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OPERATING POLICIES

Gateway Psychology Operating Policies are statements on the way Gateway Psychology will operate within the Business System. They signal the values and philosophy of our Company and provide a framework of general principles for all employees, Associates and colleagues to follow.

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SIGNATORIES (signed and controlled electronically)

Dr Meryl Ann Forse

Dr M.A. Forse – Managing and Clinical Director

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1.0 SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to all staff (this includes Employees, Contracted Associates, Agency workers and Service Contractors) of Gateway Psychology (“The Company”).

2.0 WHY WE NEED A POLICY

Gateway Psychology believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by a commitment to practices that protect them.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, gender identity or other identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- That some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting children and young people’s welfare.

The purpose of this policy:

- To provide protection for the children and young people who receive a service from the Company, including the children of adult members or users.
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they are subject to an allegation of harming a child or young person

DEFINITIONS

The Children Act 1989 definition of a child is: anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, even if they are living independently, are a member of the armed forces or is in hospital.

Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person. It may take the form of physical abuse (e.g. hitting, slapping), sexual, psychological (e.g. emotional abuse, threats, blaming), financial / material (e.g. misuse of money or possessions, theft, fraud), neglect or acts of omission, discrimination, institutional (e.g. abuse within a context of a care home, reduced or omitted acts of care), domestic (e.g. abuse within a family or between partners)

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Safeguarding children: Safeguarding children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 as:

- protecting children maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children’s health or development
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcome

3.0 KEY MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and board of directors, paid staff, associates, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, trainees, students or anyone working on behalf of the Company or using its premises.
- 3.2 Understand current and new policies, and the role of management with respect to them.
- 3.3 Ensure that all employees, Associates and contractors understand current and new policies through communication and familiarisation and behave in accordance with them.
- 3.4 Actively work to ensure that Gateway Psychology Policies are maintained and developed, through reviewing their own policies and processes and receiving and monitoring feedback information.
- 3.5 Monitor the policy locally and eradicate any non-conformances that may be identified.
- 3.6 Agree and contribute to the development of new policies and processes where applicable, and when agreed, commit to implement those policies and processes.
- 3.7 Company Managers are responsible for the continual monitoring and improvement of Policies and Processes for which they have responsibility.
- 3.8 Ensure that any concerns raised with Policies or Procedures are directed to the manager within the relevant function.

4.0 DETAILS OF THE POLICY

- 4.1 The Company believes that children must be protected from harm at all times.
- 4.2 We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- 4.3 We recognise that providing early help is more effective than reacting later.
- 4.4 We want children who use or have contact with this Company to enjoy what we have to offer in safety.
- 4.5 We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and
- Involving parents and children appropriately
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

- 4.6 We want parents and carers who use or attend our Company to be supported to care for their children in a way that promotes their child’s health and well-being and keeps them safe.
- 4.7 We will achieve this by having an effective child safeguarding procedure (Ref. GP-PRO-003) and following National and Local guidance e.g. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (Department for Children Schools and Families - DCFS) and the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection Procedures(www.staffsscb.org.uk; https://www.stoke.gov.uk/info/20009/children_and_families/391/stoke-on-trent_safeguarding_children_partnership)
- 4.8 If we discover or suspect a child is suffering harm or has experienced historical abuse, we will notify social services or the police as soon as possible in order that they can be protected if necessary. See Safeguarding Children Procedure (GP-PRO-003) for the categories of abuse.
- 4.9 If one of our staff or associates or volunteers are subject to an allegation of harming a child or other safeguarding concern, we will notify social services and conduct an internal investigation. See Safeguarding Children Procedure (GP-PRO-003) for the categories of abuse
- 4.10 We will review our child protection policy and procedures at least annually to make sure they are still relevant and effective.
- 4.11 We recognise the applicability of Children's Act of 1989 and 2004 and amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

5.0 CROSS REFERENCES TO OTHER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Safeguarding Children Procedure	GP-PRO-003
Equality Policy	GP-POL-002
Health and Safety Policy	GP-POL-004

CHANGE HISTORY

Details of Change	Date of Change	Issue Level
Draft issue	3/12/2013	0
Initial Issue	22/6/2014	1
Para 4.7 updated to include historical abuse	23/2/2015	2
Annual Review – no changes made	19/03/2016	3
Para 4.8 added and reviewed on basis of Staffordshire County Council safeguarding documents	29/1/2017	4
Annual review, no changes made	17/1/2018	5
Revised based on “Working Together..2018” document	24/10/2018	6
Annual review – updated to include ‘gender identity’	31/07/2019	7
Annual review – updated Stoke Safeguarding website address link	20/09/2021	8
Annual review – added in additional definitions	31/07/2022	9
Annual review – added in statement about some children being additionally vulnerable	31/05/2023	10