A Stitch Different Safeguarding Policy

Jan 2025 to re reviewed Jan 2026

A Stitch Different believe that every child, young person and adult has the right to be safe and we believe that it is always unacceptable for a child, young person or adult to experience abuse of any kind. A Stitch Different recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children, young people and adults, by a commitment to practice in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child, young person and adult is paramount.
- All children, young people, and adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers, and other agencies is essential in promoting people's welfare.
- Working in a positive way with adults who may be at risk accessing our service is essential to promote their wellbeing and safety.

The purpose of the policy:

- To support a culture of safety within A Stitch Different which promotes positive outcomes.
- To provide protection for all who receive our services.
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child, young person or adult at risk may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.
- This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of A Stitch Different.

This policy is based on and informed by the following:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Care Act (2014)
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance (2020)
- Mental Capacity Act (2005)
- Human Rights Act (1998)
- United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (1991)
- Data Protection Act (2018)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding to children, young people, parents and carers (2015)
- Safeguarding Disabled Children: Practice Guidance (2009)

- Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safeguarding Adult Board safeguarding procedures of the relevant authority in which we work.

Abuse falls into the following categories:
Types of abuse in relation to children: full definitions can be found at: www.nspcc.org.uk

- Bullying & harassment including peer to peer abuse, cyberbullying, sexting, revenge porn etc.
- Child sexual exploitation
- County Lines/gangs and youth violence
- Child trafficking including modern slavery
- Domestic abuse/violence
- Emotional abuse
- Female genital mutilation
- Grooming
- Neglect
- Online abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Faith abuse
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Forced Marriage https://gov..uk/forced-marriage
- Gender based violence

Types of abuse in relation to adults:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-policy-protecting-vulnerable-adults/sd8-opgs- safeguarding-policy#what-is-abuse

- Coercive control
- Discriminatory abuse
- Domestic violence (may not always be a Safeguarding issue but may be if a person has a mental health condition) and includes honour-based violence

Financial or material

- Modern slavery
  - Neglect or acts of omission
  - Physical
  - Psychological
  - Sexual

Abuse can be perpetrated by an individual (often known to the victim) or it can be organisational. Abuse can be perpetrated by peers.

Definitions in relation to the Prevent Duty

- An "*ideology" is a set of beliefs*

- *"Radicalization"* is defined by the Government's Prevent Duty Guidance as *"the process by which*

a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups."

It is recognised that radicalisers prey on individuals and individuals are attracted into terrorism in many cases due to underlying vulnerabilities. In essence, radicalisation is largely a
grooming process and is recognised as falling under Safeguarding.

- Factors which may contribute to vulnerability to being radicalised include (but are not limited to:)

- Possession of literature related to extreme views
  - Experience of poverty, disadvantage or social exclusion
  - Extremist influences
  - An event or series of traumatic events – global, national or personal
  - Recent political or religious conversion
  - Change in behaviour and/or appearance as a result of new influences
  - Identity confusion
  - Conflict with family over religious beliefs and/or lifestyle choices/extreme views
- Victim of or witness to race or religious hate crime
  - Pressure from peers associated with extremism
  - Rejected by peer, faith or social group or family ie isolated, bullied etc
  - Underachievement
  - Mental health issues
  - Substance misuse

- *Terrorism* is an action which endangers or causes serious violence, damage or disruption and is intended to influence the Government or to intimidate the public and is made with the intention of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

- "*Vulnerability*" describes factors and characteristics associated with being susceptible to radicalization

- Extremism is a vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

We will seek to safeguard children, young people, and their families by:

- valuing them, listening to, and respecting them.
- adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- sharing learning, including good practice from safeguarding and child protection practices with children, parents, staff, and volunteers.
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately.
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, and training.
- ensuring all practitioners working directly with children have received up to date safeguarding training.

We will seek to safeguard adults at risk by:

- adopting the six principles of safeguarding adults at risk and adopting person centred practices which are in line with Making Safeguarding Personal.
- involving the adult at risk in decision-making in respect of any safeguarding concerns that may arise. We will follow the principles of the Mental Capacity Act (2005) and its Code of Practice.
- adopting appropriate procedures for responding to concerns and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- sharing learning, including good practice from safeguarding practices with adults at risk, staff, and volunteers.
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, involving adults at risk appropriately.
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- Ensuring all practitioners working directly with children have received up to date safeguarding training.

Recruitment

Individuals who work directly with children and young people and adults at risk on behalf of the organisation will have an enhanced disclosure and barring service (DBS) check carried out. See Recruitment and Selection Policy for further information recruitment checks and processes.

