Safeguarding Children Procedure

Matt Tally Empowered Minds – Sports Alternative Provision

1. Purpose and statement

Empowered Mind Sports is fully committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children and young people involved in our programmes. We recognise our responsibility to promote the welfare of every child and to take all reasonable steps to protect them from harm.

The welfare of the child is paramount. This principal guide all of our work and is embedded across our provision. Safeguarding is not an add-on — it is a foundational commitment that underpins our ethos, planning, delivery, and governance.

This policy also serves a dual purpose:

- To establish clear expectations and robust procedures to ensure children are safe and feel safe.
- To act as a firm deterrent to any individual seeking to use our organisation as a means of gaining access to children for the purposes of abuse. We will not tolerate any conduct that puts children at risk, and all staff, volunteers, and associates will be subject to rigorous safer recruitment checks, training, and ongoing supervision.

All safeguarding concerns will be taken seriously, responded to swiftly, and handled in line with local safeguarding authority guidance and national legislation, including Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024).

We work proactively with local authorities, parents/carers, and safeguarding partners to create a safe and empowering environment for every child we support.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, Empowered Minds defines a child in accordance with the statutory guidance “Working Together to Safeguard Children” (2023).

A child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, regardless of their living arrangements, legal status, or independence. This includes children:

- Living with their families or carers
- In foster or residential care
- Living independently
- Seeking asylum or without a stable home environment
- With or without parental responsibility

This definition underpins all safeguarding activity within Empowered Minds and ensures that every child and young person we engage with is afforded equal protection, support, and access to safeguarding measures.

“Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children” is defined in Working Together 2023 as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge

- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework.

Staff refers to paid staff and volunteers.

3. Safeguarding procedures

- Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility

- Empowered Minds is committed to keeping children and young people safe is regularly and consistently referenced in all our key policies, procedures, website and appropriate documents.

- Empowered Minds communicates its safeguarding policies and procedures to all staff. This is done as part of induction, at supervision for relevant roles and policies and procedures are available on the staff 'shared drive' under policies and procedures: safeguarding

- Empowered Minds communicates its safeguarding policies and procedures to all staff and relevant stakeholders, including the children and young people we support through its website, staff and documentation. Safeguarding updates on practice or referral routes etc is a standing item on internal team meeting agendas.

4. Reporting of Safeguarding concerns

This policy identifies the role which carries lead responsibility for safeguarding arrangements.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):
Name: Danielle Brace
Position: Safeguarding & Welfare Officer
Email: dbrace.mtem@hotmail.com
Phone: 07855982295

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL):
Name: Matthew Tally
Position: Safeguarding & Welfare Officer
Email: matttally@googlemail.com
Phone: 07980892867

4.1 Making a safeguarding referral

- To report a safeguarding concern about a child the referral will be made using the relevant Worcestershire County Council online portal. Family Front Door directly telephone 01905 822666.
- If you have a child protection concern outside of normal office hours please contact their out of hours emergency duty team (EDT) telephone 01905 768020

The police and relevant emergency services will be contacted in an emergency by calling 999.

Where appropriate and safe to do so staff need to make it clear to anyone who shares information with them that will have to pass the information on and follow Empowered Minds procedure to ensure that no one else is at risk, to prevent a crime or to protect them if they cannot protect themselves from harm.

Lack of consent to share information does not mean that the staff member keeps the information to themselves, they must tell their Safeguarding Lead/ Deputy.

Your report must be accurate and where possible use the child's exact words if they disclosed the information to you.

The report must be signed and dated, including the year. Ensure the form is emailed safely following the directions on the form and ensure a copy is sent to Empowered Minds Safeguarding Lead in the same manner marked "Confidential SG".

4.1.1 Whistleblowing

This policy includes whistleblowing arrangements for circumstances where normal reporting lines cannot be followed.
If a concern involves management, or staff feel unable to report internally, they can:
Use Empowered Minds' Whistleblowing Procedure.
Contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
Contact the CQC (if registered care is involved).

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Flowchart for referral for actual or suspected abuse: Children (2024)

See it. Recognise it. Report it.

If the matter is urgent because a child is in immediate danger phone 999 for the Police.

See it.

Are they safe? If you are concerned about a child you could help stop abuse if you follow the safeguarding policy and procedure (use this flowchart)

It is not your responsibility to decide if abuse has happened. It IS your responsibility to report it to the Safeguarding Lead and/ or appropriate authority

Recognise it.

