

Policy Name:	Safeguarding Children
Last update:	June 2024
Next update:	July 2025
Charity name:	Portsmouth City of Sanctuary
Responsible person:	Shamila Dhana

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1. Policy Statement

- I. Portsmouth City of Sanctuary is committed to protecting all the children, young people and vulnerable adults that use our service.
- II. A child is defined as any person under the age of 18. We will make sure that all children, young people and adults are given the same protection regardless of age, gender, immigration status, disability, sex or sexual orientation, race, religion or belief.
- III. We believe that everyone working and volunteering for Portsmouth City of Sanctuary has the responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, to keep them safe and prioritise their protection.
- IV. Portsmouth City of Sanctuary recognise the additional needs of children and vulnerable adults with asylum status, or other immigration status including minority ethnic groups and disabilities and the barriers they may face.

2. Aim of Policy

- I. This policy is for both staff and volunteers, it is the responsibility of all of us to act if we have concerns about the safety of a child.
- II. Portsmouth City of Sanctuary, The Board of Trustees, volunteers, paid staff, students are all required to adhere to this policy.
- III. This policy has been written to provide easy, accessible and practical advice for Portsmouth City of Sanctuary staff and volunteers.
- IV. Portsmouth City of Sanctuary is not a statutory childcare agency and it is not appropriate for staff and volunteers to carry out investigations into suspicions of child abuse. However under the Children's Act 2004, there is a duty placed on organisations to take appropriate action and to make referrals to police and children's services. This 'Duty of Care' applies to all staff and volunteers carrying out an activity on behalf of Portsmouth City of Sanctuary.

3. Implementation of this policy

- I. Portsmouth City of Sanctuary Board of trustees are responsible and ultimately accountable for the implementation of this policy, and Portsmouth City of Sanctuary fulfils its legal and regulatory safeguarding obligations.
- II. The Board will discharge this responsibility by -

- (a) Regarding safeguarding as a governance and risk management policy.
 - (b) Review this policy periodically and consult with the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) of the Charity.
 - (c) Regular Safeguarding reports to be presented to the Board on all key safeguarding risks, to be done by senior management and the DSO.
- III. All staff, volunteers, and students are to be given a copy of this policy and any further training before commencing work with any Portsmouth City of Sanctuary clients.

4. Legal Frame Work

This policy has been drawn up based on law and guidance that seeks to protect children at risk, namely:

- Children Act 1989 United Convention of the
 - Rights of the Child 1991
 - Data Protection Act 1998
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - Sexual Offences Act 2003
 - Children Act 2004
 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
 - Children and Families Act 2004
 - Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers; HMG 2015.
- I. The law defines a child as being under the age of 18.
- II. The **Children's Act 1989** - This legislation covers many aspects of the states duties towards children. In some of our work we may make reference to Section 17 and 20 which outline the duties of Local Authorities to assist to accommodate children in need.
- III. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- IV. The Munro Review and Child Protection

5. How we will keep Children Safe

Portsmouth City of Sanctuary will appoint a designated child protection safeguarding lead, and keep children safe by -

- i. Portsmouth City of Sanctuary will recruit staff and volunteers safely, ensuring checks are done, and follow safer recruitment practices.
- ii. Implement the code of conduct for all staff and volunteers.
- iii. Valuing, listening and respecting children.
- iv. Develop child safeguarding policies and procedures which reflect best practice.
- v. Manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
- vi. Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures
- vii. Use safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involve young people and their parents, families.
- viii. Record and store information securely.
- ix. Publicise our Safeguarding Policy on our website.
- x. Casework is not permitted outside the designated drop in or PCOS office. If a child presents without an adult and you are working alone, the designated safeguarding officer must be informed immediately. Children must be seen in pairs by PCOS volunteers or staff members, lone working with a child is not allowed.
- xi. Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for children, at risk people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- xii. Ensuring that families using the services of the charity are encouraged to report any concerns they have to a staff member or a trustee of PCoS
- xiii. Ensuring that the safeguarding policy is available to all on request.

6. Safeguarding Terms

- i. Safeguarding is described as the responsibility and activities undertaken by statutory and non statutory organisations working with children, to prevent or stop children from being ill treated or abused.
- ii. Safeguarding is about protecting children from harm, abuse or ill treatment by those who are supposed to be caring for them or who are in a position of trust and authority.

7. Context of Harm in our work with refugee and asylum seekers, and vulnerable migrants.

Staff and volunteers may come across children in their work, however there are two main areas that staff and volunteers may come across children -

- i. **Unaccompanied or Separated children** – The work of Portsmouth City of Sanctuary does not currently focus on unaccompanied or separated children, however we may come across them in a drop in centre, or at a project. Staff and volunteers must work in pairs when working with separated or unaccompanied children. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed immediately, or a trustee if a UASC presents to any Portsmouth City of Sanctuary staff member or volunteer.
- ii. **Children in Families** – The work undertaken by Portsmouth City of Sanctuary, is such that you may come across children who are part of a family unit who are accessing asylum support, families who have No Recourse to Public Funds, families who are refugees.

