

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY

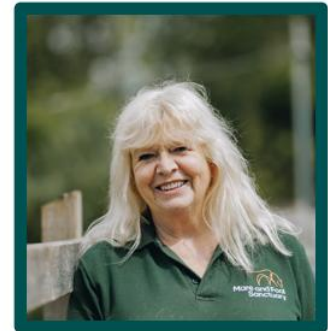
Our Safeguarding Officers



Kerri Luke
Deputy Designated
Safeguarding Officer for
Adults at Risk



Dawn Neil
Designated
Safeguarding Lead for
Children & Young
People and Adults at
Risk



Alison Murray
Deputy Designated
Safeguarding Officer for
Children and Young
People

The Mare and Foal Sanctuary Designated Safeguarding Lead person's details:

Dawn Neil, Head of Education and Equine Assisted Services and Designated Safeguarding Lead
Tel: 01626 355969 Mobile: 07842 061996

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead for Children and Young People:

Alison Murray, Equine Assisted Learning Facilitator and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead for
Children and Young People
Mobile: 07570 040470

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead for Adults at Risk:

Kerri Luke, Volunteer Coordinator and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead for Adults at Risk
Tel: 01626 355969 Mobile: 07743 044125

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Mare and Foal Sanctuary fully accepts its legal and moral obligation under The Children's Act (1989) and (2004), to provide a duty of care to protect all children and young people and safeguard their welfare, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, parental or marital status, pregnancy, religion or belief, creed, sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

1.2 A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (the Children's Act 1989). The term children and young people is also commonly used to refer to people under the age of 18.



1.3 The Mare and Foal Sanctuary fully adopts the British Equestrian Safeguarding Policy (Children and Young People), the full policy can be downloaded from the BE website

<https://www.britishequestrian.org.uk/getInvolved/safeguarding/what-is-safeguarding>

1.4 We also refer to the NSPCC Standards and guidance for children aged 0-18 (2019 Edition) and the NSPCC Safeguarding checklist aimed at voluntary organisations to ensure our policies and procedures remain up to date: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2019/safeguarding-child-protection-standards>

2.0 Aims

2.1 The aims of The Mare and Foal Sanctuary Safeguarding policies are to:

- Ensure effective safeguarding so children and young people are safe and can participate in activities in a secure, fair environment;
- Protect children and young people from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and respect their rights and wishes;
- Make sure everyone understands their safeguarding responsibilities and receives appropriate training;
- Act quickly and appropriately on any concerns, supporting those who raise them, with specialists determining whether abuse has occurred. It is the responsibility of child protection experts to determine whether or not abuse has taken place but it is **everyone's responsibility to report it**;
- Keep confidential, accurate and secure records of all safeguarding concerns;
- Maintain high standards of behaviour through mandatory codes of conduct for all staff, trustees, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, with breaches addressed promptly and potentially leading to dismissal or exclusion.

2.2 The policy will be reviewed annually, or in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and/or government guidance;
- As required by the Local Safeguarding Children Boards, British Horse Society (BHS) and British Equestrian (BE);
- As a result of any other significant change or event.

3.0 Designated Safeguarding Leads

3.1 The Mare and Foal Sanctuary will appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead person (DSL) and a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead who will have completed Level 3 or Group 5 DSL Safeguarding training for Children.

3.2 The role of the DSL and Deputy DSL is to:

- Ensure all staff, trustees and volunteers know and follow the Safeguarding Policy, procedures, guidance and codes of conduct;
- Act as the first point of contact for any safeguarding, welfare or child-protection concerns;
- Hold up-to-date contact details for local safeguarding boards, police and relevant safeguarding leads;
- Record and report safeguarding information in line with organisational procedures;
- Respond to allegations or complaints in accordance with agreed safeguarding protocols;
- Make sure under-18s and their parents/guardians know about the sanctuary's Safeguarding Policy and how to access it;
- Promote and support safeguarding training for staff, trustees and volunteers;
- Ensure safer recruitment processes are followed, including enhanced DBS and barred-list checks where required;



- Ensure codes of conduct are in place and followed by staff, trustees, volunteers, visitors and children and young people;
- Maintain confidentiality and share information only on a need-to-know basis;
- Record, report and refer concerns to appropriate agencies; the DSL/Deputy DSL does not investigate or determine whether abuse has occurred.

