

Grief support for  
children & young people  
in Swindon & Wiltshire



# Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

## Document Control:

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| 0.4                  | 07/01/2026   | K.Brownlee  | 14/01/2026    | Updates to internal roles, links to external sources<br>& clarification on DBS checks required. Good<br>09.04.26 - clarification on DBS check added (require<br>Children's Barred List check) |
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## 1. Charity Statements:

### Statement of public benefit:

Wiltshire Treehouse is for the benefit of bereaved children, young people, and their families, living/educated within Swindon & Wiltshire.

### Mission:

Wiltshire Treehouse wants to see a world where every bereaved child and young person can receive guidance and support to help them through their grieving process. We will enable those in our local communities to develop the coping strategies, skills, and confidence they need to thrive.

### Charity Objectives:

Provide high quality, relevant bereavement support and guidance to children, young people & their families.  
Improve the initial experience of a child bereavement through training and awareness raising.  
Secure the continuity of our organisation, ensuring a future of child specific bereavement support.  
Be proud of the charity, a great place to work and achieve.

### Our Values:

**Growth** – Providing a safe space for personal development.

**Respect** – Beneficiaries, volunteers, and staff are treated with respect and dignity within their journey with the charity.

**Inclusivity** – Services and support available to the whole community.

**Empowerment** – Working with beneficiaries to enable change on their terms.

**Friendly** – Open and welcoming.

## 2. Purpose, Scope, and Users:

At Wiltshire Treehouse we recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the children act 1989,
- All children, regardless of age disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse,
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues,
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their families, and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

The policy applies to all Beneficiaries and staff within the Charity, including employees and other workers, such as volunteers, and trustees, temporary workers, and contractors. All staff are expected to put this policy into practice with immediate effect.

A copy of this policy will be distributed to all employees and can also be found in the shared area of SharePoint, and it will be made available to other workers on their engagement. In addition, all employees will receive a briefing on this policy during their training, with all relevant posts working with children and young people, or vulnerable adults, receiving further training as part of their induction process and reviewed every 3 years as a minimum.

Any questions about the policy should be directed to [admin@wiltshiretreehouse.org.uk](mailto:admin@wiltshiretreehouse.org.uk)

The Trustee body has been consulted and has agreed the contents of this policy. This policy does not form part of employees' contracts of employment and the Company may amend it at any time.

This policy is reviewed annually and may be amended at any time.

### 3. Policy Statement:

Children who are bereaved, and their families, are the focus of the work of Wiltshire Treehouse. The charity fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection and is committed to establishing a safe environment in which children can be supported through bereavement.

Direct contact with children is only made by key Wiltshire Treehouse staff or volunteers who have signed up to this policy and completed Safeguarding Training. They will also have completed satisfactory references, and an up-to-date enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check (including barred list information) and this check will have been subject to relevant scrutiny. We implement the guidelines for best practice issued by The Childhood Bereavement Network.

However, the following guidelines should **always** be respected in **any** contact with children or young people by **any** member of Wiltshire Treehouse staff, Board of Trustees or volunteer team.

Wiltshire Treehouse's Child Protection Policy rests on the following principles:

- The welfare of the bereaved child is always paramount and their needs are to be put first.
- Children's wishes are to be heard, and they are to be kept informed and involved in decisions that affect them.
- The adoption of a child-centred approach to safeguarding which considers the safety of the child to be the responsibility of all involved in the organisation including Wiltshire Treehouse staff, Trustees and volunteers.
- That all children have the right to protection from abuse.
- That all Wiltshire Treehouse staff, Trustees and volunteers have a responsibility to be alert to children's needs, to any risks of harm and to report any concerns.
- That all suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- That all staff, trustees and volunteers shall work in a way which reduces the risk of allegations against them

The following practices will be followed:

- Ensuring Wiltshire Treehouse always practices safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Ensuring personnel have received appropriate training in Child Protection, behaviour standards and lone working issues.
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and understand their responsibility and the relevant procedures for referring any concerns of abuse or suspected abuse to the designated person within Wiltshire Treehouse responsible for child protection.
- Developing effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
- Keep written records, securely stored, of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Develop and follow prescribed procedures if an allegation is made against a member of Wiltshire Treehouse staff or a volunteer.

All contact with children will have due regard to:

- Confidentiality
- Anonymity
- Permission

- Safe travel arrangements
- Safe meeting environment
- Involvement in setting ground rules for meetings

These guidelines form the basis of Wiltshire Treehouses Child Protection Policy. Further guidance is available as a member of the Childhood Bereavement Network.

