

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy

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1. Introduction

The Association of Child Psychotherapists, (ACP) is the professional body and accredited register for Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists in the UK. The ACP is an accredited register of the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) and is responsible for regulating the training and practice standards of child and adolescent psychotherapy across the public and private sectors.

The ACP's overarching duty as an accredited register is to protect the public, and as part of that, to promote and maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of the public; to promote and maintain public confidence in the profession it regulates and to promote and maintain proper professional standards and conduct for Child Psychotherapists, Trainee Child Psychotherapists, ACP employees and officers and Board Members.

2. Purpose of this policy

As a registering body concerned with the wellbeing of children and young people, the ACP recognises the fundamental importance of having an effective policy in place that safeguards and takes reasonable steps to protect from harm all who come into contact with the ACP. This meets the safeguarding principles of the Professional Standards Authority (PSA).

The ACP's Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics states:

A Member must be fully cognizant of and compliant with current child protection legislation and safeguarding procedures. Most importantly, Members must be aware of, and promptly take, the steps expected of them to protect patients, other children or vulnerable adults from harm.

This policy covers safeguarding children and adults at risk and protecting from harm all those who may come into contact with the ACP, including staff, Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists on the ACP register, contractors, and partners, people and members of the public - in a way that is proportionate to our responsibilities.

The ACP gives equal priority to keeping all children and adults at risk safe, regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, We recognise that some children and adults at risk are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.

3. Responsibilities of the ACP

The ACP Board of Directors and Executive Group are responsible for:

- a) Ensuring that there is a clear and up-to-date policy in place based on statutory and good practice guidance, governing our approach to protecting people from harm, and for assuring itself that effective operational processes are in place.
- b) Ensuring a safe environment for all and a culture where protecting people from harm is central.
- c) Regularly reviewing the policy and practice and monitoring the impact.
- d) Taking responsibility for putting things right and dealing with an incident responsibly should something happen or go wrong.

- e) Acting with reasonable skill and care, and in the best interest of the ACP, exercising sound judgement and avoiding exposing the ACP or the public to undue risk.
- f) Ensuring this policy is underpinned by effective operational guidance and processes, which encompass:
 - Clear lines of accountability within the ACP for safeguarding, including designation of a safeguarding lead.
 - Training for all staff, appropriate to their role and continuing professional development, so that staff are competent in identifying and addressing concerns.
 - Safe working practices including appropriate recruitment, vetting and barring procedures.
 - Robust referral, reporting and escalation processes, working with relevant organisations across the UK as appropriate.
 - Effective inter-agency working, including effective information sharing.

The ACP, its employees and members have a duty to ensure that:

- Alleged safeguarding concerns are dealt with promptly, appropriately and reported in a secure and responsible way to all relevant agencies.
- Steps are taken to escalate or alert those able to protect children and adults at risk from harm and minimize risk of abuse.

It is the responsibility of all members on the ACP register, our Board and Executive members, and employees for taking reasonable steps in protecting people from harm. All members undertaking roles and responsibilities on behalf of the ACP, including members on the register, are expected to understand and be familiar with this policy and know how to recognise, respond to, report and record a safeguarding concern or any concern regarding harm to others.

This policy is underpinned by operational guidance on safeguarding for staff (including contractors or others who might work with us in a paid or unpaid capacity) who may become aware of a safeguarding issue that needs to be reported. This includes staff, officers and lay members who carry out investigations into fitness to practise or registration issues and all staff who have direct contact with professionals on our register or members of the public, by phone or in person.

4. What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding means protecting people from harm including physical, emotional, sexual and financial harm and neglect.

Safeguarding concerns may arise because of:

- A disclosure
- An allegation, concern or complaint reported by another person.
- An observation.
- An incident.

Safeguarding children and young people means to:

- Protect children and young people from abuse and maltreatment.
- Prevent harm to children's health or development.
- Ensure children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Take action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding adults at risk involves people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time ensuring that the adult's wellbeing is promoted. This includes, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action.

