child to MASH with their parents/carers unless doing so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, I will consult with MASH at Children and Young People's Services.

#### **5. Allegations of Abuse**

New Path Therapy will take precautions to protect themselves from allegations of abuse against me. I will aim to prevent this from happening by:

- Ensuring all workers aged 16 and over are CRB cleared
- Ensuring no other person has unsupervised access to the children under any circumstances
- Documenting every accident and incident that occurs whilst children are in my care, informing parents of such events and requesting them to sign my records.
- Noting any noticeable marks on the children when they arrive and asking parents to inform me of any accidents that have occurred whilst outside my care.
- Ensuring the children are within sight and/or hearing at all times according to the child's age & stage of ability.

- Ensuring that any occasion where physical intervention is used to manage a child's behaviour is recorded as an incident and parents are informed about it on the same day. However, if an allegation is made I will then follow the procedure detailed below to gain support and professional advice:

Inform:

- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) immediately to discuss the nature of the allegation and the appropriate action to be taken: 0300 123 22 44

Contact: Anthony Goble

- New Path Therapy Insurance Company – Markel Direct

I will write a detailed record of all related incidents, including what was said and by whom, with times and dates.

After seeking advice/approval from the LADO I will ask witnesses (if there are any) to also write a statement detailing the incident they witnessed and give their contact details in case it needs to be followed up by the authorities.

## **6. Use of Mobile Phones and Cameras**

I understand that if I store personal details about other people on my computer or any digital format (including mobile phones and digital cameras), I will need to notify the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for Data Protection.

### **Mobile Phones**

Mobile phone technology has developed significantly to include internet access and wireless connections as well as camera, video and sound recording and sending and receiving messages. They are now an extremely effective method of communication, which can only be an advantage regarding Safeguarding children. However, I understand that there is a need to balance the advantages with the potential for misuse, and intend to protect the children in my care with the following procedures:

- Ensuring my phone is kept out of the reach of children
- Taking of photos with a Mobile Phone or Camera

The use of photos to support observation, assessment and planning and to provide a pictorial record for parents is occasionally part of my practice. To ensure that children and young people are protected I have the following procedures in place:

- Pictures are taken only by myself with the written permission of parents. Parents indicate if they are willing for photos of their children to be used for: sharing with them; supporting Observation, Assessment & Planning; children's records; advertising (in which case how and where)

- I will avoid putting myself into any compromising situation which could be misinterpreted and lead to possible allegations.
- Pictures are transferred to my computer which is password protected
- I have registered with the Information Commissioner's Office for Data Protection
- Any stored pictures are deleted once a child leaves my setting

If you have any concerns, I will be happy to meet and discuss them with you.

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**

Lorraine Hobbs is appointed as the designated safeguarding lead responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy, and liaising with relevant external agencies.

## **8. Training and Awareness**

I will receive regular training on child safeguarding procedures, including how to recognize signs of abuse and how to respond appropriately to disclosures.

## **9. Communication and Engagement**

New Path Therapy will communicate this policy to all clients, parents, and carers to ensure transparency and promote a culture of safeguarding.

## **10. Review and Monitoring**

This policy will be reviewed annually or as required by changes in legislation or best practice guidelines.

## **11. Conclusion**

New Path Therapy is committed to upholding the highest standards of child safeguarding within my counselling and psychotherapy practice. This policy reflects our dedication to promoting the welfare and well-being of children and young people.

**Signed:** Lorraine Hobbs

**Date:** 02.01.2024