Share your concerns/ information with the Safeguarding Lead/ Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

Contact the Family Front Door on 01905 822666 from Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm (until 4:30pm on a Friday). Out of office hours (5.00pm to 9.00am weekdays and all-day weekends and bank holidays) contact the Emergency Duty team on 01905 768020

Complete the 'Referral to Children's Social Care' online form, which can be accessed here:

- https://lcsportal.worcschildrenfirst.org.uk/web/portal/pages/cpassess#assess

If there is immediate danger to the child call 999 for the Police.

Report it

If you have a concern about a child and need to make a safeguarding referral, use the relevant online Worcestershire Safeguarding

Contact information

Safeguarding referral:

- https://lcsportal.worcschildrenfirst.org.uk/web/portal/pages/cpassess#assess

Police: 999 if it is an emergency

Safeguarding Lead: tel. 07855982295 email: dbrace.mtem@hotmail.com

Safeguarding Deputy: tel. 07980892867 email: matttally@googlemail.com

4.2 Reporting allegations of abuse or malpractice against a member of staff including volunteers

It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a person who works with children and young people including those who work in a voluntary capacity are dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

This procedure applies to a wider range of allegations than those in which there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. **It also includes allegations that might indicate that the alleged perpetrator is unsuitable to continue to work with children in their present position, or in any capacity. This may be due to concerns about the persons conduct in their personal or professional life that might indicate their unsuitability to work with children.**

It must be used in respect of all allegations that are consistent with the guidance in Working Together i.e. cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child; or
- behaved in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

If the allegation is against an Empowered Minds member of staff or volunteer the allegation must be reported immediately, at least within one working day, to the Empowered Minds Safeguarding Lead.

If the allegation is against the Safeguarding Lead, then the allegation must be reported to the Empowered Minds Deputy Safeguarding Lead. The Empowered Minds Safeguarding Lead/or Deputy must then report the allegation to the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) on the same day.

Contact details for LADO's

Local Authority Designated Officers can be contacted for allegations against all staff and volunteers via: Email: LADO@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk or

LADO central telephone number 01905 846221

4.2.1 Safeguarding Awareness for Parents and Carers

At Empowered Minds, we recognise the vital role that parents and carers play in keeping children safe. We are committed to working in partnership with families to raise awareness of safeguarding and child protection.

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How Parents and Carers Are Informed:

- Safeguarding Policy Access: Our full safeguarding policy is made available to parents and carers upon request and is published on our website or shared as part of registration packs.
- Induction and Welcome Information: New parents and carers are given safeguarding information during the enrolment or induction process, including contact details for the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Ongoing Communication: Regular communication through newsletters, parent meetings, workshops, or electronic updates may include key safeguarding messages, updates to policy, or reminders of how to raise concerns.
- Visible Information: Key safeguarding contacts and procedures are displayed prominently at the provision site or within parent information areas.

What Parents and Carers Should Do if They Have a Concern:

If a parent or carer is worried about the safety, wellbeing, or behaviour of a child — whether their own or another — they are strongly encouraged to take the following steps:

1. Report the Concern Promptly:
   Contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL at Empowered Minds directly. Contact details will be clearly provided in parent materials and displayed on-site.
2. If the Concern is Urgent or Involves Immediate Danger:
   Contact emergency services on 999 or the local authority's children's services without delay.
3. Confidentiality and Sensitivity:
   All concerns raised will be treated seriously and confidentially. Information will only be shared with relevant safeguarding personnel or statutory agencies, in line with our legal duties.
4. Support and Guidance:
   Empowered Minds will offer appropriate guidance and, where necessary, signpost parents and carers to relevant support services or local safeguarding partnerships.

4.3 Definitions of abuse

a. PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse 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.

b. EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is 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 children 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 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.

c. SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving high levels of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse as can other children.

d. NEGLECT

Neglect is 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.

e. CHILD EXPLOITATION

Child exploitation is a form of abuse that involves the manipulation, coercion, or control of a child to engage in activities for the benefit of another person, often with the child receiving little or no benefit themselves. Exploitation can be sexual, criminal, or take other forms, and is characterised by an imbalance of power and a misuse of that power by the perpetrator.

Children may not recognise that they are being exploited and may be groomed to believe they are in a consensual or trusting relationship. Exploitation can occur in person, in groups, or online and may involve threats, violence, or manipulation.

f. CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION (INCLUDING COUNTY LINES)

Criminal exploitation occurs when a child is coerced, threatened, or manipulated into engaging in illegal activities for the gain of others. A common form is “county lines,” where gangs and organised crime networks exploit children to transport drugs, weapons, or money across local authority or police boundaries.

Signs may include:

- Unexplained money or possessions
- Missing from home or care
- Increased secrecy or association with older individuals
- Use of multiple phones or social media accounts

Criminal exploitation is a serious safeguarding concern and must be treated with the same urgency as any other form of abuse. It often overlaps with other forms of harm such as physical and emotional abuse.

STAFF MUST ALSO BE AWARE OF THE FOLLOWING SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

4.4 Domestic abuse

The organisation will act in accordance with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and local safeguarding procedures including making a referral if it seems reasonable to suspect that:

- a child sees, hears, experiences or is otherwise aware of domestic abuse – i.e. that domestic abuse is part of their experience of family life. This applies regardless of whether they actually witness any particular event or are physically harmed, and

- the non-abusing parent will not be able – for whatever reason – to ensure the safety and well being of their child without significant professional assistance and support.

(Refer to the Domestic Abuse guidance on the Worcestershire Safeguarding Partnership website for further guidance and accompanying Empowered Minds procedure for more information).

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4.5 PREVENT: Vulnerable to radicalisation (VTR) or influenced by Extremism

We will act in accordance with the policies and procedures on the Worcestershire Safeguarding Partnership website for PREVENT

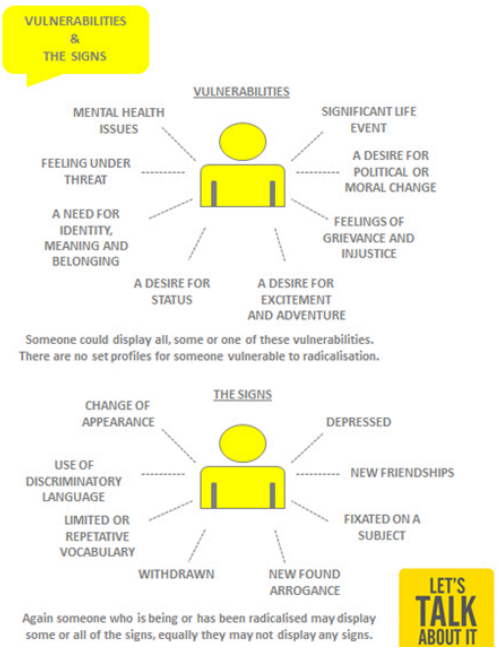
Staff may notice a change in a child or adults' behaviour that may suggest they are vulnerable to violent extremism. After having discussed concerns with appropriate colleagues, being mindful of confidentiality, where the staff member still has concerns that the individual may be vulnerable to violent extremism, a referral is made here Get Safe | Worcestershire County Council . For urgent safeguarding concerns and threat to life call 999

UNLIKE SAFEGUARDING STAFF MUST NOT DISCUSS CONCERNS WITH THE INDIVIDUAL PRIOR TO REFERRAL

Who is Vulnerable to Radicalisation?

People who are vulnerable to radicalisation come from all walks of life, genders, ages and social groups, income levels, professions etc.

There is no profile for someone who could be drawn into terrorism.



Extremism is any form of extremism; this includes extreme right wing views, animal rights issues as well as religious views. It is unhelpful to have a narrow view of who can be VTR. It is important to keep an open mind.

Looking at the factors associated with a person who becomes vulnerable to it can be helpful to look at.

This guide is to help you refer concerns about an individual who may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Below are questions which may help you to quantify and structure your concerns. The

list is not exhaustive and other factors may be present but they are intended as a guide to help communicate your professional judgement about what has led you to make a referral.

Faith / ideology

- Are they new to a particular faith / faith strand?
- Do they seem to have naïve or narrow religious or political views?
- Have there been sudden changes in their observance, behaviour, interaction or attendance at their place of worship / organised meeting?
- Have there been specific examples or is there an undertone of " Them and Us " language or violent rhetoric being used or behaviour occurring?
- Is there evidence of increasing association with a closed tight knit group of individuals / known recruiters / extremists / restricted events?
- Are there particular grievances either personal or global that appear to be unresolved / festering?
- Has there been an increase in unusual travel abroad without satisfactory explanation?

Personal / emotional / social issues

- Is there conflict with their families regarding religious beliefs / lifestyle choices?
- Is there evidence of cultural anxiety and / or isolation linked to insularity / lack of integration? Is there evidence of increasing isolation from family, friends or groups towards a smaller group of individuals or a known location?
- Is there history in petty criminality and / or unusual hedonistic behaviour (alcohol/drug use, casual sexual relationships, and addictive behaviours)?
- Have they got / had extremist propaganda materials (DVD's, CD's, leaflets etc.) in their possession?
- Do they associate with negative / criminal peers or known groups of concern?
- Are there concerns regarding their emotional stability and or mental health?
- Is there evidence of participation in survivalist / combat simulation activities, e.g. paint balling?

Risk / Protective Factors

- What are the specific factors which are contributing towards making the individual more vulnerable to radicalisation? E.g; mental health, language barriers, cultural anxiety, impressionability, criminality, specific grievance, transitional period in life etc.
- Is there any evidence of others targeting or exploiting these vulnerabilities or risks?

- What factors are already in place or could be developed to firm up support for the individual or help them increase their resilience to negative influences? E.g. positive family ties, employment, mentor / agency input etc.4.6 Information sharing procedures relating to safeguarding children

Through the safe and effective sharing of information it aims to ensure that vulnerable adults and or children get the support they require from external services and that the people it works with are protected from harm, abuse or neglect. It also seeks to prevent them from offending.

In many reviews into deaths of children the lack of information sharing between agencies and organisations is often highlighted as a contributory, if not causal, factor in the death. It is imperative that Empowered Minds staff understand the requirement to share safeguarding information in order to protect vulnerable children from harm.

Confidentiality and information sharing must be integrated across all aspects of Empowered Minds services and management as its users have the right to privacy and confidentiality and to understand when "secrets" cannot be protected for their best interests.

Information sharing Definitions

Confidentiality: Not all information is confidential. Confidential information is information of some sensitivity, which is not already lawfully in the public domain or readily available from another public source, and which has been shared in a relationship where the person giving the information understood that it would not be shared with others.

Empowered Minds understands confidentiality to mean that no information regarding a service user shall be given directly or indirectly to any third party which is external to the Staff, without that service user's prior expressed consent to disclose such information.

Breach of confidentiality: Confidence is only breached where the sharing of **confidential** information is not authorised by the person who provided it or to whom it relates. If the information was provided on the understanding that it would be shared with a limited range of people or for limited purposes, then sharing in accordance with that understanding will not be a breach of confidence. Similarly, there will not be a breach of confidence where there is explicit consent to the sharing.

Even where sharing of confidential information is not authorised, Empowered Minds **may lawfully share it if this can be justified in the public interest.**

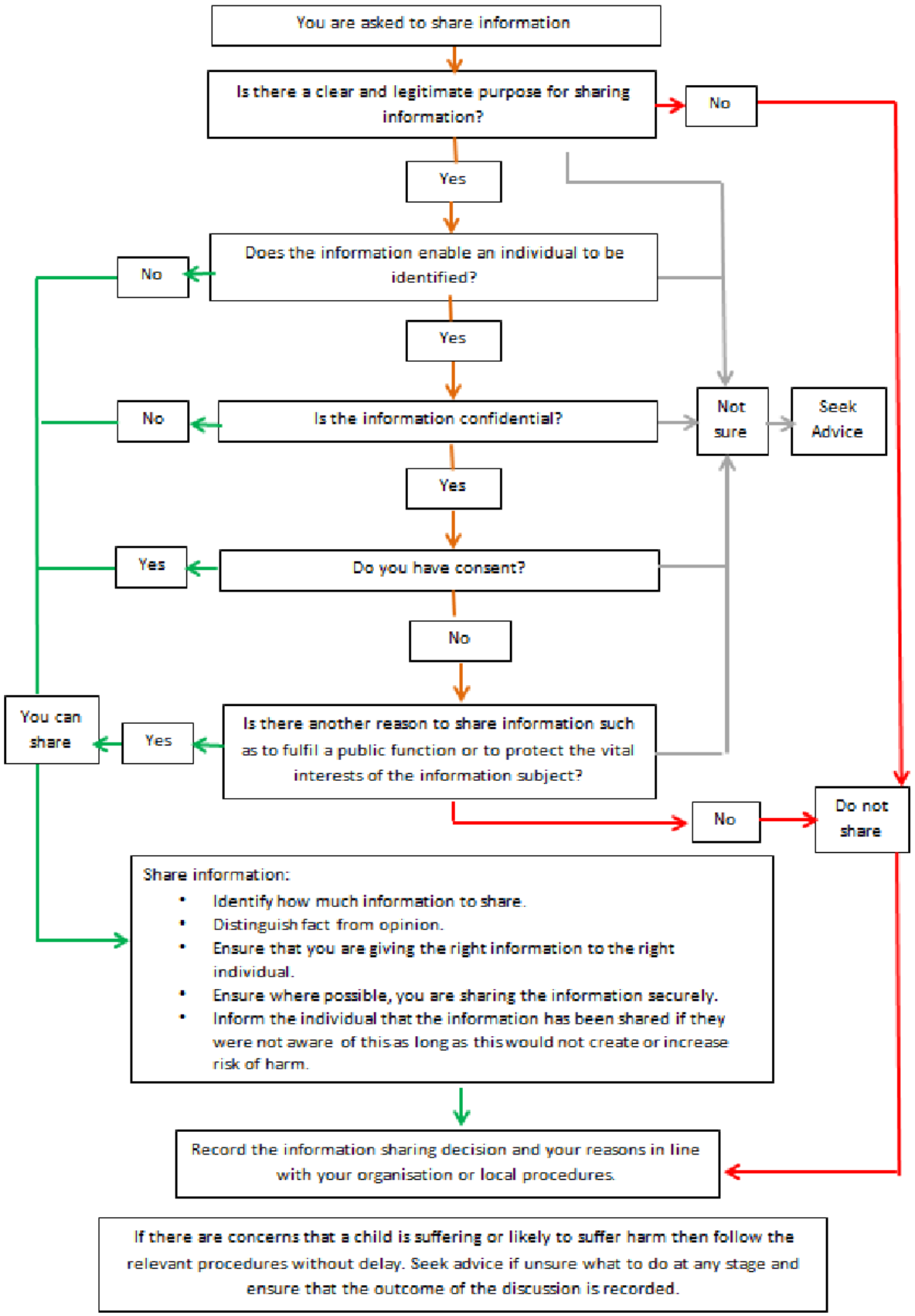
Seeking consent should be the first option, if appropriate. Where consent cannot be obtained to the sharing of the information or is refused, or where seeking it is likely to undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a crime, the question of whether there is a sufficient public interest must be judged by the Manager with the CE on the facts of each case.

Therefore, where you have a concern about a child or young person, you should not regard refusal of consent as necessarily precluding the sharing of confidential information

Public interest: A public interest can arise in a wide range of circumstances, for example, to protect children or other people from harm, to promote the welfare of children or to prevent crime and disorder. There are also public interests, which in some circumstances may weigh against sharing, including the public interest in maintaining public confidence in the confidentiality of certain services. The key factor in deciding whether or not to share confidential information is proportionality, i.e. whether the proposed sharing is a proportionate response to the need to protect the public interest in question.

Serious crime: This means any crime which causes or is likely to cause significant harm to a child or young person or serious harm to an adult.

4.7 Information sharing flowchart



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Responsibilities of Empowered Minds Safeguarding Officer

This role will work closely with the directors. The Lead Safeguarding Officer's role is to support other staff to recognise the needs of children, including identifying and responding to possible abuse. The role will be given sufficient resource and, supervision and support them to fulfil their child welfare and safeguarding responsibilities effectively

They will discharge their safeguarding functions in a way that ensures that children are safeguarded from harm and promotes their welfare.

In the case of allegations made against Empowered Minds Staff (including volunteers) the Safeguarding Lead will work with the LADO and must follow Worcestershire County Council procedures. In cases of actual or suspected abuse by a member of Empowered Mind staff the Safeguarding Lead in consultation with the LADO will ensure the Police and/or other statutory bodies like Social Services are informed as appropriate. The victim must be protected from further abuse while the Police/ external agencies conduct their own investigation.

If not already aware any allegation must be reported to the Safeguarding Lead unless the Safeguarding Lead is the alleged perpetrator, in that situation the report will be made to the Empowered Minds Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

Any information held either electronically or in hard copy will be held securely in a password protected document or sealed envelope in a secure, locked cabinet/drawer. Any electronic database used for recording and reporting abuse internally will protect the identity of the child and use an identifying code rather than the name to ensure confidentiality

How to respond when a child/young person wants to talk about abuse

- **General points**
- Take seriously what the child/young person says (however unlikely the story may sound)
- Keep calm
- Look at the child/young person directly
- Be honest
- Let them know you will need to tell someone else – don't promise confidentiality
- Reassure them they are not to blame for the abuse
- Be aware that the child/young person may have been threatened
- Never push for information
- Ask questions for clarification only; avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.

