

Little Lost Robot CIC

Children and Young People's Safeguarding Policy

Policy Updated January 2024

Next review December 2024

Purpose of Policy

To set out the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and how this will be implemented by Little Lost Robot CIC in the discharge of its duties

Policy Application

This policy applies to all members of staff at Little Lost Robot CIC and all those organisations that have a working relationship with Little Lost Robot CIC including partners, funders, volunteers and freelancers.

Policy Objectives

Our main policy objective is to ensure that we will, along with our partner agencies, promote safeguarding as our general practice. This means that staff and managers in all organisations working with children, families and young people fully understand their safeguarding responsibilities and their active role in working together to safeguard vulnerable adults from harm.

For this policy to be effective it is essential that all staff have an applied understanding of what safeguarding means, knows that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, knows the signs and symptoms of potential harm, how to access safeguarding information, advice and guidance, and is committed to making an informed contribution to safeguarding vulnerable adults.

Definitions

A child is "anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means 'children and young people' throughout. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate for children and young people, does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection under the Children Act 1989. (See Children's Act 2004)

What do we want to achieve?

Little Lost Robot CIC will follow the below principles: -

Everyone has the right to live his or her life free from violence, fear and abuse

Everyone has the right to be protected from harm and exploitation

Everyone has the right to independence, which carries with it a degree of risk

Little Lost Robot CIC will ensure that all members of staff know or can easily find out what they need to do if they have a concern about the abuse of children or young people

Categories of child abuse and possible indicators of child abuse

Definitions of child abuse are drawn from the Department of Health Publication, 'Working Together To Safeguard Children' (2018):

Physical abuse - A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Symptoms can include:

Unexplained or untreated injuries

Injuries on unlikely parts of the body

Cigarette burns, bite or belt marks, scalds

Fear of parents being contacted, going home or receiving medical advice

Flinching when touched

Refusal to discuss injury

Covering arms and legs

Sexual abuse - Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Symptoms can include:

Pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in genital area

Stomach pains

Discomfort when walking

Unexplained sources of money

Inappropriate drawings, language or behaviour

Aggressive, withdrawn behaviour or fear of one person

Neglect - The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may

occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)

Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger

Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)

Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Symptoms can include:

Poor personal hygiene

Constantly hungry

Inappropriate clothing or dress

Constantly tired

Lonely, no friends

Underweight

No parental support or interest

Unkempt appearance

Emotional abuse - The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Symptoms can include:

Over-reaction to mistakes

Sudden speech disorders

Extremes of emotions

Self-mutilation

Cyber Abuse is the use of technology and social networking sites to abuse another. Social media (email, mobile phones, websites, instant messaging, chatrooms, etc.) is increasingly being used to harm or harass children and adults in a deliberate manner. This can include communications that seek to intimidate, control, manipulate or humiliate the recipient. It may also include threatening a person's earnings, employment, reputation or safety. Recipients of the abuse can feel like there is no escape as they can be contacted at any time and also in places previously deemed safe spaces like their home.

Peer on peer abuse (abuse of children by other children) - Children can also be perpetrators of abuse of other children through bullying, emotional abuse or sexually harmful behaviour. Concerns about this or disclosures by other children must be taken seriously and staff should consult with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Gang related activity and County Lines (Dangerous Drugs Networks) - Dangerous Drug Networks are drug gangs who target more vulnerable children and adults to distribute drugs within and across counties. Sometimes extreme violence can be used in order to create a hierarchy and to intimidate rival gangs. This is usually to disrupt any existing drug supply chain. Children, often teenagers, can become caught up in these gangs and are used as drug runners.

In addition to this, children may also be abused through involvement with gangs, trafficking, radicalisation, domestic abuse (either within their household e.g., living with parents in an abusive relationship, or within their own relationships) and through Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). A child living in a household where there is domestic abuse is deemed to be suffering emotional abuse.

Forced Marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties where duress is a factor. The UN Division for the Advancement of Women states that, "As a child under the age of 18 is not capable of giving their valid consent to enter into marriage, child marriages are considered to be forced marriages."

Employer Responsibility

Little Lost Robot CIC will ensure that:

All staff, freelancers and volunteers are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and that they are informed about and take full responsibility for their actions at all levels.

This means:

Ensuring the highest standards of safe recruitment, supervision and management oversight of Little Lost Robot CIC staff, particularly but not exclusively those working directly with children and young people

Ensuring that children and young people are seen and listened to and that their views are taken fully into account when making decisions

Taking appropriate action regarding any concerns expressed about their welfare, commensurate with their rights to privacy and wherever possible on the basis of informed consent

All members of staff, freelancers and volunteers who are employed by or on behalf of Little Lost Robot CIC, and who have contact with children and young people and their families, will have a clear understanding of Little Lost Robot CIC responsibilities for safeguarding

Regularly refreshing our policies and procedures about safeguarding in light of lessons from research and serious case reviews and ensuring continuous improvement

Promoting the highest standards of safeguarding practice across Little Lost Robot CIC, including robust standards for safe recruitment and ongoing checks

Partnership Working

Little Lost Robot CIC frequently provides arts workshops, courses and projects in alliance with partnership organisations. Little Lost Robot CIC endeavours to take joint responsibility for the safety of young people, entrusted to us, producing interagency contracts which define the roles and responsibility of each organisation.

