

Safeguarding Policy

Policy agreed by Board of Trustees 10th Jan 2024

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Risk Management Policy
- Privacy policy
- Volunteer Management Policy
- Data protection policy
- IT, Communications and Monitoring Policy

Contents

Section 1: Details of the organisation.....	2
Section 2: Introduction.....	3
Our commitment.....	3
Good governance and healthy culture.....	3
Section 3: Prevention.....	5
Understanding abuse and neglect.....	5
Safer recruitment.....	5
Safeguarding training.....	6
Practice Guidelines.....	6
Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct.....	6
Whistleblowing.....	6
Section 4: Partnership working.....	7
Section 5: Responding to concerns and allegations of abuse.....	7
Documenting a concern.....	8
Concern about a child.....	9
Concern that an adult needs protection.....	10
Adoption of the policy.....	11
Appendix 1: Safeguarding Policy Statement.....	12
Appendix 2: Flowchart.....	14
Appendix 3: Useful Information.....	15

Section 1: Details of the organisation

Name: Pregnancy Crisis Helpline

Address: PO Box 78897, London, SW16 9PL

Tel No: 020 3880 5798

General email address: info@pregnancycrisishelpline.org.uk

Charity Number: 1190460

Regulators: Charity Commission

Safeguarding

Safeguarding email address: safeguarding@pregnancycrisishelpline.org.uk

Chair of Trustees and Designated Safeguarding Lead: Toby Cosh

Email: toby@pregnancycrishelpline.org.uk

Insurance

Insurance Company: Hiscox Insurance Company Limited

The following is a brief description of our activities

We are a Christian charity based in the UK, providing compassionate care to women and men who need to talk to someone following an unplanned pregnancy or struggling with difficult emotions after an abortion.

Our work is not in-person and takes place over email, web chat and telephone interactions.

We work with vulnerable adults and young people as part of our activities. This includes talking with people who are experiencing a personal crisis and who might be distressed and feeling they have no one to turn to.

Section 2: Introduction

Our commitment

We recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”.

We concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.” As Trustees we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

Our safeguarding statement for display can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

Good governance and healthy culture

Good governance helps an organisation prevent abuse and means it can respond quickly and with integrity when concerns arise. Central to this our Board of Trustees.

The board is appointed to have independent authority and legal responsibility for how our charity operate, they have a critical role in decision making and compliance as well as setting the values, standards and behaviours of our organisation.

The standards and behaviours of our workers may be referred to as the culture of the organisation or “the way we do things around here”. Culture can be shaped in both negative and positive ways.

“The culture of a charity goes beyond mere compliance with legal and regulatory demands. Charity governance is most effective when it provides assurances not just that legal requirements are met, but that the behaviour of people working for the charity, and those who come into contact with it, is proper and ethical. Culture, alongside good governance, can be pivotal to whether a charity achieves its stated object” (ICSA The Governance Institute, 2017)

We are committed to robust governance and a healthy culture which enables the charitable aims of our organisation.

The following Safeguarding Policy and Statement (which can be found in Appendix 1) aims to meet the requirements of ensuring a safe environment for those accessing our services and build an open culture where:

- Those who lead do so by example and are committed to the safeguarding of all.
- Those that work or volunteer are safely recruited and trained for their roles.
- There are accountability structures in place.
- A code of conduct has been established.
- The values of the organisation are embedded in its day-to-day actions and behaviours of its people.
- There is open communication.

Section 3: Prevention

We work to prevent abuse through the following means:

Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult.

To safeguard those in our places of worship and organisations we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19:

- 1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.*
- 2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.*

Also for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5:

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Safer recruitment

The trustees will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post.
- Those applying have completed an application form.
- Those short listed have been interviewed.
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview.
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate.

- A self-declaration form and disclosure and barring check (DBS) has been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information).
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified.
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant.
- The applicant has completed a probationary period.
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

Safeguarding training

The Trustees are committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis.

The Trustees will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

Practice Guidelines

As an organisation working with young people and adults at risk of harm, we issue good practice guidelines to all our workers. These are accessed via the online manual.

Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

As Trustees we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision.

All workers have been issued with a code of conduct and will be given clear expectations about what is expected of them both within their role. They will also receive further training as necessary.

Whistleblowing

As an organisation, we will follow the principles contained in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. Therefore, we expect that all employees (paid or voluntary) will report improper actions and omissions.

Whilst all malpractice and acts of discrimination will be investigated, it is especially important that suspicions of abuse are immediately reported to the safeguarding team.

Section 4: Partnership working

Pregnancy Crisis Helpline partners with other organisations to help deliver our services and meet our charitable aims.

