



# Online Safeguarding Policy

This policy should be read alongside Shantona's policies and procedures on safeguarding.

## 1. The purpose of this policy statement

Shantona works with children and families across all its activities in the community. The purpose of this policy statement is to:

- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is paramount when adults, young people or children are using the internet, social media or mobile devices
- Provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to online safety
- Ensure that, as an organisation, we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use online devices.

The policy statement applies to all staff, volunteers, children and young people and anyone involved in Shantona's activities. This policy has been drawn up based on legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England.

## 2. We believe that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- Children should be able to use the internet for education and personal development, but safeguards need to be in place to ensure they are always kept safe.

## 3. We recognise that:

- The online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however, it can also present risks and challenges
- We have a duty to ensure that all children, young people and adults involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online
- We have a responsibility to help keep children and young people safe online, whether or not they are using Shantona's network and devices.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, 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 and in helping young people to be responsible in their approach to online safety.

## 4. We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Appointing an online safety coordinator, this will be the Administrator who is also the designated safeguarding officer for Shantona.
- Supporting and encouraging the young people using our service to use the internet, social media and mobile phones in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others
- Supporting and encouraging parents and carers to do what they can to keep their children safe online
- Developing an online safety agreement for use with young people and their parents/carers (*see appendix 1 p-4*)
- Responding appropriately to any form of inappropriate online behaviour, whether by an adult or a child/young person, by following our safeguarding procedures on protecting young people
- Reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly



- Ensuring that staff who are in contact with clients through the internet in any form, for example any Shantona social media account, direct contact with clients through WhatsApp or online video platform such as YouTube or Zoom, should only ever be in touch with clients through verified Shantona accounts. Personal accounts should never be used.
- Ensuring staff who do post content on Shantona platforms adhere to the online content checklist (*see appendix 2 p5*)
- Ensuring that usernames, logins, email accounts and passwords are used effectively and known only by the staff who use these accounts as part of their work
- Ensuring content created for young children and put on video sharing sites such as YouTube should have the comments switched off, and this should be shared to the parent of the young child
- Ensuring any platform which is used for service user engagement is monitored regularly and that the comment sections or equivalent of this are moderated by staff members to discourage inappropriate online behaviour of service users or non-service users
- Ensuring personal information about the adults and children who are involved in our organisation is held securely and shared only as appropriate
- Ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after their written permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given
- Providing supervision, support and training for staff and volunteers about online safety
- Examining and risk assessing any social media platforms and new technologies before they are used within the organisation.

**5. If online abuse occurs, we will respond to it by:**

- Having clear and robust safeguarding procedures in place for responding to abuse, please see Shantona's Safeguarding Children policy for this procedure
- Providing support and training for staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of abuse, including bullying/cyberbullying, emotional abuse, sexting, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation
- Making sure our response takes the needs of the person experiencing abuse, any bystanders and our organisation as a whole into account
- Reviewing the plan developed to address online abuse at regular intervals, in order to ensure that any problems have been resolved in the long term.

**6. Named Contacts for this policy:**

Shantona Women's & Family Centre: 0113 249 7120

Online Safety Coordinator: Ashia Akhtar, Administrator/PA

Duty and Advice Team: 0113 37 60336 between 8.30am to 5pm. Outside of these office hours, please contact the Children's Emergency Duty team (guide) on 0113 37 60469.

The Local Authority Designated Officers in Leeds can be contacted Monday to Friday on 0113 37 89687, operating a duty system for notifications. They can also be contacted by email via [LADO@leeds.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@leeds.gcsx.gov.uk).



## **Related policies and procedures**

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures, including:

- Safeguarding Children and Young people policy
- Procedures for responding to concerns about a child or young person's wellbeing
- Dealing with allegations of abuse made against a child or young person
- Managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- Shantona Safeguarding contact forms
- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Anti-bullying policy and procedures
- Photography and image sharing guidance



## Appendix 1 –

Shantona understands the importance of children being able to use the internet for education and personal development. This includes social media platforms, games and apps. We aim to support children and young people in making use of these in our work. However, we also recognise that safeguards need to be in place to ensure children are kept safe at all times. This agreement is part of our overarching code of behaviour for children and young people and staff and volunteers. It also fits with our overarching online safety policy. If you would like to know more about this, please speak to Ashia Akhtar (Safeguarding Lead)

Young person: please read the following agreement and discuss it with your parents/carers and group leader

Parents/carers: please read and discuss this agreement with your child and then sign it, ask your child to sign it, and return it to the group leader.

