

# **Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy**



## 1) ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name: The Mustard Tree Foundation (Reading)

Address: 4 Sackville Street, Reading, RG1 1NT.

Tel No: 0118 956 7000 Email address: [admin@themustardtree.org](mailto:admin@themustardtree.org)

Denomination/Organisation: Charity

Charity Number: 1104631

Company Number: 4986086

Insurance Company: Public Liability insurance with Access Insurance Ltd

At the Mustard Tree (hereafter MTF), we are passionate that every individual has the opportunity to thrive. We identify unmet needs and innovate and grow projects which support individuals in Reading who are marginalised and facing disadvantage. Delivering high impact services to some of Reading's most underrepresented people.

We provide strong governance and management structures as well as strategic start up and development advice. Our projects are varied, but all desire to empower and envision communities and individuals to bring positive change:

**Rahab** – Supporting those who are sex working. Working with them to break free from the cycles of abuse, poverty, and addiction.

**Starting Point** – Providing mentoring and creating opportunities for young people aged 11-25 who face disadvantage.

**Engage** - Reducing isolation and loneliness by developing positive relationships and networks in our communities.

## 2) OUR COMMITMENT

MTF recognises the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people, and adults at risk. We recognise that everyone can make a difference and have therefore, adopted the procedures set out in this policy to:

- promote good practice and work in a way that can prevent harm, abuse and coercion occurring.
- to ensure that any allegations of abuse or suspicions are dealt with appropriately and the person experiencing abuse is supported.
- and to stop that abuse occurring.

Ultimate accountability for Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk sits with the MTF Trustees and will be dealt with by those with designated responsibility for safeguarding (hereafter referred to as the MTF Safeguarding Team). Please see Appendix 1 for contact information.

The Trustees undertake to:

- Endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures.
- Develop a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone
- Provide appropriate safeguarding training for all staff and volunteers in relevant positions on a regular basis
- Regularly review operational guidelines
- Endeavour that the premises meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
- Support the MTF Safeguarding Team in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children, young people and adults at risk
- Build constructive links with statutory and voluntary protection agencies
- Ensure that children, young people and adults at risk are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

Our commitment to safeguarding runs throughout MTF, and this policy should be read in conjunction with our other policies.

### **3) LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

This policy has been drawn up in line with law and guidance that seeks to protect children, young people and adults at risk. Further information can be found regarding adult and children's safeguarding on the websites of the relevant local authority, local Safeguarding Adults Board ([sabberkshirewest.co.uk](http://sabberkshirewest.co.uk)), or Safeguarding Children Partnership ([berkshirewestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk](http://berkshirewestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk)).

### **4) WHAT IS ABUSE**

Abuse can happen anywhere. It may happen at home, in a care home, hospital, day centre or in a public place. Anyone can be an abuser, but it is usually someone known to the person. Abuse can take many forms and may include:

- Physical abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery

- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Self-neglect.

Definition of a child or young person at risk:

A child is defined as a person who is aged under 18, and includes an unborn child.

A child at risk – is a child who:

- Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm.
- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs).

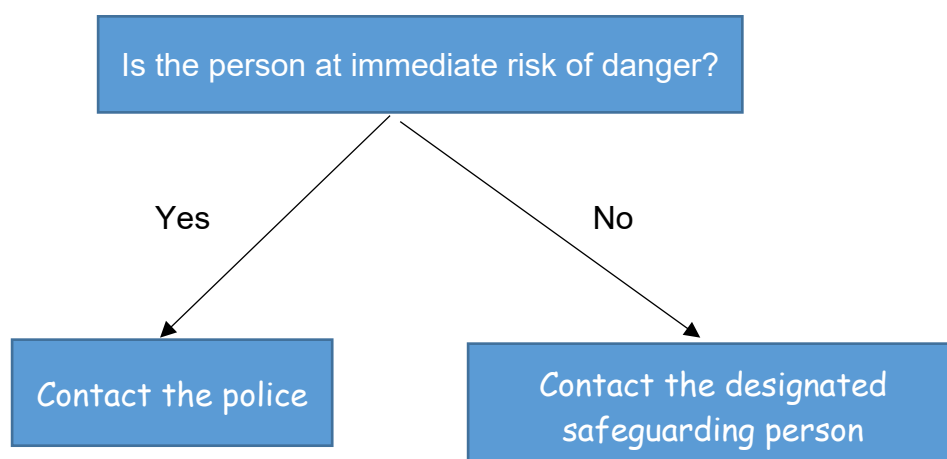
Definition of a vulnerable adult / adult at risk\*:

An adult (18 years and over) who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect

\*Care Act 2014 c.23 Part 1 Section 42(1)

## 5) RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OR CONCERNS OF ABUSE



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

If there is an allegation or concern you should contact the MTF designated safeguarding person. Or, if you have an immediate concern for the safety of an individual report it to the police (see appendix 2 for contact numbers).

If someone from the MTF Safeguarding Team is not available, you can contact the local authority safeguarding team directly.