Examples of roles defined in such contracts:

To organise Public Liability Insurance for the workshop

To ensure that where possible, Little Lost Robot CIC staff, contracted freelance workers and volunteers are not left alone with young people

To ensure that young people are aware of the venue's health & safety procedures

To complete a Health and Safety risk assessment of venue, young people and art form

To ensure adequate supervision of young people. (we use B&NES guidelines to decide correct staffing levels)

To support the needs of young people

To ensure that young people are aware of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour for the workshops

Good practice guidelines to working with young people:

Do's

Ensure that all young people are given appropriate levels of support and sessions are adequately staffed by Little Lost Robot CIC staff and/or partnership organisations (Use B&NES guidelines to decide correct staffing levels)

Treat all young people with respect and dignity

Put the welfare of the young person first before the project/workshop goals

Try to build a balanced relationship with mutual respect, involving young people in decision making processes wherever possible

Make art fun

Be a good role model - this includes not smoking, drinking alcohol or swearing in the company of young people

Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback and never negative criticism

Avoid private situations with young people i.e., no secrets and avoid unobserved situations

Challenge young people when they use inappropriate language or behaviour.

Make sure that any suspicions, allegations or disclosures of abuse concerning young people are well documented and acted on

Keep a record of any accidents which occur to young people and ensure that any treatment given or action taken is well documented (please refer to Little Lost Robot CIC' Health and Safety policy)

Don't

Touch a young person in an intrusive or sexual manner

Make sexual suggestive comments to a young person, even as a joke

Do things of a personal nature that a young person can do for themselves, such as taking them to the toilet. If a young person does require such attention, Little Lost Robot CIC would normally expect this to be the role of supporting staff members of partnership organisations, details of which should be outlined in a partnership contract

Take a young person to your home

Offer lifts in your own car

Initiate physical contact

Safe Employment

Robust procedures are in place to ensure that staff who have access to children and young people or access to sensitive information about children and young people are employed safely.

This means:

There is a culture throughout Little Lost Robot CIC that enables safeguarding issues to be addressed

Recruitment and vetting procedures prevent unsuitable people from having contact with children and young people

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

Staff who work or have contact with children and young people and their families or carers have appropriate safeguarding and safe working practices training, including induction, consistent with their role and function

Little Lost Robot CIC recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children and young people in some way. All reasonable steps are taken to ensure suitable people are recruited

Safe Recruitment Procedures

Interview and induction:

A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced Disclosure check will need to be present before a candidate can begin work for and with Little Lost Robot CIC, if necessary, for the role

Two confidential references will be required, of which one should be regarding previous work with children and young people (for posts in which there will be direct contact with children and young people)

Evidence of identity (passport or driving license with photo) will be required

All staff will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations

All staff working directly with, or responsible for, work with vulnerable adults should receive formal induction, during which:

A check will be made that qualifications can be substantiated

The job requirements and responsibilities will be clarified

They should receive a copy of and sign up to the Staff Handbook and our values and code of conduct

Safeguarding procedures are explained and training needs are identified

Training:

Staff/ freelancers and volunteers will receive training to:

Analyse their own practice against established good practice and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them against false allegations

Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse

Respond to concerns expressed by children and young people

Work safely and effectively with children and young people

Understand their right to confidentiality if they have concerns about another member of staff/volunteer

Little Lost Robot CIC requires staff/freelancers and volunteers to attend at least one internal safeguarding training event and if necessary additional external training from the appropriate bodies.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced Disclosure

The DBS's aim is to help organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors by identifying candidates who may be unsuitable to work with children, young people or other vulnerable members of society. Little Lost Robot CIC insists that any member of staff over the age of 18 working with children and young people must have a DBS check within the following terms:

DBS checks are required, and can only be obtained, for those working in roles that involve working directly and regularly with, or being in sole charge of, children, young people and vulnerable adults. Please consult SAFE child's DBS guidelines: <http://www.safecic.co.uk/>

For more information, please see Disclosure and Barring Service website
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

DBS checks for both staff, freelancers and volunteers are processed through an umbrella organisation – Theatre Royal Bath.

Designated Officer

The Designated Officer has operational responsibility for receiving concerns about the safety and welfare of vulnerable adults and they will make decisions about what action needs to be taken and liaise with other agencies involved in safeguarding, especially adult social care.