4.0 Communication

4.1 The Mare and Foal Sanctuary will make available its Safeguarding Policy and Procedures to all staff, trustees, volunteers, participants and their parents/guardians and referral agencies. Our policies appear in full on The Mare and Foal Sanctuary website within the Equine Assisted Services section: <https://www.mareandfoal.org/equine-assisted-services/our-standards/>

4.2 The Mare and Foal Sanctuary will circulate to all new participants and their parents/guardians if they are under the age of 18 and to referees, the name of the DSL and Deputy. Images of our DSLs can be found on our safeguarding notices boards at all of our sites and offices and at the top of this policy.

4.3 All individuals involved with The Mare and Foal Sanctuary, no matter what role they participate in, must adhere to the Safeguarding Code of Conduct. All individuals involved with The Mare and Foal Sanctuary must attend mandatory in house safeguarding training and all sign to agree to uphold the Safeguarding Code of Conduct as part of their induction process.

4.4 All safeguarding incident concern forms and related communications are logged and securely stored on a Safeguarding SharePoint which only key members of staff have access to.

5.0 Online Safety

5.1 Online safety is an increasing area of concern. The equine assisted services team contact participants via email through their parents, carers or referees, eg, social workers. Live stream sessions only take place where there are other known professionals or parents/carers within secure online meeting forums.

5.2 Our code of behaviour for working with children online remains the same as face to face delivery.

5.3 We use parents, carers or referee email addresses or phone numbers to communicate with children, unless this poses a safeguarding risk. We use The Mare and Foal Sanctuary accounts to communicate via email or online platforms, eg, EGRESS secure email for responding to personal documents never staff's personal accounts.

5.4 Phone calls or text messages are made from the Education Team work mobile number or office phones where possible, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

5.5 We ensure that staff members accessing families' contact details at home, comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 as outlined in our GDPR Policy.

5.6 Advice and support in relation to potential online, domestic and other forms of abuse and mental health concerns are shared regularly with staff and trustees via our staff newsletters, eg, signposting to the NHS Every Mind Matters materials and resources. Across our organisation we have trained Mental Health First Aiders and Champions who are listed in our offices and on our staff intranet who are available to support staff, trustees, volunteers, supporters and participants.

5.7 Concerns and issues relating to online, domestic or other forms of abuse and mental health are reported using our normal safeguarding reporting procedures.



6.0 Training

6.1 All staff, trustees and volunteers will receive in house safeguarding training giving an overview of safeguarding and outlining our policies and procedures for safeguarding children. Annual refresher training is provided to all staff, trustees and volunteers.

6.2 Staff and volunteers working with children must undertake an approved safeguarding training course at Level 2. Refresher training must be completed every three years via an approved online training portal or a further face to face course. Any new appointments of staff and volunteers working with children will undertake safeguarding training as part of their initial training/induction unless they can evidence that they have undertaken the course with another approved qualification in the last three years.

6.3 Designated Safeguarding Leads for Children complete Level 3/Group 5 Safeguarding training which is renewed every 3 years.

6.4 All Safeguarding training for staff, trustees and volunteers is recorded and monitored on an internal single central record.

7.0 Pre-appointment vetting checks, regulated activity and recording information

7.1 Staff and volunteers who lead or support regulated activity through delivery of our education and equine assisted services provision for children or other charitable activities, must hold an enhanced DBS certificate with children's barred list check as outlined in '[Keeping children safe in education 2025](#)' pages 62-67.

8.0 Types of Child Abuse

8.1 Child abuse can take a range of different forms. It is any action by another person (adult or child) that causes harm to a child. It can be defined as physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect.

8.2 Types of child abuse include:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Online abuse
- Neglect
- Domestic violence and abuse
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Forced marriage and honour killings
- Child trafficking and modern slavery
- Radicalisation and extremism
- County Lines
- Child-on-child abuse
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE)
- Serious violence

8.3 Please see statutory government guidance '[Keeping children safe in education 2025: part one](#)' and Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership website for further information about each type of abuse: <https://www.devonscp.org.uk/working-with-children/abuse/>



9.0 Dealing with Concerns

9.1 If a child or adult discloses abuse to you:

Do:

- Stay calm and try not to show shock or disbelief
- Listen carefully to what they are saying
- Be sensitive ('I am sorry that this has happened to you')
- Be aware of the possibility that medical evidence might be needed
- Tell the person that: - They did the right thing to tell you - You are treating the information seriously - It was not their fault - Inform them you will need to share the information in order to help keep them safe - All necessary steps will be taken to protect and support them
- Report to the Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Write down what was said by the person disclosing as soon as possible always using their words

Do Not:

- Press the person or question them for more details
- Stop someone who is freely recalling significant events; (for example, don't say 'Hold on we'll come back to that later,') as they may not tell you again
- Jump to conclusions
- Do not promise to keep secrets; you cannot keep this kind of information confidential
- Make promises you cannot keep (such as, 'this will never happen to you again')
- Contact or confront the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental
- Pass on the information to anyone other than those with a legitimate 'need to know'.