If you make a direct referral to the police or local authority, then the MTF designated safeguarding person should be advised at the earliest opportunity.

#### If a service user makes a disclosure to you

If a person discloses abuse to you then:

- Listen, reassure and respond sensitively
- Let them use their own words and repeat back to them what they have said and ask them to confirm it.
- Record what is said, (see below for guidance).
- Preserve any physical evidence
- If the person is a child explain that you have to tell someone else and explain what you are going to do next
- If the person is an adult, then ask what they would like to happen and discuss the options with them. They should give their consent before a formal safeguarding referral to the council is made, unless they do not have the mental capacity to make this decision, in which case a referral can be made without consent.
- Speak to the designated safeguarding officer to report the concern at the earliest opportunity (whether or not, in the case of an adult, consent has been given to refer the concern to the local authority)
- Maintain confidentiality between yourself, the person and others involved in the investigation.

#### Recording Concerns

You should write a record of your concerns as soon as possible. In order to ensure confidentiality, consider where the record is being held until you pass it to the designated safeguarding officer. The record should include:

- What you saw if you witnessed the abuse
- Information on the setting
- Describe any significant points about the person's appearance and emotional presentation
- What was said, use exact words where possible
- Make a careful record of the person's condition and any injuries. Use a body map as necessary

- Ensure that you separate factual information from your opinion
- Who the concerns were reported to

### Confidentiality

Please treat all conversations with the strictest confidence and do not share personal details with anyone except your line manager or MTF Safeguarding Team as appropriate. We cannot give assurances of confidentiality about allegations of abuse. Where a person is unable to act for themselves, we have a duty of care to act on information given to us. It may also be that the abuse goes beyond the individual and we have a wider duty to protect others as well. We will strive to ensure that a person's dignity is upheld at all times during investigations of abuse allegations.

### If an individual is not satisfied with action taken over an allegation or concern

If the individual with the concern feels that the MTF Safeguarding Team has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the MTF Safeguarding Team as to the appropriateness of a referral they can make a complaint as per our complaints policy and can contact the local authority directly.

## **6) REPORTING SAFEGUADING CONCERNS TO REGULATORS**

The Trustees hope that staff and volunteers will use the procedure outlined in this policy to report a concern. A direct referral to the local authority safeguarding team as detailed in this section, would therefore, be done through consulting with the MTF designated safeguarding person. It is, of course, the right of any individual to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies. They should then notify the designated safeguarding person at the earliest opportunity.

### **a. Reporting procedures where there is a concern about a child**

If there is a concern about a child all staff and volunteers should follow the procedures outlined by the relevant local authority including:

- Contact the Children's Single Point of Access Team (CSPAT) for advice in cases of unexplained or non-accidental injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home. (see contact numbers in appendix 2)
- Consider whether consent should be obtained from the parents before making a referral. If you believe a child is at-risk of immediate harm or you are unsure if this could be the case – you should contact a social worker in the CSPAT Team directly. The social worker will be able to support you in what to say to parents – particularly as there are times when telling parents about the referral could place the child/children at further risk.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.

- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage the parent / carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm. If in any doubt advice should be gained from the safeguarding team

**b. Reporting procedures where there is a concern about an adult at risk**

If there is a concern about an adult at risk, all staff and volunteers should follow the procedures outlined by their local authority, including:

- Discuss any concerns with the individual themselves giving due regard to their autonomy, privacy and rights to lead an independent life.
- If the person is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the emergency services, informing them of any suspicions.
- For advice or to raise a safeguarding concern contact the relevant Local Authorities Adult Social Care department. (see contact numbers in appendix 2)

**c. Reporting procedures where there is a concern about conduct within the Mustard Tree**

If there is an allegation about the behaviour of a member of staff or a volunteer who works at The Mustard Tree, then this should be reported immediately to the designated safeguarding person. They will then make a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or adult safeguarding team. See Appendix 2 for contact information.

The local authority will advise on any action required, for example, the suspension of the worker. The procedures laid out in the Mustard Tree grievance and disciplinary policy will apply.

**d. Trustees reporting responsibilities**

The trustees will contact the Charity Commission about any safeguarding issues, or serious safeguarding incidents, complaints or allegations in line with the regulatory guidelines. More information on these can be found on the website [www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity). The police and/or the insurance company will also be informed as required.

**e. Safeguarding escalation**

Occasionally situations arise when we may feel that the actions, inaction or decisions of another agency do not adequately safeguard a child, young person or adult at risk of abuse or neglect. For example: whether a safeguarding concern is reportable or non-reportable; the practitioner's roles and responsibilities; lack of action from an agency; sooner than expected case closure.

The West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Board has a multi-agency Escalation Policy offering professionals a process for resolving such professional differences, when a case meets the statutory criteria for safeguarding adults. The policy can be found on the West of Berkshire SAB website using the following link [Escalation Policy](#) and should be read alongside [Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Policy](#) and

Procedures, as well as our own relevant internal organisation policies on escalating matters in dispute.

