



## **Safeguarding Policy**

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# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Aims and objectives**

Everyone who participates in The Final Straw Foundation projects and workshops is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. The Final Straw Foundation has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people, trustees, staff, instructors and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

The Final Straw Foundation is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of this policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of The Final Straw Foundation and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific safeguarding and child protection issues.

## **1.2 Definitions**

A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children's Act 1989). However, our policies and procedures also support working with vulnerable adults. They also apply to all children and young people regardless of age, disability, gender, sexual orientation or identity, racial heritage, religious belief or social status.

## **1.3 Policy statement**

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and interns, students or anyone working on behalf of The Final Straw Foundation.

The purpose of this policy is:

- to protect all children and young people who are involved with The Final Straw Foundation
- to provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.

This policy has been drawn up based on legislation and guidance that seeks to protect children including:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)

## 1.4 The Final Straw Foundation commitments

The Final Straw Foundation commits to the following:

- recognising that the welfare of the child is paramount, as detailed in the Children's Act 1989.
- believing that all children, whatever their age, disability, gender, sexual orientation or identity, racial heritage, religious belief or social status should be able to participate in the Final Straw Foundation activities in a fun and safe environment.
- recognising that some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other factors.
- adopting safeguarding and child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers and taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment.
- to respect the rights, wishes and feelings of all children and young people.
- ensuring all concerns and allegations of unsafe or inappropriate practice or abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- ensuring all The Final Straw Foundation employees who work with children are recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility and provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and child protection procedures.
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through training, supervision and support.
- understanding that working in partnership with parents, carers and children is essential in promoting and protecting the welfare of children and young people.
- sharing safeguarding and child protection concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately.
- appointing a board member and member of staff as Lead Safeguarding Officers and a link Trustee for Safeguarding.

## 1.5 Gender Diversity and Inclusion

- The Final Straw Foundation commits to treating all children with respect and acceptance. All staff or volunteers who work with children will never try to provide advice to, or guide children who are questioning their gender, but instead support them and adapt to their preferences.

## 2 Plan for Safeguarding Children

### 2.1 Responsibilities of key personnel for safeguarding

The Lead Safeguarding Officer for The Final Straw Foundation will complete appropriate training for safeguarding and ensure this is regularly updated.

The Lead Safeguarding Officer will be responsible for:

1. Promptly addressing any arising concerns reported by The Final Straw Foundation staff.
2. Recording written information about arising concerns and actions taken and storing securely.
3. Seeking advice from appropriate professionals in the local area as required.
4. Ensuring all staff understand their role in safeguarding.
5. Ensuring all staff are trained annually and updates are shared.
6. Maintaining a central record of the training that trustees, staff and volunteers have undertaken.

**Outreach officers will be responsible for:**

1. Promptly addressing any arising concerns shared by children, young people, parents/carers and volunteers on their project ensuring clear information about the course of action to be taken and making a written record of this.
2. Promptly sharing information relating to concerns with The Final Straw Foundation Lead Safeguarding Officer and sharing the written record of this.
3. Seeking advice from appropriate professionals in the local area as required.
4. Ensuring all volunteers working on their project are always supervised.
5. Ensuring all those involved in the project in their area have access to clear information about what to do in the event of a safeguarding concern or disclosure.

## **2.2 Procedure for responding to an arising concern, disclosure or allegation**

It is the responsibility of all those involved in The Final Straw Foundation to act on any concern or disclosure in relation to safeguarding by following the procedures within the organisation. It is not the responsibility of anyone working with The Final Straw Foundation (paid or unpaid) to decide whether abuse has taken place. This applies both to allegations relating to abuse taking place elsewhere and any allegation made within The Final Straw Foundation.

### **2.2.1 Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse**

**If a child is in immediate danger call 999.**

If there is an immediate concern about a child or their family any member of staff can phone the 999. If in exceptional circumstances, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Staff should consider speaking to a member of the local authority Safeguarding Board (see appendix 2 for regional contact details). In these circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) as soon as is practically possible.

If you are unsure, you can contact the Local Safeguarding Children Board for advice and guidance. When contacting the LCSB or making a referral ensure that you have as much factual information about the child as possible when you phone include:

- Full name
- D.O.B
- Address
- