

## **Northallerton Osteopaths Safeguarding Children Policy**

### **Introduction**

The safety and welfare of our patients is of the utmost importance. Because of the day-to-day contact with children that our team has, all those who work at Northallerton Osteopaths are well placed to provide a safe environment for the children in our care whilst also remaining vigilant for the outward signs of abuse. All adults working in the practice contribute to providing a safe environment (physical and emotional) to protect children from harm and abuse, being aware that any child may be at risk of harm or abuse.

Northallerton Osteopaths will fulfil our duty to safeguard and protect the welfare of our patients under the Children Act 1989 through identifying any child with welfare concerns and taking action to address them in partnership with families and other agencies where appropriate.

#### **1. Aims of the policy**

This policy aims to safeguard all children and protect vulnerable children by:

- Raising the awareness in both clinical and non-clinical staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse
- Ensuring all adults within our practice who have contact with children have been checked as to their suitability
- Emphasising the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff
- Developing a structured procedure within the practice, which will be followed by all members of the staff in a case of suspected abuse
- Developing and promoting effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the police and social services

#### **2. Procedures**

Northallerton Osteopaths will ensure:

- We have a Designated Safeguarding Lead who undertakes regular training. At present this person is Joanna Waterworth, Clinical Director.
- There is 1 member of staff (Deputy Safeguarding Leads) who will act in the Designated Safeguarding Lead's absence. At present this person is Fiona Kelly.
- All members of staff have developed their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse and have referred to the appropriate documentation both for local authority contacts and national guidelines.
- Training is available to all members of staff as appropriate paying attention to national guidelines

- All members of staff know how to respond to patients who disclose abuse
- All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regards to child protection procedures
- Our procedures will be annually updated
- All new members of staff will be given a copy of our child protection procedures as part of their induction into the practice
- Any students or volunteers working on the premises will be given a summary of our safeguarding policy and asked to sign a form to show they will adhere to the policy

### **Responsibilities**

Everyone in the practice is alerted to the possibility that any child in our care, regardless of race, religion, culture, class or family background, could be the victim of abuse or neglect and must be familiar with these procedures.

### **The Designated Safeguarding Lead – Joanna Waterworth is responsible for:**

- Keeping written records of concerns (on appropriate safeguarding forms) about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral, ensuring all such records are kept confidentially and secure and are separate from the patient's records
- Ensure an indication of further record-keeping is marked on the patient's records
- Remaining up to date in their knowledge and attending relevant training
- Ensure the safeguarding policies are in place, are relevant, robust, reviewed annually and are followed
- Ensure the relevant policies are made readily available to parents
- Staff have appropriate training and are aware of all relevant policies
- Staff have access to relevant information and contact details to make referrals to appropriate agency as appropriate
- Safe recruitment practices are in place
- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are always listened to
- Ensure verbal concerns are raised with the appropriate authorities as soon as possible after the concerns have been raised recording all details on the appropriate forms
- Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children, which may include Social Services and/or the police.

#### **4. Confidentiality**

We recognise all matters relating to child protection are confidential. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will only disclose information about a safeguarding issued to other members of staff on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Staff are made aware through child protection training that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other appropriate agencies to safeguard children. They are also made aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets and that they have a duty to share any concerns about children with the Designated Safeguarding Lead before leaving the practice premises. This clinic recognises that the welfare of the child or young adult is paramount.

## 5. **Supporting staff and Therapists**

We recognise that staff and therapists working in the practice environment who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or who appears to be likely to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and to seek further support as appropriate.

## 6. **Allegations against staff and Therapists**

We understand that a child might make an allegation against a member of staff or therapist. If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the member of staff should inform the Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

## 7. **Whistleblowing**

All staff and therapists are aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitude or actions of colleagues.

## 8. **Recruitment and selection**

In our recruitment we will ensure that our interview panellists are appropriately trained, that we always follow-up gaps in previous employment, that we always require specific references from employers for the last five years and that for all posts, paid or voluntary, the appropriate Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) and Disqualifications by Association checks are conducted. We also ensure staff are inducted in safeguarding procedures thoroughly and staff training is conducted regularly.

We keep a central record of all staff training including the date and outcome of their Disclosure Barring Service checks so that all children, patients and parents can be assured that this has been completed.

## 9. **Contractors and outside services**

We expect all contractors providing services within the practice, whose staff have access to the practice premises, to comply with these policies and procedures. They must agree to this in writing. We require any contractors or organisations delivering a service on behalf of the practice or using our premises, to provide evidence that they adhere to the above requirements in terms of recruitment, selection, training and supervision of their staff, especially with reference to conducting Disclosure Barring Service checks.

This policy and procedure will also apply to **any** therapist, **any** organisation or **any** individuals using practice facilities. They must also agree to this in writing.

Policy Owner: Northallerton Osteopaths Ltd

Policy approved by: Joanna Waterworth

Date Policy approved: 01.01.2024

Next review Date: Jan 2025