- *Image and Pregnancy Helpline:* www.pregnancyhelpline.co.uk
- *Options London:* www.optionslondon.org

We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding. We meet regularly with partners to review operational performance and safeguarding compliance.

We believe good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

Section 5: Responding to concerns and allegations of abuse

Under no circumstances should a volunteer or worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse.

The main procedures for a call handler or volunteer who thinks there might be someone at risk of harm are as follows:

- 1) Inform them that you're concerned for their safety, and that you feel they need extra support to keep them safe.
- 2) The following information, where relevant, is needed where the caller, or someone they know, may be considered to be at risk of harm:
 - Name and Surname
 - Address
 - Mental health Team / Social Worker and Contact Details
 - Details of risk
 - Relevant history
 - Information of any children who may be in the household and could be harmed

3) Report your concerns to the safeguarding officer/lead. For immediate-risk situations, contact police or appropriate services directly and then report the actions to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Have a low threshold for triggering safeguarding concerns - better to escalate concerns and decide that no action is needed, than to do nothing and fail to identify significant harm.

Documenting a concern

The worker or volunteer in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to one of the safeguarding team via phone, WhatsApp or at safeguarding@pregnancycrisishelpline.org.uk

Please note: if the suspicions in any way involve one of the Safeguarding Team then the report should be made to a different member of the team. If the suspicions implicate all members of the Safeguarding Team, then the report should be made in the first instance to: **Thirtyone:Eight** Tel: 0303 003 1111 Option 2.

Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.

- The Safeguarding Team should contact the appropriate agency or they may first ring the Thirtyone:Eight helpline for advice. They should then contact social services in the area the child or adult lives.
- The Safeguarding Officer may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern:
 - Chair or trustee responsible for safeguarding who may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident.
 - Designated officer or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place. The form for recording these can be found [here](#).
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Team, the absence of the Safeguarding Team should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from Thirtyone:eight.

- The Trustees will support the Safeguarding Lead/Officers in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from Thirtyone:eight, although the Trustees hope that workers will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Lead/Officers has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Lead/Officers as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency directly. We hope by making this statement that the Trustees demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the Safeguarding Lead/Officer is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

Concern about a child

Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Lead/Officer will:

- Contact Children's Social Services (or Thirtyone:eight) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by Thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Lead/Officer will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Seek and follow the advice given by Thirtyone:eight if for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. Thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

Concern that an adult needs protection

Suspicious or allegations of abuse or harm including; physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse

If there is concern about any of the above, Safeguarding Lead/Officer will:

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively Thirtyone:eight can be contacted for advice.
- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Lead/Officer, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will:

- Liaise with Children's Social Services regarding the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the LADO if they are involved.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with care and support needs

The Safeguarding Lead/Officer will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker.
- Make a referral to the DBS following the advice of Adult Social Services.

The Care Act places the duty upon Adult Services to investigate situations of harm to adults with care and support needs. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for Adult Services to decide not the charity.

Adoption of the policy

This policy was agreed by the Trustees at the board meeting on 10th Jan 2024 and will be reviewed annually:

Signed by:

Position:

Date:

Trustee

.....

Clive Copus

Signed by:

Position:

Date:

Trustee

.....

Olivia Coningham-Rolls

Signed by:

Position:

Date:

Chair of Trustees

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Toby Cosh

Appendix 1: Safeguarding Policy Statement

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect vulnerable adults and young people in the United Kingdom. This includes:

- Working together to Safeguarding Children 2018
- The Care Act 2014
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR

We believe that:

- Adults at risk and young people should never experience abuse of any kind.
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all adults at risk and young people, to keep them safe and to practice in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the vulnerable adult and young person is paramount.
- All adults at risk and young people, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some adults at risk and young people are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences or additional needs.
- Working in partnership with adults at risk and young people, and with relevant agencies, is essential in promoting their welfare.

We will seek to keep young people and vulnerable adults safe by:

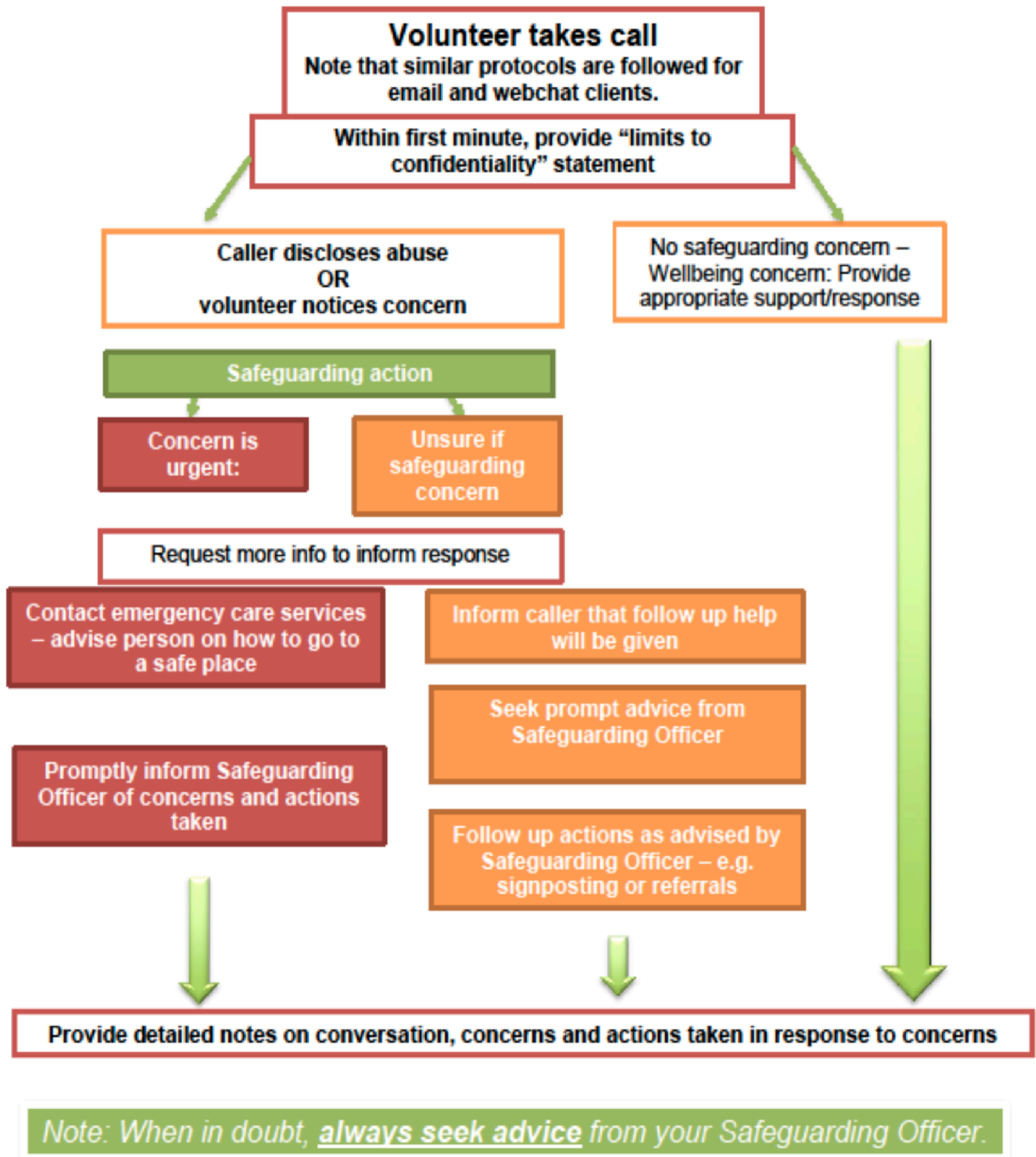
- Ensuring clients with medical or mental health concerns are signposted immediately to the appropriate service to be assessed before engaging with our services.
- Valuing, listening to and respecting them.
- Appointing a nominated safeguarding lead, and a lead trustee for safeguarding
- Developing safeguarding policies and procedures which reflect best practice.
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving young people and adults at risk appropriately.
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures.
- Implementing a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely, in line with our Data Protection Policy and in accordance with GDPR and other relevant legislation.
- Acknowledging our limitations and referring to more experienced or better equipped practitioners or services where appropriate.

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures, including:

- Risk Management Policy
- Privacy policy
- Volunteer Management Policy
- Data protection policy
- IT, Communications and Monitoring Policy

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

Appendix 2: Flowchart



Appendix 3: Useful Information

- Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees - Charity Commission:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>
- Safeguarding vulnerable adults: Care and support statutory guidance:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutoryguidance>
- Working together to safeguard children 2018:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children-2>
- Charity Governance Code:
<https://www.charitygovernancecode.org/en/front-page>
- thirtyone:eight - safeguarding advice for charities
<https://thirtyoneeight.org/safeguarding-services/>
- Handling and reporting incidents and allegations:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees#handle-and-report-incident-sand-allegations>
- NSPCC: Safeguarding children and child protection
<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/>
- ThirtyOne:Eight Safeguarding Services
<https://thirtyoneeight.org/safeguarding-services/>
- 10 actions trustee boards need to take to ensure good safeguarding governance
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756636/10_safeguarding_actions_for_charity_trustees_infographic.pdf
- Good governance for safeguarding: A guide for UK NGO boards
https://www.bond.org.uk/sites/default/files/resourcedocuments/good_governance_for_safeguarding.pdf