- **Helpful things to say or show**
- Show acceptance of what the child/young person says
- "I am glad you have told me"
- "It's not your fault"
- "I will help you"

- **Avoid saying**
- "Why didn't you tell anyone before?"
- "I can't believe it"
- "Are you sure this is true?"
- Never make false promises
- Never make statements such as "I am shocked!", or "don't tell anyone else"

- **Concluding**
- Reassure the young person that they were right to tell you and that you take them seriously
- Let the young person know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what might happen Immediately report the matter, as per procedures

Other good practice

Staff ratios

Plan the work of the group to minimise situations where the abuse of children and/or young people may occur.

Arrange that an adult is not left alone with a child or young person where there is little or no opportunity of the activity being observed by others. This may mean groups working within the same large room or working in an adjoining room with the door left open. This good practice can be as much benefit to the adult as to the child or young person.

Ensure that all staff, paid and unpaid, who work with children and young people do not meet one of the children or young people outside designated Empowered Minds premises without a parent or other adult being present.

Always have at least two adults present with a group, particularly when it is the only activity taking place on Empowered Minds premises. OFSTED recommends that the following number of adults should be present when working with children. If there are not enough leaders, the event should not take place.

- Age 13 - 18: 1 adult to 10 children.

However, these are just general recommendations in addition we must always ensure appropriate ratios of leadership to children and young people are observed according to age and gender and reflect the needs identified in the risk assessment for the activity and the group of children and young people involved.

Consent forms including medical details should always be used for children and young people attending the activity and should be readily available during the activity.

Never take a group off the premises with fewer than two adults. Consent forms including medical details should always be used for specific outings or activities outside the Empowered Minds premises.

As it is good practice to keep a **record of each activity/**session these will be used. This record should include a register of children and staff and details of any significant incidents.

Always keep a register with the address and contact phone number of every child. These records are to be kept securely, in line with the Data Protection policy.

All staff working with children or young people will be subject to an appropriate **DBS check**. While waiting for a DBS check to arrive the person will never be left alone with children unsupervised.

Any photography or filming of children and young people at Empowered Minds activities will be subject to the **Photography and filming policy**.

RECOGNISING POSSIBLE CHILD/YOUNG PERSON ABUSE

The following behavioural signs *may* be indicators of child/young person abuse, but care should be taken in interpreting them in isolation.

Physical signs

- Any injuries, bruises, bites, bumps, fracture, etc. which are not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Injuries which appear to have been caused by a weapon e.g. cuts, welts, etc.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention.
- Instances where children/young people are kept away from the group inappropriately or without explanation.
- Self-mutilation or self-harming e.g.. cutting, slashing, drug abuse.

Emotional signs

Changes or regression in mood and behaviour, particularly where a child/young person withdraws or becomes clinging. Also depression/aggression.

- Nervousness or inappropriate fear of particular adults.
- Changes in behaviour e.g., under-achievement or lack of concentration, inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults e.g., excessive dependence attention-seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness, wetting or soiling of bed or clothes by an older child.

Signs of neglect

- Regular poor hygiene
- Persistent tiredness
- Inadequate clothing
- Excessive appetite
- Failure to thrive e.g. poor weight gain, consistently being left alone and unsupervised

Indicators of possible sexual abuse

- Any direct disclosure made by a child/young person concerning sexual abuse.
- Child/Young person with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of.
- Adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play.
- Preoccupation with sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- Child/Young person who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home.
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.
- Other emotional signs (see above) may be indicative of sexual or some other form of abuse.

5.1 Safe Recruitment

Empowered Minds is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of adults at risk through a robust, transparent, and safe recruitment and selection process. These procedures are part of our overarching safeguarding framework and **should be read in conjunction with our Safer Recruitment Policy, Code of Conduct, Whistleblowing Policy, and Adult Safeguarding Policy.**

At least one member of every recruitment panel has successfully completed accredited Safer Recruitment Training. Currently, this is Danielle Brace, mentor Lead and DSL, who ensures safer recruitment principles are consistently applied.

Empowered Minds will not place or employ any individual who is known to have a history of unacceptable conduct, behaviour, or safeguarding concerns. All staff are recruited in line with statutory guidance, including the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and The Care Act 2014.

Key Recruitment, Selection, and Vetting Procedures

When recruiting staff or contractors who will engage in regulated activities involving adults at risk, Empowered Minds will ensure the following processes are applied:

- **Thorough Interviews:**
  All candidates undergo structured interviews by trained personnel. Interviewers are trained in safe recruitment practices and safeguarding legislation. Full employment history is reviewed and any gaps in employment are identified, explored, and verified.