9.2 When recording a disclosure:

- At the first opportunity make a note of the disclosure recording the date and time and sign your record. Transfer this to our safeguarding reporting form and send it to the DSL without delay;
- You should aim to:
 - note what the people actually said, using their own words and phrases
 - describe the circumstances in which the disclosure came about
 - note the setting and anyone else who was there at the time
 - only record factual information, not your own opinion/s
 - be aware that your report may be required later as part of a legal action or disciplinary procedure
- Under no circumstances should any individual attempt to deal with the problem alone;
- The primary responsibility of the person who first suspects or is told of abuse is to **report it** and to ensure that their concern is taken seriously;
- Remember it is everyone's responsibility to record and pass on safeguarding concerns appropriately, not to investigate them.

10.0 Reporting a Safeguarding Concern or Incident about a child

10.1 If there is a serious and immediate threat to a child contact the **Police by calling 999**.

10.2 Concerns that a child is being abused must be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Leads.



10.3 All safeguarding concerns or incidents should be reported using our safeguarding concern or incident report form template which can be found on the staff intranet within the policies and procedures section under 'Safeguarding' and on all safeguarding notice boards at our sites and offices. Copies of any initial notes related to disclosures, incidents or concerns must also be kept and provided to the DSLs when reporting a concern.

10.4 All safeguarding incidents or concerns should be reported to Dawn Neil, Designated Safeguarding Lead via email marked as high importance and confidential using the following email address: dawn.neil@mareandfoal.org or by calling 07842 061996.

10.5 If the concern relates to the DSL's conduct you should contact the Rhodri Samuel, Chief Executive of The Mare and Foal Sanctuary and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for Devon Tel: 01392 384964.

10.6 If a concern relates to any adult in a position of trust working with children including staff or volunteers that work for The Mare and Foal Sanctuary and those that work for other organisations or agencies, then they should also be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and to the LADO for Devon Tel: 01392 384964.

10.7 Safeguarding concerns and incidents will be responded to within 24 hours as outlined within our safeguarding reporting concerns procedure document which is located on the staff intranet and published on our main website.

10.8 Any concern about child abuse or risk of significant harm to a child must be reported to [Devon Children's Services \(MASH\)](#) for children within Devon or through [South West Child Protection Procedures](#) for the local safeguarding board/partnership within the child's locality.

10.9 Do not attempt to deal with the problem of abuse alone, it is our responsibility to report concerns, not to investigate or decide whether or not abuse has occurred!

11.0 Consent and Sharing Information

11.1 Children should be given the opportunity to decide whether they agree to their personal information being shared. If a child doesn't have the capacity to make their own decisions ask their parent or carer (unless doing so would put the child at risk of harm).

11.2 If you're sharing information without consent keep a written record explaining:

- what steps you took to get consent
- the person's reasons for not giving consent (if known)
- why you felt it was necessary to share information without consent

11.3 Pass a copy of this record on to the agency/agencies you're sharing the information with.

11.4 The Government's Information Sharing Advice for Practitioners (May 2024) sets out seven key principles:

1. A child's safety takes priority over privacy rights.
2. Where safe and practical, explain to the child or carer what information you will share, with whom, and why.
3. Consent is not required if a child is at risk of harm.
4. Seek prompt advice if unsure about the legal basis for sharing information.
5. Protect the identities of anyone who could be harmed if their details were disclosed.
6. Share only relevant, accurate information with those who need it to safeguard or support the child/family.
7. Record your decision and the reasons for sharing or not sharing information.



11.5 KCSIE (September 2025) states that the Data Protection Act and UK GDPR do not prevent information sharing to keep children safe. Staff should consult the designated safeguarding lead if unsure. Concerns about data protection must not obstruct safeguarding.

12.0 Prevent duty

12.1 Prevent is part of the UK's CONTEST counter-terrorism strategy, aiming to reduce the risk of terrorism and stop people from becoming involved in extremist activity. Radicalisation can stem from many ideologies and looks different for each individual, with signs such as accessing extremist content, justifying violence, or adopting extremist symbols or behaviours. These indicators must be considered in context and concerns should be raised promptly. Guidance and training are available through the Home Office's Prevent resources. The sanctuary supports Prevent by creating a safe environment for young people, ensuring clear information about wellbeing and equipping staff, trustees and volunteers with the training, supervision and procedures needed to recognise and report concerns.

12.2 Link to Prevent duty UK: [Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales \(accessible\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prevent-duty-guidance-for-england-and-wales)

12.3 There are resources and guides that can be accessed to improve understanding and awareness of radicalisation. The Home Office's Prevent page on GOV.UK sets out in further detail how to spot the signs of radicalisation and [what to do if you are concerned about someone](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-if-youre-worried-about-someone-being-radicalised).
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-if-youre-worried-about-someone-being-radicalised>

12.4 Prevent training is available on the government website: [Prevent duty training: Learn how to support people susceptible to radicalisation | Prevent duty training](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prevent-duty-training)

13.0 Early Help and Preventative Support

13.1 Purpose

Within our Equine Assisted Services setting, Early Help aims to identify and respond to emerging needs of children and young people at the earliest opportunity. Through observation during equine and nature based sessions and relational work, we are uniquely placed to notice changes in behaviour, emotional wellbeing, and family functioning.

Early intervention supports improved outcomes and helps prevent escalation to statutory safeguarding services.

13.2 When to Initiate Early Help

Early Help should be considered where children or young people demonstrate:

Emotional and Behavioural Indicators:

- Increased anxiety, distress, withdrawal, or emotional dysregulation
- Difficulty forming relationships with staff, peers or animals
- Sudden changes in confidence, engagement or behaviour
- Low mood, low self-esteem or trauma-related responses

Developmental and Social Indicators:

- Delays in communication or social interaction
- Poor attendance or inconsistent engagement
- Difficulty managing boundaries, risk or safety



Family and Environmental Indicators:

- Parents/carers/children sharing concerns about:
 - Home stress or instability
 - Financial hardship
 - Mental health challenges
 - Parenting difficulties

Observations of:

- Inconsistent supervision
- Concerning parent-child or child-child interactions
- Transport or access issues affecting attendance

13.3. Identifying Need for Early Help Intervention in an Equine Setting

All staff, facilitators, and volunteers must:

- Recognise that equine environments can encourage disclosure, both verbal and non-verbal
- Be attentive to body language, behaviour during activities and interaction with horses
- Record concerns factually, including: What was observed; What was said (using the child's words where possible) and the Context (eg, during grooming, riding, or reflective work)

All concerns must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

13.4. How to Initiate Early Help

Step 1: Internal Safeguarding Discussion. Concerns are shared promptly with the DSL

The DSL considers:

- Frequency and severity of indicators
- Known background or additional needs
- Whether concerns meet Early Help or safeguarding thresholds

Step 2: Gaining Consent

Early Help is voluntary and requires informed consent from:

- Parents/carers
- The child/young person (where appropriate)

In our equine setting, this may be sensitively introduced by:

“We want to make sure the support we offer here is part of a wider network helping your child thrive.”

Step 3: Early Help Assessment

The DSL or trained staff member completes a local Early Help Assessment (EHA). Information may include:

- Observations from equine sessions
- Emotional wellbeing indicators
- Strengths demonstrated through engagement with horses
- Family and environmental context



Step 4: Referral Pathway

Referrals are made through:

- Local authority Early Help Hub/Children's Services portal
- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), where appropriate

As a therapeutic equine assisted service provision, we may contribute:

- Session reports
- Behavioural observations
- Professional insight into relational and emotional functioning

13.5. Who Can Initiate an Early Help Referral

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) holds responsibility for initiating referrals. Deputy DSLs may act in their absence.

Facilitators and equine practitioners:

- Identify concerns
- Record and report to DSL
- May contribute to early help assessments

Important: Due to the therapeutic nature of our work, staff **must not** promise confidentiality if a child or young person shares or discloses concerns. Safeguarding procedures always take precedence.

13.6. Early Help Referral Pathways

Early Help referrals may involve:

- Education providers (schools, SENCOs)
- CAMHS or mental health services
- Family support services
- Youth services
- Social prescribing pathways (where applicable)

Our therapeutic equine assisted service may act as:

- A supporting provision within a wider Early Help plan
- A Lead or contributing professional, depending on role and agreement

13.7. Recording and Monitoring

The DSL must ensure all concerns are:

- Clearly recorded
- Linked to observed patterns over time

Confidential records are securely stored.