8. What is Child Abuse

- i. Child Abuse is where a child or young person under the age of 18 experiences ill treatment or impairment of development through a failure on the part of the parent or carer to ensure a reasonable standard of care and protection.
- ii. This policy also acknowledges that it is not only adults who abuse children, and that children may abuse children through buying, physical and sexual abuse, exploitation.

The following are four main categories of child abuse -

Physical abuse

- (a) any bruising to a baby – pre-walking stage
- (b) multiple bruising to different parts of the body
- (c) bruising of different colours, indicating repeated injuries
- (d) fingertip bruising to the chest, back, arms or legs
- (e) burns of any shape or size
- (f) an injury for which there is no adequate explanation.

Sexual abuse

- (a) something a child has told you or told someone else
- (b) a child who shows worrying sexualised behaviour in their play or with other children

- (c) a child who seems to have inappropriate sexual knowledge for their age
- (d) a child who may be visiting or being looked after by a known or suspected sexual offender.

Emotional abuse. These signs may be present in children whose parents are over-critical, emotionally distant, or unable to meet their child's emotional needs:

- (a) excessive behaviour, such as excessive bedwetting, overeating, rocking, headbanging
- (b) self-harming, for example, cutting or scratching themselves or an overdose
- (c) attempt at suicide
- (d) persistently running away from home
- (e) high levels of anxiety, unhappiness or withdrawal
- (f) children who usually seek out or avoid affection.

Neglect

- (a) squalid, unhygienic or dangerous home conditions
- (b) parents who fail to attend to their children's health or development needs
- (c) children who appear persistently undersized or underweight
- (d) children who continually appear tired or lacking in energy
- (e) children who suffer frequent injuries due to lack of supervision.

Other Child Protection Concerns -

- i. **Forced Marriage/Underage marriage** - It is illegal to force a child to get married in the UK, volunteers and staff must be alert to this when working with clients.
- ii. **FGM – Female Genital Mutilation** – FGM is practised predominantly amongst communities from Sub-Saharan Africa. If it comes to your attention that a young girl is about to undergo FGM here or in another country, a child referral must be made to children's services and soon as possible. If you become aware that a young girl has recently undergone the procedure, a referral must be made to social services.
- iii. **Radicalisation** - Terrorist groups which pose a threat seek to radicalise and recruit young people, if you have concerns please raise this with your line manager or the designated safeguarding officer.

9. What to do when you have concerns.

Circumstances that may give rise to safeguarding concerns may include the following

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- i. A child may disclose a past history of abuse in the project or elsewhere.
- ii. A child may disclose that he/she is being abused by another adult, child, carer, professional.
- iii. A member of staff or volunteer may become concerned about the conduct, behaviour of a child.
- iv. A parent or carer may disclose a past history of abuse and there is a likelihood that the child may be at risk of abuse.
- v. A member of staff or volunteer may become suspicious that a child is being abused due to their behaviour or physical signs.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer -

Portsmouth City of Sanctuary Designated safeguarding Office (DO) is currently a member of the Trustee Board – Shamila Dhana. Should an issue arise in her absence please contact the Chair of the Trustee Board – Malcolm Little. **Contact details can be found on the Safeguarding Alert form.**

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer is -

- i. Keep the written Safeguarding Procedures and policy up to date.
- ii. Offer consultation, advice and help should a child safeguarding incident arise.
- iii. Ensure the statutory child protection agencies have been contacted, and a written report kept.
- iv. Make use of Portsmouth City council MASH procedure following the threshold document/criteria.
- v. Record incidences and review policies.
- vi. Report on safeguarding risks to the board.

How to contact Social Services and the Police -

- i. Always discuss your concerns with your manager or the project lead. Further advice can be sought from the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- ii. If your concerns require immediate attention and your line manager, or Designated Safeguarding Officer is not available and immediate action is required then contact social services or the police.

Within social services you can contact the **Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub MASH team.**

Phone 023 9268 8793

email MASH@secure.portsmouthcc.gov.uk

At all other times, phone the out-of-hours service on 0300 555 1373.

- i. Information and practices will be shared with other organisations, such as health, police and children's services, to safeguard children and promote their welfare. Much more information is available at [Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Board](#)
- ii. It is important to keep accurate records about safeguarding concerns.
- iii. Any allegations made by children, adult, carers must be written down in the actual words used.
- iv. When a disclosure is made by a child, you should explain that you cannot keep the matter a secret and that you will have to tell someone.

10. Breach of the policy

In the event of a breach of this policy, the investigation suspension and disciplinary procedure may be instigated. All unlawful acts will be reported to the police.

PCoS expects the same high standards from all of our partners, contractors, suppliers and all third parties working with or for PCoS, including taking measures to prohibit their staff and representatives from engaging in any sexual exploitation and abuse in their working and person lives.

Signature of responsible person:	Shamila Dhana 03/06/2023
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