

Safeguarding Children

1. Background

Abbeyfield the Dales (ATD) has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and neglect and will ensure all staff and volunteers are clear about their duty to safeguard not only the people they support, but also any children with whom they come into contact during the course of their working activities.

This policy has been developed in recognition of the legislative requirements and expectations on individual services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

In this document a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means children and young people throughout.

2. Objectives

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all staff understand their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children with whom they come into contact during their working activities.

All staff will be guided by the following principles:

- Children have a right to be safe and should be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect.
- safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility.
- it is better to help children as early as possible, before issues escalate and become more damaging.
- children and families are best supported and protected when there is a co-ordinated response from all relevant agencies.

ATD will work in partnership with other multi-agency partners in order that the protection and safeguarding of children is consistent with current policy and guidance.

3. Scope

All established staff, agency staff and volunteers working for ATD.

This policy applies to Abbeyfield the Dales Limited and its corporate trustee responsibilities for registered providers Charles Edward Sugden Almshouses, and Frank Crossley's Almshouses, also for the non-registered provider The Pawson Cottage Homes, and its subsidiary Abbeyfield Court Limited.

4. Policy

Even though the primary responsibility of ATD staff does not relate to children, they may encounter visiting children during their working activities. All staff have a duty to safeguard and promote the

welfare of children and should be alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and know what to do if they suspect that a child is at risk of harm.

4.1. Defining Child Abuse and Neglect

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment – a person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or by a stranger, including via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. An abused child will often experience more than one type of abuse, as well as other difficulties in their lives. Abuse and neglect can happen over a period of time but can also be a one-off event. Child abuse and neglect can have major long-term impacts on all aspects of a child's health, development, and well-being.

4.2. Types of Abuse

There are 4 main types of abuse:

4.2.1. Physical abuse

Physical abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. Some of the following signs may be indicators of physical abuse:

- Children with frequent injuries.
- Children with unexplained or unusual fractures or broken bones.
- Children with unexplained:
 - Bruises or cuts
 - Burns or scalds
 - Bite marks

4.2.2. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong.
- Parents or carers who withdraw their attention from their child, giving the child the 'cold shoulder'.
- Parents or carers blaming their problems on their child.
- Parents or carers who humiliate their child, for example, by name-calling or making negative comparisons.

4.2.3. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child. Many children who are victims of sexual abuse do not recognise themselves as such. A child may not understand what is happening and may not even understand that it is wrong. Sexual abuse can have a long-term impact on mental health.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual abuse:

- Children who display knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age.
- Children who use sexual language or have sexual knowledge that you wouldn't expect them to have.
- Children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games.
- Children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections, or underage pregnancy.

4.2.4. Neglect

Neglect is a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision, or shelter. It is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of neglect:

- Children who are living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe.
- Children who are left hungry or dirty.
- Children who are left without adequate clothing, e.g., not having a winter coat.
- Children who are living in dangerous conditions, i.e., around drugs, alcohol or violence.
- Children who are often angry, aggressive, or self-harm.
- Children who fail to receive basic healthcare.
- Parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured.

4.3. Safety and Welfare of Visiting Children

Children may visit ATD premises for a number of reasons:

- They (or the adult responsible for them) have a relative or friend living at the premises.
- They have a parent, relative or acquaintance who works at the premises.
- They are visiting the premises in the company of a professional, for example from a school or church, to take part in an internally or externally organised event.

Children visiting ATD premises must be accompanied by a responsible adult who must personally supervise the children at all times. Groups of children visiting with professionals must be accompanied by enough responsible adults to ensure their safety and welfare.

Adults visiting with children must be reminded to sign the children in and out of the premises' Visitors Book.

Where play areas are provided for the benefit of visiting children, the Manager must ensure that signage is displayed stating "Safety Notice: Children must be supervised at all times".

Any known or foreseeable risks to visiting children should be assessed and mitigated, for example, where a Person Posing a Risk to Children lives at the service.

Staff must not provide care or have any unsupervised contact with visiting children.

Staff who bring their children to visit ATD residents or to attend social events are reminded that they are responsible for personally supervising their children at all times. Staff are not allowed to bring their children with them when they are on duty. Should an occasion arise where a member of staff has problems with their childcare arrangements, they must speak

with their line manager. Any decision to allow children of a member of staff to be on ATD premises whilst the member of staff is working may only be taken by the Manager and will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances and for the shortest time possible.

4.4. The Prevent Strategy

Prevent is about safeguarding people and communities from the threat of terrorism. *Prevent* is 1 of the 4 elements of *Contest*, the Government's counter-terrorism strategy. The main aim of *Prevent* is to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. At the heart of *Prevent* is safeguarding children and adults and providing early intervention to protect and divert people away from being drawn into terrorist activity.

Certain specified authorities have a legal duty, known as the Prevent Duty, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". Whilst this legal duty does not extend to ATD, we are committed to our role in safeguarding staff, residents, visiting students and children and other stakeholders from becoming radicalised and being drawn into terrorism.

If anyone has concerns about their own safety or the safety and wellbeing of others in relation to *Prevent*, you must speak to your line manager who will explore the concerns and where necessary report them to professional organisations for appropriate action and support.

Alternatively, concerns may be raised by:

- Calling the police hotline on 0800 789 321
- Calling the local police force by dialling 101
- Summoning urgent police assistance by dialling 999
- Reporting suspicious activity online: <https://act.campaign.gov.uk/>

Concerns about radicalisation of a child can also be reported to NSPCC by:

- Calling 0808 800 5000
- Contacting help@nspcc.org.uk
- Reporting concerns online <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/protecting-children-from-radicalisation/>

4.5. Designated Safeguarding Lead

ATD's Designated Safeguarding Leads are Registered Managers and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead is to:

- Act as a champion of Abbeyfield's safeguarding vision.
- Raise the profile of safeguarding across the organisation.
- Serve as a visible point-of-contact for anyone who may have safeguarding concerns.
- Report safeguarding issues and strategic risks to the Executive and to the Board, via the Quality Committee.
- Promote strategic ownership of safeguarding by ensuring it remains at the forefront of Executive and Board decisions.
- Support effective safeguarding governance arrangements.
- Serve as the named Lead for external partners and agencies, where required.

5. Finance, Value for Money & Social Value

ATD will add social value by taking a proactive role in tackling child abuse wherever it occurs, even if this is not within its own premises.

6. Supported Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Responding to possible child abuse.

7. Linked Policies

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults (LG031P)

8. Legislation/Regulation

Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) 2014

Regulation 13: Safeguarding service users from abuse and improper treatment

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

9. Review

Every 3 years, subject to any regulatory or legislative updates.

10. Procedure/Guidance

[Working together to safeguard children.](#)

[Prevent Duty Guidance](#)