#### **4. Specific Responsibilities**

All staff and volunteers are responsible for the implementation of this policy at all times.

In addition, the following roles are identified:

- Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Office (DDSO)
- Named Trustee with responsibility for safeguarding
- Specialist Consultant with responsibility for safeguarding, on behalf of the trustee board

Up to date details of these contacts can be found in appendix 1.

#### **5. Reference Documents:**

H M Government National Guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).

The Children Act (1989) (2004).

The Munro Review of Child Protection (2011).

The Charities Commission guidelines.

NSPCC Safeguarding and child protection standards for the voluntary and community sector.

NSPCC Standards and guidance for the children and young people aged 0-18.

Swindon Safeguarding Partnership Allegation Management Guidance -

[https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk/downloads/file/1498/allegation\\_management\\_guidance](https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk/downloads/file/1498/allegation_management_guidance)  
- january 2024

## 6 What to do if you are worried a child is being abused

Report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO – Kath Brownlee).  
The DSO will decide if further action is required.  
If the DSO is not available, report to the lead worker present. They will liaise with the DSO.

***If you think that someone is in immediate danger, contact the police emergency line by dialling 999.***

If DSO/DDSO has further cause for concern - refer case to the social services.

*Urgent child protection concerns should **always** be made by telephone.*

### Contact details:

- **Swindon:** Telephone 01793 464646, option 1
- E-mail: [contactchildrenandfamilies@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:contactchildrenandfamilies@swindon.gov.uk) (non urgent enquiries)

Out of hours contact the Emergency Duty Service (EDS) on 01793 436699.

Link to Request for Help and Support form (used to be called RF1):

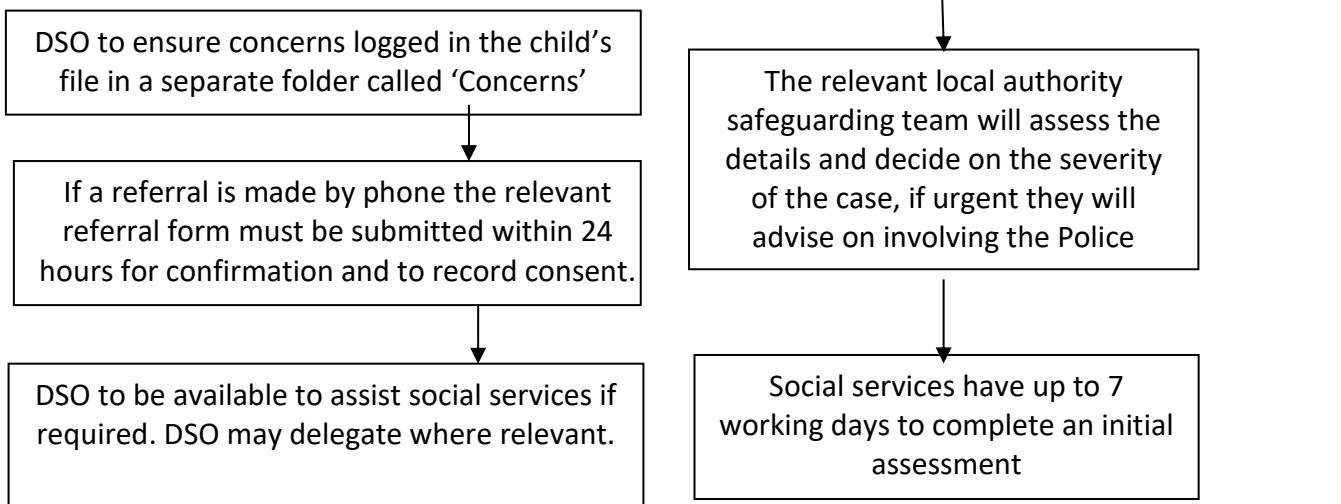
[https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk/downloads/file/630/referral\\_form\\_-\\_request\\_for\\_help\\_and\\_support](https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk/downloads/file/630/referral_form_-_request_for_help_and_support)

**Wiltshire:** Call the Wiltshire Integrated Front Door (IFD) on 0300 4560108, 8.45am-5pm, Monday-Thursday and 8.45am-4pm Friday; Out of Hours 0300 456 0100.

