

Magic Equine Assisted Therapy C.I.C.

Safeguarding Children Policy

1. Introduction

Magic Equine Assisted Therapy C.I.C. believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

Magic Equine Assisted Therapy C.I.C. recognises that:

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount
- All children and young people, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To provide protection for the children and young people who receive *Magic Equine Assisted Therapy C.I.C.* services, including the children of adult service users
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding children and young people

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of *Magic Equine Assisted Therapy C.I.C.*

Magic Equine Assisted Therapy C.I.C. seeks to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children/young people, parents, staff and volunteers
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children/young people appropriately
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training

2. Link with other policies

- *Safeguarding Adults Policy*

3. Nominated safeguarding lead person

The nominated person *Susie Butler*, should be notified immediately by any staff or volunteers who have concerns about:

- A child or young person (see section 4)
- A person who works with children (see section 5)

Concerns should be raised if

- A child has been harmed, or may have been
- A criminal offence has possibly been committed against or related to a child or young person; or
- Someone has behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children or young people.

The nominated person will provide advice and support to staff/volunteers unsure about how to proceed with a particular case, and take line management responsibility for the safe delivery, quality and effectiveness of *Magic Equine Assisted Therapy C.I.C.* services. The nominated person is responsible for ensuring *Magic Equine Assisted Therapy C.I.C.* is aware of developments in safeguarding best practice, advising on changes to policy and practice (in line with Local Safeguarding Board policies) and coordinating safeguarding audits and reporting.

One of *Magic Equine Assisted Therapy C.I.C.* directors is nominated to take leadership responsibility for the organisation's safeguarding arrangements. This includes ensuring that staff have sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively.

4. How to raise concerns about a child or young person

- a) If someone is at immediate risk of harm, dial 999 for the police
- b) Contact *Susie Butler* by phone 07771 995284 or email susie@magicequinetherapy.org as soon as possible. A decision will be made which includes whether to make a referral, who will make the referral, and how information about the concern will be securely recorded, stored and, if appropriate shared.
- c) To report a concern or to get advice:
 - NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000
 - Hertfordshire County Council: 0300 123 4043

5. How to report an allegation made against staff or volunteers

An allegation may relate to a person who works with children or young people who has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed. Or may have harmed, a child/young person;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child/young person; or
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children/young people.

Any allegation against people who work with children or young people should be reported immediately to *Susie Butler*. The relevant local authority should be informed within one working day (Local Authority Designated Officer LADO).

The local authority will provide advice and guidance on how to deal with allegations against people who work with children/young people and will also ensure that there are appropriate arrangements in place to effectively liaise with the police and other agencies to monitor the progress of cases and ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process. Support and advice will be available to individuals against whom allegations have been made.

If *Magic Equine Assisted Therapy C.I.C.* removes an individual (paid worker or unpaid volunteer) from work (or would have, had the person not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to children, the organisation must make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service. It is an offence to fail to make a referral without good reason.

6. Independent resources for children and young people

Children and young people can speak to an independent person outside of *Magic Equine Assisted Therapy C.I.C.* through making contact with either of the following:

- Childline on 0800 1111
- NSPCC helpline: 0800 328 0904

7. Being alert to signs of abuse and neglect and taking action

All staff and volunteers should be alert to the signs and triggers of child abuse and neglect. Indicators of abuse and neglect may be difficult to spot. Children and young people may disclose abuse but in some cases, the indicators may be more subtle and appear over time. Everyone should be aware of the potential for children to be sexually exploited for money, power or status and individuals should adopt an open and inquiring mind to what could be underlying reasons for behaviour changes in children of all ages.

Magic Equine Assisted Therapy C.I.C. will ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of;

- The signs of abuse and neglect,
- How to handle a disclosure;

Through induction, training and supervision.

8. Information sharing

Sharing information is an intrinsic part of safeguarding children and young people. The decisions about how much information to share, with whom and when, can have a profound impact on individuals' lives. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people at risk of abuse or neglect. No practitioner should assume that someone else will pass on information which may be critical to keeping a child or young person safe.

The seven golden rules to sharing information are:

- Remember that Data Protection and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing, but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about individuals is shared appropriately.
- Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
- Seek advice from the nominated person if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned.
- Share with informed consent where appropriate. Remember that you may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is good reason to do so, such as where safety may be at risk.
- Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.
- Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
- Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

In *Magic Equine Assisted Therapy C.I.C.* work, the starting point for information sharing is to follow the steps in Sections 4 or 5 of this policy.

9. Code of behaviour

This section outlines the behaviour expected of *Magic Equine Assisted Therapy C.I.C.* staff, volunteers, peer leaders and staff from other organisations who engage with children and young people through *Magic Equine Assisted Therapy C.I.C.* and its activities.

This code has been developed to provide advice which will not only help to protect children and young people, but will also help identify any practices which could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse being made against individuals. Following this good practice code will also help to protect *Magic Equine Assisted Therapy C.I.C.* by reducing the possibility of anyone using their role within the organisation to gain access to children and young people in order to abuse them.

When working with children and young people for *Magic Equine Assisted Therapy C.I.C.* all staff and volunteers are considered to be acting in a position of trust. It is therefore important that staff and volunteers are aware that they may be seen as role models by children and young people and must act in an appropriate manner at all times and follow the code of conduct.

All members of staff and volunteers are expected to report any breaches of this code to the nominated person, *Susie Butler*. Staff who breach this code of conduct may be subject to *Magic Equine Assisted Therapy C.I.C.* disciplinary procedures.

Any breach of this code involving a volunteer or member of staff from another agency may result in them being asked to leave the project. Serious breaches of this code may also result in a referral being made to a statutory agency such as the Police or Children's Services Department.

Adults must:

- Treat all children and young people with respect
- Treat children and young people fairly, without prejudice and always avoid favouritism
- Value and take seriously children's and young people's contributions
- Provide an example of good conduct for others to follow
- Ensure that, whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy/encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- Ensure any contact with children and young people is appropriate and relates to the work of the project
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret actions, no matter how well-intentioned
- Be aware that any physical contact with a child or young person may be misinterpreted
- Recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse

Adults must not:

- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or young people
- Act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive

- Be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour
- Make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or young people
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- Either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- Show favouritism to any individual
- Rely on their good name or that of *Magic Equine Assisted Therapy C.I.C.* to protect them
- Believe "it could never happen to me"
- Take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach
- Make inappropriate promises to children and young people, particularly in relation to confidentiality
- Allow allegations to go unreported
- Let children and young people have their personal contact details (mobile number or address)