## **7) SUPPORT AND PREVENTION**

### **a. Safe recruitment**

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

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post
- Those short listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A Disclosure & Barring Services Check has been completed in accordance with guidelines (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant, which covers safeguarding and employee/volunteer code of conduct.
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

### **b. Management of Workers – Codes of conduct and practice guidelines**

We are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. We also wish to operate and promote good working practice. We have set out our commitment to this in our policies and procedures and we have specific good practice guidelines for activities that we are involved in. These include the use of referral forms, risk assessments, lone working procedures, and regular supervision sessions.

We provide safeguarding training to everyone who joins the organisation as part of their induction. Staff training is reviewed annually as part of an individual's development plan and will be refreshed at least every 2 years. Volunteers are asked to renew their training after 3 years.

**c. Supporting those affected by abuse**

The Trustees are committed to supporting all those who have been affected by abuse. We have strong links with support services in the local area and will signpost to relevant organisations, working with statutory agencies as appropriate.

**d. Working with offenders**

Appropriate checks will be carried out during the recruitment process for all MTF staff members and volunteers. Any applicant who has committed serious crimes against a child or adult, shall be prohibited from working or volunteering with any vulnerable adult or child.

It remains a criminal offence for anyone on a Barring List to apply to work in regulated activity with that particular group of people. If any MTF staff member or volunteer becomes aware that a person they are working with is on a Barring List this must be reported to a member of the MTF Safeguarding Team immediately

Suitable applicants will not be prevented from working or volunteering because of offences that are not relevant to the role applied for. Please see our “Recruiting and Working with Ex-Offenders Policy” for more information.

**e. Working in Partnership**

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk. For example, due to cultural tradition, or understanding of what constitutes abuse. We therefore have clear guidelines in regards to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership. We will discuss our safeguarding expectations with all our partners.

Good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children, young people and adults at risk, and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

We will display the “Safeguarding is a Priority Here” poster in the relevant locations that the charity is active in. The poster includes details of other agencies that can be contacted in reference to support in cases where abuse is being experienced or suspected.

**f. Working with Education Providers**

When working with young people in school or further education settings we will follow the education providers safeguarding procedures alongside our own. An agreement will be signed with the school or college in advance of the mentoring starting and the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) will be identified. If any safeguarding concerns are raised, the DSO for the education setting will be notified as well as the



relevant Mustard Tree Safeguarding team member. We will then liaise with the education provider to ensure the concern is followed up and appropriate action is taken.

**g. Commitment to Online Safety**

We recognise that the online world provides everyone with many opportunities. However, it can also present risks and challenges. Therefore, we support and encourage the young people using our service to use the internet, social media and mobile phones in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others.

If any of our service delivery takes place online or involves online activity, we will provide clear and specific directions to staff and volunteers on how to behave online through project specific guidelines and codes of conduct.



## Appendix 1

### Mustard Tree Safeguarding Team:

Designated Safeguarding Officer:	Katherine Shepherd 07557 649461
Deputies	Georgia McIntosh (Starting Point) 07825 331 262  Jackie Curtis (Engage) 07887 395115
Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding:	John Hawkins 0118 377 6787
DBS checks:	Operations Administrator 0118 956 7000



## APPENDIX 2 Safeguarding Referral Contact Numbers

### Adults:

Please contact the Adults Safeguarding Team for the relevant local authority. Reports can be made online, and advice can be obtained by contacting the team by phone.

The office hours numbers for the following council areas are:

Reading: 0118 9373747 or email [CSAAdvice.Signposting@reading.gov.uk](mailto:CSAAdvice.Signposting@reading.gov.uk)  
or complete an [online form](#)

West Berkshire: call 01635 519056 or email  
[safeguardingadults@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:safeguardingadults@westberks.gov.uk)  
or complete an [online form](#)

Wokingham: 0118 974 6371 or email  
[adultsafeguardinghub@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:adultsafeguardinghub@wokingham.gov.uk)  
or complete an [online form](#)

More information including out of office hours can be found at  
[www.sabberkshirewest.co.uk](http://www.sabberkshirewest.co.uk)

### Children:

Please contact the Children's Safeguarding Team for the relevant local authority. Reports can be made online, and advice can be obtained by contacting the team by phone. The office hours numbers for the following council areas are:

Reading: 0118 937 3641

West Berkshire: 01635 503090 or email [child@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:child@westberks.gov.uk)

Wokingham: 0118 908 8002 or email [triage@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:triage@wokingham.gov.uk)

More information including out of office hours can be found at  
[www.berkshirewestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk](http://www.berkshirewestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk)



Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Please contact the LADO for the relevant local authority:

Reading: LADO@brighterfuturesforchildren.org or 0118 937 2684

West Berkshire: LADO@westberks.gov.uk

Wokingham: LADO@wokingham.gov.uk

Police Protection Team: dial 101 or 999 in emergency

Charity Commission:

Serious incidents should be reported by emailing: rsi@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk

Mental Health Support

CPE (Common Point of Entry): 0300 365 2000

Crisis Team: 0300 365 9999