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to Ashia Akhtar ( Safeguarding Lead or Nahid Rasool ( CEO)

Young person's agreement

- I will be responsible for my behaviour when using the internet, including social media platforms, games and apps. This includes the resources I access and the language I use.
- I will not deliberately browse, download or upload material that could be considered offensive or illegal. If I accidentally come across any such material I will report it immediately to the group leader.
- I will not send anyone material that could be considered threatening, bullying, offensive or illegal.
- I will not give out any personal information online, such as my name, phone number or address.
- I will not reveal my passwords to anyone.
- I will not arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone I meet online unless I have discussed this with my parents and/or group leader and am accompanied by a trusted adult.
- If I am concerned or upset about anything I see on the internet or any messages that I receive, I know I can talk to the group leader at Shantona or Ashia Akhtar ( Safeguarding Lead)

I understand that my internet use at Shantona Women's and family services will be monitored and logged and can be made available to the group leader. I understand that these rules are designed to keep me safe and that if I choose not to follow them, Shantona women's and family services may contact my parents/carers.

Signatures:

We have discussed this online safety agreement, and [child's name] agrees to follow the rules set out above.

Parent/carers signature..... Date .....

Young person's signature..... Date .....



## Appendix 2- Posting online content checklist

When posting online content for young people and adults it is important that we are sharing safe, relevant and accurate information. When posting please answer these questions below.

- Is the information I have provided correct? (I.e. can I verify this with other independent sources or research)
- Is this content age appropriate for the audience I am engaging with?
- If I am signposting other resources or organisations do I know they are legitimate?
- If I am signposting through links to other websites, do I know these websites are age appropriate and safe for children? **(Do not signpost children to individuals)**
- Have I checked that any links that I have provided have not been re-directed?
- Is this piece of content free of anything that may cause offense/ controversy/ emotional distress or harm/ Shantona to fall into disrepute?

If you have answered 'No' to any of these questions, then this piece of content should **not** be distributed. If you have answered 'yes' to all of these questions, then it is likely that your content is suitable for Shantona media channels. If you have any questions about this, please get in touch with Sonia.

### List of verified support chat forums that Shantona are allowed to signpost:

- <https://www.childline.org.uk/>
- <https://www.myh.org.uk/>



## Useful services & helplines

### Services in Leeds

**The Market Place** provides services include a drop in, counselling and other one-to-one support. All services are free and confidential, and available to 13–25 year olds in Leeds.

Address: 8–18 New Market Street, Leeds, LS1 6DG Tel: 0113 2461659. Website: [www.themarketplace.leeds.org.uk](http://www.themarketplace.leeds.org.uk)

**Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service (SLCS)** works with people aged 16 and over and have specialist knowledge and experience of working with suicide and self-harm. Dial House is a place for sanctuary open 6pm–2am Friday– Monday. Visitors can access when they are in crisis. Please call from 6pm on the night you would like to request a visit.

Address: Dial House, 12 Chapel Street, Halton, Leeds, LS15 7RW Tel: 0113 2609328 Website: [www.slcs.org.uk](http://www.slcs.org.uk)

**Public Health Resource Centre** provides health promotion resources available free to professionals.

Address: Technorth, 9 Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds LS7 3NB Tel: 0113 224 3174 Website: [www.phrc.leeds.gov.uk](http://www.phrc.leeds.gov.uk)

**TESS & [www.selfinjurysupport.org.uk](http://www.selfinjurysupport.org.uk)** - This is a website for women in emotional distress and who self-harm.

The website has ideas for support and coping with difficult feelings, and also has an e-mail and text support service for young women aged up to 25 (called TESS) They also offer the RAINBOW Journal, which is free to under 18's.

NSpcc- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

## Helplines

**ChildLine** – free and confidential helpline for children and young people Tel: 0800 11 11

**Samaritans** – confidential helpline Tel: 08457 90 90 90 (24 hours) Connect is a helpline open 6–10:30pm every night of the year for people over 16 living in Leeds. The service provides emotional support and information for people in distress. Run by Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service. Tel: 0808 800 1212

**HOPELineUK** – a specialist helpline staffed by trained professionals who give non-judgemental support, practical advice and information to: children, teenagers and young people up to the age of 35 who are worried about themselves anyone who is concerned about a young person Tel: 0800 068 41 41

**Young Minds Parents Helpline** – a free and confidential national helpline for parents. Tel: 0808 802 5544 (9:30am – 4pm) Monday to Friday

**Learning Disability Helpline** provides information and advice. Tel: 0808 808 1111

Approved By Nahid Rasool (CEO)

Date : 23/12/2024

*Nahid Rasool*