- **Identity Verification:**
  Original, valid photographic identification is checked and verified at the point of recruitment.
- **Qualification Verification:**
  Original qualification certificates relevant to the role are reviewed and, where necessary, validated with the awarding body.
- **References:**
  A minimum of **two written references** are obtained, including one from the most recent or relevant employer. References must cover the previous **three years of employment**. All gaps are accounted for and verified.
- **DBS Requirements:**
  All staff must have a current **Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate** with **Adult Workforce Barred List** checks. If the DBS was not processed directly by Empowered Minds, the staff member must have a certificate subscribed to the **DBS Update Service**.
- **Rehabilitation of Offenders Declaration:**
  All candidates are required to complete and sign a declaration form under the **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**, disclosing any spent or unspent convictions.
- **Professional Status and Sanctions Checks:**
  Where applicable, online checks will be conducted through the **Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA)**, and if the candidate holds **QTLS**, their membership with the **Society for Education and Training (SET)** will be confirmed. Any relevant sanctions or prohibition orders are also reviewed.
- **Right to Work:**
  All candidates must provide acceptable evidence of their **Right to Work in the UK**.
- **Health Declaration:**
  Staff must complete a confidential **health declaration** to confirm their fitness to work in regulated activities.
- **Safeguarding Training:**
  All staff must have completed **Adult Safeguarding** training within the last 2 years. Where training is not current, Empowered Minds provides **mandatory safeguarding training**, including **Prevent Duty** training.
- **KCSIE Compliance:**
  All candidates are issued with and required to read the latest **'Keeping Children Safe in Education'** guidance and confirm their understanding as part of induction.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Process

- **New Staff:**
  All new employees or contractors must hold a valid **Enhanced DBS certificate with Adult Barred List check**. Where applicable, they will be required to join the **DBS Update Service**.
- **DBS Update Service Use:**
  If a candidate already holds a DBS certificate and is registered on the **Update Service**, Empowered Minds will:
  - View the **original certificate** and assess any disclosures.
  - Conduct an **online status check** with the candidate's permission.
  - Repeat the check **annually**, or immediately following any break in service exceeding **three months**.
- **New Disclosures:**
  Any change in the DBS status will result in:
  - A **new DBS check** being required.
  - A **risk assessment** conducted by the Compliance Manager.

- Written statements (where appropriate) submitted to the relevant partner or client organisation for a decision on continued placement.

- **Non-Update Service DBS Certificates:**
  Any staff not subscribed to the DBS Update Service must undergo a **new Enhanced DBS check annually**. Staff are strongly encouraged to maintain active Update Service subscriptions.

Managing Risk and Disclosures

If a candidate's DBS certificate reveals **cautions, warnings, or convictions**, Empowered Minds will:

- Conduct a full **risk assessment** led by the Compliance Manager.
- Discuss the findings with the relevant client or placement organisation.
- Obtain written confirmation that the client is aware of the DBS content and consents to the placement, where appropriate.

Empowered Minds is committed to safe and fair recruitment practices. Every step is taken to ensure that those working with or around adults at risk are appropriately vetted, trained, and supported to deliver safe, respectful, and inclusive services.

5.2 Empowered Minds' Preventative Measures Include:

1. Safe Recruitment Practices

All staff and contractors are thoroughly vetted (see Recruitment and Selection Process) to ensure they are suitable to work with vulnerable adults and children.
Regular DBS checks and risk assessments are conducted and reviewed.

2. Staff Training, Awareness, and Monitoring of Practice

All staff receive mandatory safeguarding induction training, including Prevent and Channel awareness.
Refresher training is provided annually or sooner if legislation or risk levels change.
Staff are trained to recognise early signs of abuse, neglect, grooming, or radicalisation.
Staff practice is monitored through regular supervision meetings, line management oversight, and probationary reviews to ensure that learning from training is embedded in day-to-day work.
Professional boundaries and safe practice are reinforced through observations, appraisals, and feedback.
Any concerns regarding staff conduct are addressed immediately in line with safeguarding and HR procedures.

3. Promoting a Safe Environment

Clear Codes of Conduct are in place and communicated to all staff and learners.
Empowered Minds fosters an open, inclusive culture where diversity is respected and discrimination is not tolerated.
Safeguarding policies are prominently available in welcome packs, on our website, and discussed during onboarding.