Adults at risk are those aged 18 or over in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, or, age 16 or over in Scotland who:

- Have needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs);
- Are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect; and, because of those care and support needs, are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

An adult at risk of abuse may:

- Have an illness affecting their mental or physical health.
- Have a learning disability.
- Suffer from drug or alcohol problems.
- Be frail.

5. The ACP as an organisation and an employer

The ACP has systems in place for the safe recruitment and selection of staff:

- Employees of the ACP, including administrative staff, who may have direct or indirect contact with children, adolescents, their parents/carers, and /or Adults at Risk, are required to attend a Level 3 safeguarding course every three years.
- It has a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check in place for staff and others involved in the running of the ACP.
- It has in place systems for dealing with allegations or concerns relating to staff, including clear lines of accountability, systems of reporting and actions to be taken.

The ACP may be targeted by those who want to gain access to children and adults at risk and we are committed to ensuring that we mitigate this risk through robust HR policies and recruitment processes.

6. ACP members on the register

To ensure that the ACP has in place standards and policies that maximise the protection of the public in respect of safeguarding, it is required that members will:

- Understand and be familiar with current safeguarding/child protection legislation and guidance and know how to recognise, respond to, report and record a safeguarding concern or any concern regarding harm to others.
- Attend a Level 3 safeguarding course at least every three years. Members can contact the ACP office for further information about the training provisions.
- Have a DBS check in place.

- Have fulfilled the Annual CPD requirements, signed by their supervisor, in order to be able to re-register. This is to ensure that good practice and standards are maintained.
- Members who have breached the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics inform prospective and current patients of any relevant restrictions on their practice as imposed by the ACP as a result of a disciplinary or fitness to practice investigation. Members under sanction may be found on the ACP website.

7. Support for members and employees

Dealing with concerns about safeguarding can be stressful for members and employees. When, how and with whom to share information regarding safeguarding issues can be particularly difficult. Members involved in these processes should discuss their concerns with their clinical supervisor, line manager, or safeguarding officer depending on their professional circumstances. Members in independent practice can contact their local social services duty officer for advice. Employees, Non-Executive Directors and Board Members of the ACP will follow the appropriate processes in place.

8. Statutory framework

- The ACP operates across all four countries of the UK. There are some differences in adult safeguarding legislation, policy and practice in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
- The ACP Safeguarding Lead ensures that the ACP maintains an up-to-date understanding of the legislative and public policy requirements in each country, and that our operational guidance and processes meet the specific requirements in each of the four countries.

9. Sharing information, confidentiality and mental capacity

Safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk is a shared responsibility, with the need for effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise.

Liaising and working with other agencies is also important, to prevent individuals who actively target organisations in order to abuse children and adults at risk from doing so. This may include sharing information or making referrals to social services or other relevant agencies.

In sharing information, we will ensure that we do so in compliance with our adjunct safeguarding policies and any relevant data protection legislation.

10. Useful Resources

Identifying abuse and neglect

The NSPCC provide a number of helpful toolkits to help identify different kinds of abuse and neglect such as:

- [Radicalisation](#)
- [Protecting children from county lines](#)
- [Protecting children from sexual exploitation](#)

The NICE guidance on 'Child maltreatment: when to suspect maltreatment in under 18s' can be found [here](#).

The British Psychological Society have produced useful guidance for clinicians who work with adults and where there is a disclosure of historical child sexual abuse which can be found [here](#).

The government have published the 'Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children' which can be found [here](#).

You can also find 'An overview of child protection legislation in England' [here](#).

ACP Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics

The ACP Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics can be found on the ACP website [here](#).

UK wide Safeguarding

These are useful links for those working in the devolved nations:

- <http://www.actagainstharm.org/>
- <https://gov.wales/safeguarding-guidance>
- <https://safeguarding.wales/>
- <https://www.safeguardingni.org/>

There are useful apps for IOS and android

- NHS Safeguarding guide
- Safeguarding board NI
- Wales Safeguarding Procedures

Publication and review

This policy will be published on our website, reviewed by the ACP every three years. We will also review it following any serious incident, to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Tanya Leonard in collaboration with the Professional Standards Committee
Safeguarding Lead
(November 2021)