Email: [integratedfrontdoor@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:integratedfrontdoor@wiltshire.gov.uk) (non urgent enquiries)

Link to Integrated Front Door referral form:

[https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/2973/IFD-Referral-Form/doc/IFD\\_Referral\\_Form\\_5rrqfr3o8l2y\\_updated\\_03-25.docx?m=1743163204060](https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/2973/IFD-Referral-Form/doc/IFD_Referral_Form_5rrqfr3o8l2y_updated_03-25.docx?m=1743163204060)



In the absence of the DSO, a suitable member of the team may be delegated and/or the trustee with safeguarding responsibility may be contacted.

## Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children act 1989 & 2004
- United convention of the rights of the child 1991
- GDPR 2018
- Data Protections Act 2018
- Human rights act 1998
- Sexual offences act 2003
- Children act 2004
- Safeguarding vulnerable groups act 2006
- Protection of freedoms act 2012
- Children and families act 2014
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice
- Working together to safeguard children (2023)
- Swindon Safeguarding Partnership guidelines and policies
- Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership guidelines and policies
- HM Government, Department for Children, Schools and Families (2013) *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*
- HM Government, Department of Education. Munro, E. (2011) *The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report A child-centred system.*
- Charity commission guidance on safeguarding children (updated 2022)  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>
- HM Government National Guidelines: Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners (updated 2024) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice>

This Wiltshire Treehouse safeguarding policy should be used in conjunction/ read alongside the Safeguarding flowchart which details the specific contact numbers to use in the event of concerns regarding safeguarding of children.

## 7 South West Child Protection Procedures:

Swindon:

[https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk/info/15/for\\_professionals/34/request\\_for\\_help\\_and\\_support\\_guidelines\\_and\\_contact\\_information](https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk/info/15/for_professionals/34/request_for_help_and_support_guidelines_and_contact_information)

Wiltshire: <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/children-young-people-protection>

We have also ensured policies follow recommendations from the NSPCC, found following the below links:

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2019/introductory-guide-safeguarding-child-protection>

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2019/safeguarding-child-protection-standards?msclkid=594366f6bb3111ec9986ac0ae4f5bbf2>

## 8 Safeguarding for service users, staff and volunteers

Wiltshire Treehouse is working with children and families who may be particularly vulnerable due to the loss of a loved one. When safeguarding vulnerable children and young people special consideration should be taken:

Children are all different and are likely to react to loss, trauma and bereavement in a unique way. The way in which they react is likely to depend upon some or all the following:

- Prior experiences of loss and death
- Their level of developmental understanding
- their age
- emotional maturity and stability
- their relationship with the person who has died
- the circumstances of the death
- the reactions of the significant adults around them
- The resultant changes in the child's life.

The questions that children ask can, at times, be direct and blunt and adults may find themselves being upset by the form of the questions or by their inability to answer them fully. Wiltshire Treehouse recommends all staff and volunteers to consider these special factors when working with families and ensure support from other team members is requested and regular supervision is attended.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Appointing a designated safeguarding officer (DSO) for children and young people, a deputy and a lead board member for safeguarding
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures and a code of conduct for all staff and volunteers
- Ensuring anyone who comes into contact with children have undertaken training so they know how to recognise and respond to child protection concerns
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, their families, staff and volunteers via leaflets, posters, one to one discussion and training.
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- Provision of information to staff and volunteers as appropriate in relation to investigation outcomes following reported safeguarding incidents
- Documenting a child risk assessment for all service users prior to participation in groups with Wiltshire Treehouse. These will be shared as appropriate with volunteers and staff and will include basic care needs like allergies and also any potential risk/s to themselves or others
- Monitoring peer to peer discussions during groups facilitated by Wiltshire Treehouse, to ensure radicalisation and other potential pressures are not placed on service users by other service users
- Developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures
- Carrying out necessary checks on anyone who will be around children or young people (DBS & references)
- Following safer recruitment guidelines when recruiting staff and volunteers. Safer recruitment is a set of practices to help make sure staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children and young people and are a vital part of creating a safe and positive environment and are a part of our commitment to keeping children safe from harm. A safer recruitment checklist is included in the appendix of this document.
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely, as per our data protection policy.
- 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
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place

- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance and by implementing a lone working policy.

In addition, we will seek to keep staff and volunteers safe by:

- Sharing information pertinent to service users at the appropriate time to ensure staff and volunteers are kept safe
- Lone Working – ensuring staff and volunteers are familiar with and work in accordance with the Wiltshire Treehouse Lone Working Policy
- Offering debrief opportunities to staff and volunteers involved in safeguarding issues, provided by appropriately trained staff

## 9 Definitions

**Who is defined as a child?** A child is any person who has not reached the age of 18.

**What is child abuse?** A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody 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, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Child abuse is physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect or emotional abuse.

## 10 Induction and Training

Wiltshire Treehouse will ensure that there is adequate and appropriate induction and ongoing training and information to all employed staff and volunteer workers concerning child protection matters. All members of staff/volunteers shall have this policy drawn to their attention on joining Wiltshire Treehouse as part of their induction programme. Staff should be fully aware of how to access the full policy statement and should route any queries or concerns to the Service Director.

Training shall also include behaviour standards and lone working policy. This will set out how Wiltshire Treehouse expects its staff and volunteers to conduct themselves and seeks to protect both service users and staff/volunteers from inappropriate behaviour and allegations.

## 11 Personnel Checks

Wiltshire Treehouse's aim is to ensure as far as possible that anyone, paid or voluntary, who seeks to work with children and young people through Wiltshire Treehouse's activities and who gains substantial access to them is as safe to do so in child protection terms as can be guaranteed. Our practice will reflect Safer Recruitment guidance.

The following checks should be carried out on all prospective and existing employees and volunteers whose work may create a situation of substantial access to children and young people:

- All applicants shall complete a Wiltshire Treehouse application form, be interviewed by a suitably qualified person (who has undertaken safer recruitment training) and shall be subject to references and an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check with Children's Barred List information .
- It is Wiltshire Treehouse's policy to recheck all staff and volunteer DBS checks every 3 years
- Applicants/employees/volunteers shall produce identity, preferably passport/driving licence proof of residency.
- All Wiltshire Treehouse staff and volunteers who come into direct contact with children and young people will undertake relevant safeguarding training. As per best practise, all Trustees will also.
- At all times the onus is on the applicant/employee/volunteer to reveal any conviction, caution, bind-over, probation order, or pending prosecution whether imposed prior to or within the period the applicant works with Wiltshire Treehouse.
- Wiltshire Treehouse will not accept any previous reference, police check, social services endorsement etc provided by an applicant in substitution for the above enquiry process. At all times the initiative must lie with Wiltshire Treehouse to make its own, completely independent enquiries.

## 12 Personnel Records

The Service Director will maintain a confidential file on each applicant containing

- Copies of all forms, consents and replies.
- If a telephone call is received or other non-written communication, the main points shall be recorded and filed with the applicant's records.
- The file of an unsuccessful applicant shall be kept for 12 months and then safely destroyed. Likewise for a successful applicant who declines to commence with Wiltshire Treehouse.
- Files of personnel leaving their role with the charity shall be kept for 6 years from termination, unless there is a safeguarding allegation (see Wiltshire Treehouse Data Retention Policy and Schedule for more information).
- Anyone working with Wiltshire Treehouse has the right to inspect their own confidential records and may do so on request to the Service Director who shall not withhold consent unreasonably and will do so within one working day. The Service Director will only withhold such agreement and access if to do so might jeopardise a police or social services investigation relating to child protection matters or might lead to a child's welfare and safety being compromised. The Service Director need give no reason for such withholding of consent. She/he will report such a situation to the management, purely on the lines that a request was made and refused for reasons relating to the welfare of children.

## 13 Activities

Prior to any activity/meeting being commenced the Service Director shall ensure that adequate child protection procedures are in place.

- A site audit should be undertaken to ascertain the layout of the premises/site, helpers and supervision required to achieve adequate personal safety of children and young people. The audit shall be undertaken with a view to recognising any problems in terms of supervision of helpers, communication concerns etc.
- Every activity shall be undertaken with the possibility in mind that a child may be suffering abuse outside the project, that a disclosure or symptom relating to this may be apparent with the activity, or that there will be children present who have not as yet revealed they are being abused. It is important that the environment is as conducive to support of a child in such a situation as is possible.

## 14 Reporting of concerns

Those working on a project within Wiltshire Treehouse have a duty to ensure that any suspicion, incident, allegation or other manifestation relating to child protection is reported as below.

- Disclosure or evidence for concern may occur in any number of ways. This may be by what a child says, about itself or another child or children. It may be through interception of a written item, or through observation of activity or behaviour causing concern. It may be through changes in behaviour or attitude. There may be physical pointers such as bruising, staining, inappropriate behaviour or knowledge. These and many other signs can be picked up.
- IT IS VITAL THAT ALL INCIDENTS, OBSERVATIONS, HOWEVER INSIGNIFICANT THEY MAY SEEM, ARE LOGGED BY OBSERVER[S]
- See Flowchart (below) for procedure

## 15 Feedback and Reporting

Staff will always wish to be assured that having made a report, appropriate action has been taken. The Service Director should always attempt to give such feedback from a reporting situation as is appropriate. The Service Director may be short on information once the report has been made to Social Services, who for reasons of confidentiality may be unable to give specific details. However, the Service Director should request a description about progress, if possible, from the Social Services end. The Service Director is entitled to ask what specific action has been taken so far, whether the police have been informed etc.

In giving feedback to staff the Service Director must bear in mind 'need to know' and confidentiality.

In regular reports on child protection matters to Wiltshire Treehouse's Trustees the Service Director will report:

- Details of any unsatisfactory staff/volunteer checks (DBS or otherwise), for recording purposes and discussion as required.
- Any formal report to the police or social services, omitting children's and families' names.

## 16 Allegations Against Workers and Management

If a child or parent makes allegations to Wiltshire Treehouse against a person working for Wiltshire Treehouse, whether paid or unpaid, the following procedure will come into force – incident reports will be made at all stages as appropriate:

The person receiving the complaint will contact the Service Director or in their absence, the trustee with safeguarding responsibility or the Chair of trustees. On receipt of the complaint the Service Director (Chair, or trustee with safeguarding responsibility) must inform the local authority designated officer (LADO) within one working day, and prior to any further investigation taking place.

The Service Director shall contact social services to appraise them of the situation. Normally, this will be by informal channels but if there is a criminal allegation, the contact will be formal to the duty social worker and also to the police.

The Service Director should inform the member of staff/volunteer against whom the allegation has been made as soon as possible unless there appears to be a case that this might prejudice a criminal investigation. The Service Director will seek advice from the LADO, the police and/or Children's social care about how much information should be disclosed to the accused person.

The course of action to be taken from thereon will be decided by the nature of the allegation.

- If a criminal allegation e.g. of sexual abuse and impropriety is made, or physical assault, or inappropriate behaviour, the Service Manger will activate the Disciplinary Procedure and suspend the person from the project under the heading of Gross Misconduct. If it is warranted, this may be without pay, should the evidence appear strong enough to justify the matter. The suspension will remain in force unless and until the police and/or social services confirm there was no substance to the report. An incident report will be made and treated as confidential.
- If there is no criminal allegation the Service Director will gather as much detail from available sources of information as possible, by way of investigation, but not including seeking to interview any child if there is a criminal allegation (which is a matter for the authorities). The Service Director should examine to see if there is any previous report relating to a child protection matter concerning that child. This is most important. Where appropriate, the Service Manger should consider whether suspension of the member of staff is advisable and recommend accordingly to the Trustees. This may include a situation which, though non-criminal, could lead to a decision of gross misconduct.

The Service Director will report to the Trustees on the outcome of such investigation and will recommend whether the circumstances constitute grounds either

- a. to treat the matter as a disciplinary issue, either as misconduct or gross misconduct with associated rights to appeal
- b. to dismiss the allegations as unfounded, or to make such other non-disciplinary recommendations as appropriate.

The person against whom such non-criminal allegations are made should have the opportunity to give an explanation or answer to any allegation at an interview conducted by the Service Director and the course of such an interview should be minuted by a senior staff member who should be present. This will be reported to the necessary agencies by the Service Director or, if appropriate, the police (remembering to report to Social Services). The personal file of such a worker will have the necessary note of action taken entered in it.

Lesser forms of misconduct involving a worker in a child protection incident where the member of staff's actions or behaviour are inconsistent with children's welfare should be reported and dealt with under the ordinary misconduct provisions of the Disciplinary Procedure, with appropriate records made in the person's file. Social Services should be informed if the matter is related to child protection, and it is possible they may express a view on the person's suitability to continue to work within the project. Each case will be individual and judged on its own merits.

In the case of suspension, this will remain in force on completion of the Service Director's enquiries and if the misconduct is viewed as so serious as to constitute grounds for immediate termination of employment or voluntary service, until the dismissal procedure is implemented. The person suspended should be advised by the Service Director with whom she/he can communicate during the period of suspension on

matters relating to their employment, and the person so appointed should be told clearly, as should the person suspended, the address to which any communication should be made.

If legal proceedings result in the conviction of the person for a serious offence involving a child, the Trustees shall consider any report or information from the police and/or social services and shall recommend to the board the appropriate course of action up to and including instant dismissal. If the proceedings do not result in a conviction but there is evidence to suggest misconduct, the procedure for dismissal may be invoked. The Service Manager will write to the person concerned to inform them of the outcome of the investigation and will inform the person of any decision to terminate employment or the date and conditions, if any, of a return to duties, where a disciplinary offence has been committed but is not of a nature as to warrant immediate dismissal.

**UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES IS ANY PERSON SUSPENDED TO RE-ENTER WILTSHIRE TREEHOUSE'S PREMISES OR ATTEND A SESSION SITE WHILST UNDER SUSPENSION. THIS PROHIBITION INCLUDES ACTIVITIES WHERE THERE ARE NO CHILDREN/YOUNG PERSONS PRESENT.**

In appropriate circumstances, and with other officers available, the Service Director may affect an instant dismissal if the evidence warrants it. For example, someone caught in the act of committing an offence.

If allegations are in relation to the Service Director then details should be reported directly to the trustee with safeguarding responsibility, or the Chair of the charity, who will then take responsibility for following the above process.

## **17 Escalation Policy**

Wiltshire Treehouse is committed to open and transparent joint working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults. Raising questions, challenging, and escalating concerns where appropriate, quickly and clearly, is seen as a positive approach to practice and continuing improvement in how we protect and meet the needs of children and adults.

In the event of professional differences of opinion or concerns about practice decisions, actions or perceived lack of action team members should take the following action:

- For internal concerns (within Wiltshire Treehouse) – team members should contact the Service Director, and if concerns are not resolved should contact the trustee with safeguarding responsibility and/or the Chair of trustees. If the situation is not resolved in a satisfactory manner team members should contact the local authority safeguarding service (Contact Swindon for Swindon, Integrated Front Door for Wiltshire).
- For concerns in relation to external agencies, team members should follow [https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk/downloads/file/674/escalation\\_policy](https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk/downloads/file/674/escalation_policy)

## **18 Review of this Policy**

The management shall review this policy, its effectiveness and regarding its implementation every year and the Service Director will ensure that the views of staff, paid and voluntary are sought and reflected in such a review process, and that any statutory authority input is sought as appropriate.

## 19 E safety policy

### Introduction

This policy provides guidance on the procedures that will support and underpin the use of social networking and other online services within Wiltshire Treehouse.

It is important that all staff, volunteers, Trustees, or anyone working on behalf of the organisation are aware of this policy and agree to the following terms.

### Terms:

- To protect all children and young people attending Wiltshire Treehouse groups and who make use of technology (such as mobiles phones, games consoles/hand held devices and the internet) whilst they're within the care of the club/organisation.
- To provide staff and volunteers with policy and procedure information regarding e-safety.
- To ensure Wiltshire Treehouse is operating in line with their values and within the law regarding how the organisation uses information technology.

### E-safety checklist:

All members of Wiltshire Treehouse will:

1. Understand the safety aspects including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour when using digital technology such as social networking sites (e.g. Twitter and Facebook), mobile phones, game consoles and the internet.
2. When engaging with digital technology/social networking companies (e.g. Facebook, Twitter or Instagram) it is important to ensure that they adhere to relevant legislation and good practice guidelines.
3. Review existing safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that online safeguarding issues are fully integrated:
  - a. reporting online concerns about possible abuse
  - b. reporting other breaches of terms
4. Ensure that adequate privacy settings are in place either restricting or allowing access to photos, personal information, comments about others, friends and followers.
5. Ensure that staff and volunteers, including trustees, are aware of the need to protect their privacy online. Staff and volunteers should be encouraged by Wiltshire Treehouse to carefully consider who they give access to their personal information online. All staff and volunteers should ensure that a clear differentiation between their personal and professional profiles.

### Webpage & Social Media Pages:

We shall

- Appoint suitably vetted and trained persons to manage our website and social media pages. As a minimum they should be DBS checked and have undertaken safeguarding training (this is because these channels allow communication and access to children and vulnerable adults).
- Ensure any interactive content is moderated
- Address safety when adding content, such as promoting safe and responsible use
- Avoid taking personal details of children and young people
- Remember to 'think before you post'
- Report fake or impostor webpage/profiles
- Report any safeguarding concerns
- Address safeguarding when promoting Wiltshire Treehouse

## **Social Media:**

Social media (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn) is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. However, video sharing platforms such as YouTube have social media elements to them.

Wiltshire Treehouse recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. Staff, parents/carers and young people are actively encouraged to find creative ways to use social media. However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This policy aims to encourage the safe use of social media by Wiltshire, its staff, parents, carers and children.

## **This policy**

- Applies to all staff and to all online communications which directly or indirectly, represent Wiltshire Treehouse.
- Applies to such online communications posted at any time and from anywhere.
- Encourages the safe and responsible use of social media through training and education
- Defines the monitoring of public social media activity pertaining to the Wiltshire Treehouse.

Wiltshire Treehouse respects privacy and understands that staff and beneficiaries may use social media forums in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or Wiltshire Treehouse reputation are within the scope of this policy.

Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on Wiltshire Treehouse media sites or using the name Wiltshire Treehouse. All professional communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications are those made via a personal social media account. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with Wiltshire treehouse, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of Wiltshire Treehouse with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon Wiltshire Treehouse are outside the scope of this policy.

Digital communications with beneficiaries are also considered. Staff may use social media to communicate with beneficiaries via the Wiltshire Treehouse media account for Support and group purposes but must consider whether this is appropriate and consider the potential implications.

## **Behaviour**

- Wiltshire Treehouse requires that all users using social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.
- Digital communications by staff must always be professional and respectful, in accordance with this policy. Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff. School social media accounts must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave Wiltshire Treehouse.
- Users must declare who they are in social media posts or accounts. Anonymous posts are discouraged in relation Treehouse activity.

- If a journalist makes, contact about posts made using social media staff must contact the Service Director or Business Director before responding.
- Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by Wiltshire Treehouse and will be reported as soon as possible to a relevant senior member of staff, and escalated where appropriate.
- Legal considerations
- Users of social media should consider the copyright of the content they are sharing and, where necessary, should seek permission from the copyright holder before sharing.
- Users must ensure that their use of social media does not infringe upon relevant data protection laws, or breach confidentiality.
- Handling abuse
- When acting on behalf of Wiltshire Treehouse, handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity.
- If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, Treehouse users should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and should inform the audience exactly why the action was taken
- If you feel that you or someone else is subject to abuse by colleagues through use of a social networking site, then this action must be reported using the agreed protocols.

### **Tone**

The tone of content published on social media should be appropriate to the audience, whilst retaining appropriate levels of professional standards. Key points to consider when composing messages are:

- Engaging
- Conversational
- Informative
- Friendly (on certain platforms, e.g. Facebook)
- Pupil/Students
- Managing your personal use of Social Media:
- “Nothing” on social media is truly private
- Social media can blur the lines between your professional and private life. Don’t use the Wiltshire treehouse logo and/or branding on personal accounts
- Check your settings regularly and test your privacy
- Keep an eye on your digital footprint
- Keep your personal information private
- Regularly review your connections – keep them to those you want to be connected to
- When posting online consider; Scale, Audience and Permanency of what you post
- If you want to criticise, do it politely.
- Take control of your images – do you want to be tagged in an image? What would children or parents say about you if they could see your images?
- Know how to report a problem

### **Safe Use of Images**

Creation of videos and photographs:

With the written consent of parents and staff, Wiltshire Treehouse permits the appropriate taking of images by designated staff within the Groups.

All staff are aware of specific children (they have responsibility for) in groups which do or do not have photograph permissions. If they do have permission, staff are aware of which platforms they can be used on.

Staff are not permitted to use personal digital equipment, such as mobile phones and cameras, to record images of young people. Wiltshire Treehouse own mobile devices must be used in this case.

#### Publishing pupil's images and work

All parents/guardians will be asked to give permission to use their child's work/photos in publicity materials or on the Wiltshire Treehouse website or social media accounts.

This consent form is considered valid for the entire period that the child attends Wiltshire Treehouse, and 12 months after their work with us has ended (unless there is a change in the child's circumstances where consent could be an issue).

Parents/ carers may withdraw or amend permission, in writing, at any time.

Children's names may be published alongside their image on the website, social media accounts, or any other publicity materials only with parental consent.