4. Clear Reporting Channels

All concerns must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who takes appropriate action following internal procedures and legal guidelines.
Whistleblowing procedures are in place to support those raising concerns about unsafe practices.

5. Curriculum and Awareness Activities

Where appropriate, Empowered Minds embeds topics such as critical thinking, online safety, resilience, and awareness of exploitation (including radicalisation) into learner support or education programmes.
Learners are supported to develop personal safety strategies and confidence to speak out.

6. Multi-Agency Collaboration

Empowered Minds works with local safeguarding partners, the police, social care, and Channel coordinators to share information and respond effectively to concerns.
We support and follow all statutory guidance including the Care Act 2014, Working Together to Safeguard Adults, and Prevent Duty Guidance.

7. Risk Assessment and Review

Regular reviews of safeguarding risks are undertaken by senior leadership.
Updates to policy and practice are made in response to changes in law, guidance, or identified risks.

6. Induction and Ongoing Training

This policy sets out the mandatory induction and ongoing training arrangements for all staff and volunteers at Empowered Minds.

Induction
All new staff and volunteers receive safeguarding induction within their first two weeks of starting.
Induction includes:

Types and indicators of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
Safeguarding and reporting procedures.
Whistleblowing procedures.
Code of Conduct and role-specific professional boundaries.

All staff complete a probationary period during which their practice is closely supervised to ensure boundaries and safeguarding responsibilities are understood and embedded.

Ongoing Training and Practice
Annual safeguarding refresher training is mandatory for all staff and volunteers.
Additional training is provided in response to changes in legislation, emerging risks, or staff needs.
Line managers and the DSL regularly observe staff practice, provide supervision, and review conduct during appraisals to ensure professional boundaries are consistently maintained.

Safeguarding and professional conduct are standing agenda items in team meetings and 1:1 supervision sessions.
Any concerns regarding staff practice are addressed immediately in line with safeguarding and HR procedures.

7. Safer Recruitment and Empowering Children

Safer Recruitment
Empowered Minds is committed to the highest standards of safeguarding and child protection. As part of this commitment, we follow a robust safer recruitment process to ensure that all staff, volunteers, and contractors who have access to children and young people are suitable to work with them.

Our procedures include:

- Comprehensive application and vetting processes
- Verification of identity and right to work in the UK
- Enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks
- Professional reference checks
- Safeguarding interview questions during recruitment
- Mandatory safeguarding induction and regular training for all team members

We reserve the right to refuse or terminate engagement with any individual who fails to meet the organisation's safeguarding expectations.

Empowering Children and Young People
At Empowered Minds, we are committed to creating an environment where children and young people feel confident, heard, and respected. Empowerment is central to our safeguarding approach.

We support children and young people to:

- Understand their right to be safe and respected
- Develop their knowledge of personal safety, boundaries, and consent
- Recognise trusted adults and know how to seek help
- Access information about safeguarding in child-friendly formats
- Speak up if they are worried, without fear of blame or judgment

We believe safeguarding is most effective when children are active participants in their own protection. Our provision ensures opportunities for them to express concerns, ask questions, and contribute to building a culture of safety.

8. Policy Management and Assurance

Dissemination of Policies

All policies are shared with staff and volunteers during induction and are accessible at all times via the Empowered Minds shared drive/online workspace.
Updated versions of policies are circulated to staff by email and highlighted in staff meetings. Staff are required to confirm that they have read and understood updated policies.
Critical policies (e.g., Safeguarding, Safer Recruitment, Whistleblowing, Code of Conduct) are revisited during supervision, team meetings, and annual refresher training.

Policy Reviews

All policies are formally reviewed annually, or sooner if statutory guidance, legislation, or identified risks change.
Reviews are carried out by the DSL and senior leadership team, with oversight from trustees/directors where applicable.

Assurance of Adherence

Compliance with policies is assured through:
Regular staff supervision and line management meetings.
Observations of staff practice to ensure alignment with safeguarding and professional standards.
Probationary reviews for new staff and annual appraisals for all staff.
Whistleblowing procedures that allow staff to raise concerns where policies are not being followed.

Any breaches of policy are addressed immediately in line with HR and safeguarding procedures.

Assurance Statement

Empowered Minds confirms that all staff and volunteers are provided with, trained on, and held accountable for adhering to organisational policies. Policy compliance is monitored through structured supervision, appraisal, and leadership oversight, ensuring policies are live documents that guide safe and effective practice.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required by changes in legislation or operational needs.

Signed:

Matt Tally (Director)

Empowered Minds

Date: 25/05/2025