Supervision & Training

Individuals who work solely with children and young people and adults at risk on behalf of the organisation will be made aware of this policy and will be required to attend safeguarding training in respect of children, young people and adults at risk. Safeguarding Training will be refreshed every 12 months alongside learning opportunities between this time.

Safeguarding officer Amanda Bland is trained to Level 3 (learnpac) refreshed annually

All other staff/ volunteers to be offered level 1 safeguarding training. Lead facilitators to undertake annual minimum level 2 training..

This policy is to be displayed & accessible to all attending or on request

Supervision of staff and volunteers will take place as per the Supervision Policy in which safeguarding will be a standard agenda item to discuss any concerns for children, young people or adults at risk and also identify any areas for training or development in safeguarding practices.

Meeting with all staff/ volunteers is to be held ahead of delivery of any program

Safeguarding is a standing item of every board meeting and is discussed and reviewed by the board The organisation's Safeguarding Officer Amanda Bland the Managing Director. The Managing Director is responsible for referring concerns to other agencies as appropriate and for ensuring that any safeguarding issues are dealt with appropriately. The Managing Director may need to attend further safeguarding meetings, case conferences and reviews with referral agencies as appropriate.

There is a designated safeguarding trustee on the board.

Safeguarding Officer

Amanda Bland Managing Director will raise safeguarding issues with the board of Directors as appropriate.

Online Safety

We recognise that during Covid-19 there is more interaction with people online either through video call, email, or other means. Therefore, we are committed to ensuring everyone who comes into contact with A Stitch Different, and our staff and volunteers are safe.

If there are any concerns in respect of children, young people, or adults at risk who we come into contact with or are told about while engaging online, this must follow the same procedures set out below.

We will pay additional attention to the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect which may be spotted during online engagement and will respond to these in-line with this policy and with a focus on safeguarding everyone who comes into contact with us.

Where there is a concern through an online chat or email facility (or other online but not face-to-face) we will support the child, young person, or adult at risk as we would in any other circumstance. We may need to seek more information from that person to ensure we can respond appropriately such as any immediate risk and ensure they get appropriate help.

We will signpost children, young people, or adults at risk to support agencies such as Samaritans, NSPCC or the Local Authority. If we do this, a record of the details we have, and action taken should be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.

If there is any immediate concern, this will be responded to as set out below and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

What to do if you are worried about a child, young person or adult at Risk

Recognise

Everyone who works with or for A Stitch Different will have completed safeguarding training in respect of children, young people, and adults at risk. Therefore, will all be aware of the types of abuse and the key indicators of these forms of abuse. These are the ones set out in the Children Acts 1989/2004 and the Care Act (2014) and associated guidance.

Raising concerns

The Safeguarding Officer will seek to clarify the nature of the concern, ensure that the child, young person or adult is safe and supported where there is an immediate cause for concern, and make any necessary referrals.

Respond

All concerns about the welfare of a child, young person and their families or concerns that a child, young person or adult may be suffering, or at risk of suffering, abuse or neglect must be raised immediately with the Safeguarding Officer and will be taken seriously.

The Safeguarding Officer will seek to clarify the nature of the concern, ensure that the child, young person or adult is safe and supported where there is an immediate cause for concern, and make any necessary referrals.

Under no circumstances should employees or volunteers attempt to carry out an investigation into allegations or suspicions of abuse. It is the responsibility of Social Services, through referral by the Safeguarding Officer, to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

- When there is a concern raised in respect of a child, young person or adult at risk, their immediate safety must be responded to. If there is a risk of immediate harm or in need or urgent medical attention. This will be done using the emergency services on 999.
- Reassure the child, young person or adult at risk, especially if they have shared their experiences of abuse or neglect with you directly.
- Listen to the information they are giving you but do not ask any leading questions, probe for further information, or begin an investigation. This is not your role.
- It is best practice, in relation to children & young people, to seek their consent to pass on the concerns and tell them who you will be passing the concerns onto.
- In relation to adults at risk, you must seek their consent to share the information. Consider if the adult may lack capacity to make decisions about their own and other's safety and

wellbeing. You can share information against a person's wishes if there is reasonable belief they are at risk of harm, other people are at risk of harm or to prevent or detect a crime. You must record your decision and the reasons for this, it is best to seek guidance from the Safeguarding Officer in these situations.

- In terms of safeguarding adults at risk, all responses to safeguarding concerns must be in line with Making Safeguarding Personal which recognises that adults at risk must remain in control of their lives and any safeguarding actions needs to keep the person at the centre.

Report

• All safeguarding concerns must be reported to the Safeguarding Officer immediately.

