



MHW Foundation CIO

Children's Safeguarding Policy

MHW Foundation CIO

Date Adopted: 12/10/2025

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out MHW Foundation CIO's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. It defines our responsibilities, outlines procedures for responding to concerns, and ensures compliance with all relevant legislation. This policy applies to all trustees, staff, volunteers, contractors, and partner organisations working with or on behalf of MHW Foundation CIO, including activities delivered through therapy, community programmes, and educational outreach.

2. Policy Statement

MHW Foundation CIO believes that all children and young people, regardless of age, ability, gender, race, religion, or background, have the right to protection from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. We are committed to creating safe environments in which children can thrive, feel respected, and be listened to. We take our duty of care seriously and will act promptly and appropriately whenever concerns are raised.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy is based on and informed by the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
- Education Act 2002 (Section 175)
- Care Act 2014
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Charity Commission Safeguarding Guidance (CC30)



4. Definitions and Key Principles

A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

The key principles underpinning this policy are:

The welfare of the child is paramount.

All children have equal rights to protection.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Children's voices must be heard and respected.

5. Types of Abuse and Neglect

Abuse and neglect can take many forms, including:

- Physical abuse (hitting, shaking, poisoning, burning, or otherwise causing physical harm)
- Emotional abuse (persistent emotional maltreatment or rejection)
- Sexual abuse (forcing or enticing a child to participate in sexual activities)
- Neglect (persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or emotional needs)
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE)
- Domestic abuse exposure
- Online abuse (including grooming and exploitation)
- Radicalisation and extremism

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Anthony Young (Designated Safeguarding Lead - DSL): Overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. Ensures compliance, training, and liaison with statutory agencies.

Lisa Vieyra (Deputy - DSL): Supports the DSL and assumes responsibility in their absence.

Trustees: Provide oversight and ensure safeguarding is a strategic priority.

Staff, Volunteers, and Contractors: Must understand this policy, complete training, and report any concerns immediately.

Partner Organisations: Must demonstrate compliance with safeguarding standards equivalent to those of MHW Foundation CIO.

7. Recognising and Responding to Concerns

All individuals should be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm. Indicators may include physical injuries, changes in behaviour, developmental delays, or inappropriate relationships. If a concern arises, it must be reported immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL. Concerns will be recorded factually and handled sensitively.



8. Reporting Procedures

1. Immediate Action: Report concerns directly to the DSL (Anthony Young) or, if unavailable, to the Deputy DSL (Lisa Vieyra).
2. DSL Review: The DSL will assess the concern and decide whether to refer the case to the Local Authority Children's Social Care team.
3. Referral: If a child is at immediate risk, the DSL will contact the Police or relevant safeguarding team without delay.
4. Record Keeping: All concerns, actions, and decisions must be recorded accurately and securely.
5. Escalation: If an individual disagrees with the DSL's decision not to refer, they have the right to contact the Local Authority directly.

9. Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Confidentiality is essential but should never prevent the sharing of information when a child is at risk of harm. Information will be shared lawfully and proportionately, following the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018 and statutory guidance on information sharing.

10. Safer Recruitment and Training

MHW Foundation CIO follows safer recruitment practices for all staff, volunteers, and trustees. Enhanced DBS checks are mandatory for individuals in regulated activity. All personnel must complete safeguarding training on induction and refresher training every two years.

11. Online and Digital Safeguarding

Given the nature of therapy and outreach work, MHW Foundation CIO recognises that safeguarding extends to online communication. All staff and volunteers must use only approved platforms, maintain professional boundaries, and report any online concerns immediately. Online therapy sessions must follow the same safeguarding principles as face-to-face interactions.

12. Working with Parents, Carers, and Partner Organisations

MHW Foundation CIO values collaboration with parents and carers. Concerns about a child's welfare will usually be discussed with their parents unless doing so may place the child at greater risk. Where services are delivered jointly with partner organisations, safeguarding responsibilities will be clearly defined in written agreements.

13. Record Keeping and Data Protection

All safeguarding records will be stored securely, with access limited to the DSL and authorised personnel. Records will be kept for a minimum of seven years after the case is closed. Information will be handled in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.



14. Monitoring and Review

The DSL will monitor safeguarding activity and report quarterly to the Board of Trustees. The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if changes occur in legislation or operational practice. Lessons learned from safeguarding incidents will be used to improve procedures and training.

15. Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Adult Safeguarding Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection and Privacy Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Health & Safety Policy

16. Trustee Sign-Off

This Children's Safeguarding Policy was approved and adopted by the Trustees of MHW Foundation CIO on 12 October 2025.

Signed: *A Young* (Anthony Young, Chair of Trustees)

Dated: 12 October 2025