Monitoring includes:

- Changes in presentation
- Engagement with people, horses and activities
- Feedback from families and professionals

13.8. Escalation

Immediate escalation to Children's Social Care through Local Authority Safeguarding Children's Boards is required if:

- A child discloses abuse or neglect
- There are injuries or signs of harm
- Risk increases despite Early Help intervention

13.9. Key Principles of Early Help delivery will:

- Be trauma-informed, recognising the therapeutic role of equine and nature based interactions
- Respect the voice of the child, including non-verbal communication
- Value the regulatory and relational benefits of equine assisted and nature-based work
- Work in partnership with families and professionals
- Ensure safe boundaries within a nurturing, supportive and safe environment

13.10 Early Help Contact Details

Below are Early Help links for our surrounding local authorities which include Devon, Torbay and Plymouth:

- Devon - [Early Help - Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)
- Torbay - [Early Help - Torbay Council](#)
- Plymouth - [Plymouth Early Help and SEND Advice line | PLYMOUTH.GOV.UK](#)

14.0 Charity Governance

14.1 To strengthen the governance of safeguarding within the charity, this policy sets out the oversight responsibilities of the Board of Trustees. Safeguarding concerns that indicate significant risk, organisational weaknesses, or potential reputational impact will be escalated to the Board or to a designated safeguarding trustee. The Board will determine whether any matter meets the threshold for a serious incident report to the Charity Commission and ensure such reports are submitted promptly where required. Trustees will receive regular assurance on safeguarding through scheduled reports, trend analysis and learning from incidents or near misses, enabling them to monitor themes, identify emerging risks and ensure that appropriate actions are taken. Making these governance arrangements explicit provides clarity, accountability and transparency, reinforcing the charity's commitment to robust safeguarding practice.

Further Information and Links

The Mare and Foal Sanctuary Designated Safeguarding Lead person's details:

Dawn Neil, Head of Education and Equine Assisted Services and Designated Safeguarding Lead
Tel: 01626 355969 Mobile: 07842 061996

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead for Children & Young People:

Alison Murray, Equine Assisted Learning Facilitator and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead for Children and Young People
Mobile: 07570 040470



British Equestrian (BE) Safeguarding Contact details:
Telephone Numbers: 02475313443 or email safeguarding@bef.co.uk

You can report a concern via the [Safe to Play](#) website

BHS Lead Safeguarding Officer 02476 840746 safeguarding@bhs.org.uk
Confidential email: cpleadofficer@bhs.org.uk

Childline 0800 1111 or Visit: <https://www.childline.org.uk/>

NSPCC 0808 800 5000 or Visit: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

Local Safeguarding Boards Key Contact Information



Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership – Visit: [The Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership \(Devon SCP\)](#)

If it's an emergency call 999.

If you have an urgent safeguarding concern about a child in Devon contact MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) on 0345 155 1071 or complete a request for support online form at [DCC - Request for support](#)

Local Authority Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer (LADO) for Devon

If a concern relates to a member of staff or the Designated Safeguarding Lead's conduct you should contact the Chief Executive of the Mare and Foal Sanctuary Rhodri Samuel and the Local Authority Designated Officer for Devon (LADO).

Complete the LADO contact form at: [form - DCC Services Portal](#)
email childsc.localauthoritydesignatedofficersecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk



Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership – Visit <http://www.torbaysafeguarding.org.uk/>

If you feel a child is in immediate danger, please call 999.

If you are worried about a child please call the Torbay Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub on 01803 208100 or email mash@torbay.gov.uk

Out of office hours please call 0300 4564 876.

Local Authority Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer (LADO) for Torbay

If a concern relates to a member of staff or the Designated Safeguarding Lead's conduct you should contact Rhodri Samuel, Chief Executive of The Mare and Foal Sanctuary and the Local Authority Designated Officer for Torbay (LADO) Ivan Sullivan - Tel: 01803 208541 or 07920 247310 or Email ivan.sullivan@torbay.gov.uk





Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership – Visit <https://plymouthscb.co.uk/>

Call 01752 668000

Local Authority Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer (LADO) for Plymouth

If a concern relates to a member of staff or the Designated Safeguarding Lead's conduct you should contact Rhodri Samuel, Chief Executive of The Mare and Foal Sanctuary and LADO enquiries, please email LADO@plymouth.gov.uk or call on 01752 306758.

*For child protection procedures in other locality safeguarding boards within the South West visit: <https://swcpp.trixonline.co.uk/>

Useful websites and document links:

Please see BHS website for useful templates and documents <https://www.bhs.org.uk/about-us/how-we-operate/our-policies/safeguarding/>

BE Safeguarding link:

<https://www.britishequestrian.org.uk/getInvolved/safeguarding/what-is-safeguarding>

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Job Title: Head of Education and Equine Assisted Services and Designated Safeguarding Lead

APPROVED BY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Signature:

Job Title: Chair of Trustees

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Policy Review Date: March 2027