Name: Amanda Bland - Contact Details: 07525494205 or mandy@astitchdifferent.co.uk

- If the Safeguarding Officer is unavailable, then you should contact Debbie Twinney, Deputy Managing Director, Contact Details: 07495424592 or debbie@astitchdifferent.co.uk
- NSPCC can be contacted 24/7 for advice regarding safeguarding children & young people. This can be done so anonymously without any commitment to actions.
- The Local Authority Adult Social Care Emergency Duty Team can be contacted for advice regarding adult at risk. This would be in the area that the child lives, the key contacts are:
- Cumbria Social Services – Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub & out of hours 03332401727
- Cumbria Adult Social Services 03003032704
- Children & Families Services Craven House Barrow, Support & Protection 01229408100

Remember: safeguarding concerns are generally reported to the local authority where the child, young person or adult lives.

Record

- All safeguarding concerns must be recorded in writing & sent to mandy@astitchdifferent.co.uk
- Where there are immediate concerns then a verbal discussion should take place with the Safeguarding Officer immediately. These should be followed up in writing using the 'Reporting a Concern Form' the same working day.
- For concerns that do not require an immediate response, should be recorded digitally & emailed to safeguarding officer via email to astitchdifferentcic@gmail.com
- All records of safeguarding concerns must be factual and record the following details as a minimum:
- Date, time, and location of concern
- Name of child, young person or adult at risk
- Name of alleged perpetrator
- Details of the concern – this must be factual including who, what, where and when.
- Any immediate actions that has been taken
- Who has the concern been reported to
- Is the child or young person's parents/carers aware, if not why?
- Incidents will be recorded by the Safeguarding Officer outlining the concerns and action taken, these will be stored securely in line with the data protection policy.

Refer

• The Safeguarding Officer will make a decision based on the information if an onward referral is needed, this will include:

- Children's Social Care
- Adult Social Care
- Police
- Local Authority Designated Officer
- Any other relevant agencies

• The Safeguarding officer will seek advice and guidance from the trustee for safeguarding or the chair of trustees in respect of safeguarding concerns. All safeguarding concerns will be reported to the board to review and learn from.

Disputes over safeguarding actions

If there is a dispute over the actions or outcome of a safeguarding concern, this should be raised with the Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer can seek advice and guidance from Cumbria Social Services for safeguarding or the deputy Managing Director. Alternatively can seek advice from the Local Authority Children's Social Care or Adult Social Care in the area the concerns is reported to have occurred.

In respect of children & young people, if there continues to be a dispute that cannot be settled internally, then staff or volunteers care contact NSPCC to raise their concern or follow the Whistleblowing Policy.

Concerns relating to a member of staff, volunteer or trustee

Concerns raised in respect of staff, volunteers or trustees are taken very seriously and will be responded to with immediacy and respect for everyone involved.

Any concerns relating to a member of staff, volunteer or trustee should be raised with the Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible. A confidential discussion can be had with the Designated Safeguarding Officer should you be concerns about anyone working with or for the charity.

If the concern is in respect of the Designated Safeguarding Officer then this should be raised with the Deputy Managing Director, given that the Designated Safeguarding Officer is the Managing Director.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will gain the information and either ask you to make a written record or make one of your account and ask you to verify it. You must provide the Designated Safeguarding Officer any information (written or otherwise) in respect of your concern.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will inform the staff member and will consider the disciplinary policy and risk assessment of appropriate action. Should the staff member be suspended pending investigation, this does not assume guilt but allows for a fair and transparent process to be followed.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will lead on any internal investigation and will consider any onward referrals including:

- The Police if a criminal offence is alleged.
- Informing the Local Authority Designated Officer, this will be at the Local Authority in which the concern is alleged to have happened.
- Any other agencies as deemed necessary.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):

The role of the LADO is to oversee allegations of abuse and neglect towards a child or young person by a person in a paid or voluntary position. They will consider a case and will become involved when there are concerns that:

- a staff member has behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child
- a staff member has committed a criminal offence in relation to a child
- a staff member has behaved towards children in a way that indicated they are unsuitable to work with children.

The child, young person, adult at risk and the member of staff or volunteer will be supported throughout the whole process.

If concerns are substantiated, the disciplinary policy will be followed. It will also be considered if the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) should be informed. This may be led by direction from statutory agencies.

If concerns are unsubstantiated, there will be consideration to how the staff member, volunteer or trustee can return to their position and if any training, support or changes to their role is needed, especially if there is a conclusion of poor practice.

Confidentiality

The organisation respects everyone's right to confidentiality (see Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy), however, it believes that the welfare of children, young people and families has to take priority. The organisation has a duty to disclose abuse and relevant information will be passed on to the appropriate agency if deemed necessary. The consequences of breaching confidentiality for trustees, staff and volunteers will lead to disciplinary procedures.