#### Storage of Images

Images/ films of children are stored securely on the Treehouse system.

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These guidelines have been drawn up in accordance with H M Government National Guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013), and with reference to the Children Act (2004), the Munro Review of Child Protection (2011) and the Charities Commission guidelines.

## 20 Appendix 1 – Wiltshire Treehouse Safeguarding Contact details

**Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)** = Kath Brownlee, Service Director

Tel: 07493509750 (work)

Tel: 07891557778 (personal – emergencies only)

**Deputy Designated Safeguarding Office (DDSO)** = Sica Wheeler, Senior Practitioner, 07513 315203

**Named Trustee with responsibility for safeguarding** = Helen Pepler 07765 303 152

**Specialist Consultant with responsibility for safeguarding, on behalf of the trustee board** = Sue Ward

Tel: 07803609619

Key contacts:

**Contact Swindon** (Swindon Borough Council) - 8.30am to 4.40pm, Monday to Thursday, and 8.30am to 4.00pm on Friday. Telephone 01793 464646, option 1.

Or email: [contactchildrenandfamilies@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:contactchildrenandfamilies@swindon.gov.uk)

Out of hours contact the Emergency Duty Service (EDS) on 01793 436699.

**Wiltshire Integrated Front Door (IFD) Wiltshire Council** - 0300 4560108, 8.45am-5pm, Monday-Thursday and 8.45am-4pm Friday; Out of Hours 0300 456 0100.

Email: [Integratedfrontdoor@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:Integratedfrontdoor@wiltshire.gov.uk)



# Safer recruitment checklist

## Gathering and assessing criminal record information for UK and non-UK nationals, including displaced people

This checklist is to help you ensure you're taking a thorough approach to gathering criminal records information when employing from overseas. It's designed to be used alongside the [Safer recruitment guidance](#), which includes more detail.

### At attraction stage



We have included a statement in job adverts for roles that require the person to work in regulated activity that it's a criminal offence for people who are barred from working with vulnerable adults, children or both to apply for roles that require them to work unsupervised with that group.



### At application stage



We have shared information with applicants on the level of criminal record checks required for the role and at what point in the recruitment process disclosure is required.



### At shortlisting stage



We have asked applicants to complete a criminal record self-declaration appropriate to the role (whether covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA) or exempt).



### After conditional job offer



We have completed an appropriate level of DBS criminal record check (for all applicants, whether UK national or non-UK national).

### If the applicant has spent six months or more overseas in past five years



We have asked the applicant for consent to complete an overseas criminal record check.



We have requested a record check appropriate to the country and assessed the information returned.



If unable to obtain criminal record information, we have asked the applicant to contact Embassy or High Commission for advice and to evidence all attempts to access overseas criminal information or assistance in doing so.

### If a criminal record has been disclosed



We have carefully considered all information provided.



If concerned, we have completed a risk assessment and discussed concerns with applicant before making a final decision.

### Final decision



We have recorded evidence of efforts to gather information, whether successful or not, and have accurately recorded reasoning for decision.

For more information on overseas recruitment visit

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/InternationalRecruitment](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/InternationalRecruitment)

Skills for Care, West Gate  
6 Grace Street, Leeds, LS1 2RP

T: 0113 245 1716  
[skillsforcare.org.uk](http://skillsforcare.org.uk)



## 22 Appendix 3 - Safer Recruitment Checklist (From Swindon Safeguarding Partnership, Safer Recruitment Training 2022)

### Recruitment Process Exercise

1. Design job description and person specification
2. Advertise the post
3.
  - (a) Send out information pack
  - (b) Give information about safeguarding policies, procedures and checks carried out
  - (c) Ask for a criminal record self-disclosure
4.
  - (a) Read application form and check information
  - (b) Shortlist candidates
  - (c) Request references
  - (d) Scrutinise references
5.
  - (a) Choose methods of assessment
  - (b) Design interview questions, role play or other assessment
  - (c) Train and brief those who are carrying out interview or other assessments
6.
  - (a) Carry out interview, role play or other assessment
  - (b) Check gaps or issues on application form with candidate
  - (c) Discuss criminal convictions history with the candidate
  - (d) Probe candidate's attitudes and motives towards safeguarding and children
  - (e) Check identity documents
  - (f) Check qualifications and professional registration
7.
  - (a) Make a conditional offer of employment
  - (b) Request Criminal Records Bureau check
8. Make unconditional offer of employment and give a start date