The Little Lost Robot CIC Designated Officer also has a responsibility to ensure vulnerable adult policies and procedures are reviewed and kept up to date and that all relevant staff access appropriate levels of training.

The Little Lost Robot CIC Designated Officer is:

Ruby Sant
Email: ruby@lostrobot.org
Phone: 07703 319557

Little Lost Robot CIC Designated Deputy Officer is:

Juliet Webb
Email: juliet@lostrobot.org
Phone: 07365 519479

In the event a concern relates directly to the designated staff the contact is:

Disclosure

What to do if someone makes a disclosure to a member of Little Lost Robot CIC staff/volunteer/freelancers:

It is possible that a child or young person who is suffering, or has suffered, abuse will disclose to Little Lost Robot CIC member of staff/volunteer/freelancer. This is something that everyone should be prepared for and must handle carefully.

Good practice guidelines for dealing with disclosure (please note: this is intended as guidance and is not a check list)

Find a suitable location to hold such a discussion, where the young person will feel comfortable and safe and where you are unlikely to get interrupted
Please note that you may be required to work alone with a young person in such situations.
It is advised, where possible to remain visible
Stay calm and relaxed

Explain the need for you to involve others

Listen carefully and use open questioning to clarify the issues. Do not ask leading questions (indicating the answers you expect) or questions requiring Yes/No answers. Do not attempt to get the young person to disclose information, just focus on ensuring that the young person is safe

Express your sympathy. 'I am sorry to hear this has happened to you'

Reassure them that they are doing the right thing by sharing their concerns and be prepared to clearly inform them that they are not to blame

Try to determine the basic facts, leaving more detailed discussions to trained professionals.

Be aware they may still want to talk to you about things that might be disturbing

Explain that Little Lost Robot CIC will refer them to people who will be able to give them appropriate support and reassure the young person that they will be dealing with specifically trained people, such as police officers and social workers

Record accurately what was said by the young person and what questions you asked. Note the date and time of the conversation on a referral form

Throughout the conversation do not jump to conclusions or suspect who the perpetrator of the abuse might be

Seek further assistance from Little Lost Robot CIC' Designated Lead

Do not initiate physical contact with the young person

Contact the Designated Lead Officer at Little Lost Robot CIC as soon as possible. If they are not available, do not hesitate to contact Bath and North East Somerset Council for all concerns regarding the welfare of children and young people. If you have a concern about a child or a family, please contact them on 01225 39 61 11 or 01225 47 79 29 or 0300 247 0201 to discuss any safeguarding concern.

In the event of an emergency, always ring the police on 999. If you think a child is in immediate danger please call the B&NES Emergency Duty Team on 01454 61 51 65

You should follow up any referral with a copy of the notes that you have made following your conversation with the child/young person, using their own words. These can then be passed on to the appropriate organisations.

Allegations against staff

In the event of an accusation of abuse being made against any member of Little Lost Robot CIC staff/volunteer/freelancer, the individual accused will be automatically suspended pending further investigations. The temporary suspension of a member of staff in no way implies guilt or innocence. It is a measure intended to protect and reassure both staff and/or the child/young person.

An internal investigation will be held and the member of staff/volunteer/freelancer against whom an accusation of abuse has been made will be summoned to a Disciplinary meeting as early as possible. They are entitled to be accompanied to this meeting. Minutes will be taken of the meeting. The task of the Disciplinary Committee is to decide whether or not the accused member of staff/volunteer/freelancer should be allowed to continue to work with children and young people. At all times the welfare of the child/young person should be of paramount importance.

In all cases where the accusation of abuse is found to be true, the Disciplinary Committee will normally terminate the employment, contract or agreement with the individual. Lesser measures may be taken at the discretion of the Disciplinary Committee.

This is an internal procedure and will be in addition to any external legal procedure necessitated by the relevant authorities.

Staff referral form for reporting concerns about a child/young person

Details of child and parents/carers

Your details

Report

This form should be copied, marked 'Private and Confidential', and passed confidentially to the Designated Officer at Little Lost Robot CIC, Ruby Sant and to the statutory authorities (if they have been informed of the incident) within 48 hours of the incident.

Artist or freelancers referral form for reporting concerns about a child/young person

If you consider a child or young person is at risk of immediate harm first call the police on 999 or the B&NES Emergency Duty Team on 01454 61 51 65

Then inform the Little Lost Robot CIC Designated Lead:
Ruby Sant - 07703 319557

In the event you cannot contact the lead person above, please contact B&NES on 01225 39 61 11 or 01225 47 79 29 or 0300 247 0201 to discuss any safeguarding concern.

Details of child/young person

Your details

Report

This form should be copied, marked 'Private and Confidential', and passed confidentially to:
Ruby Sant at Little Lost Robot CIC.

Dated 3 January 2024

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ruby Sant
Managing Director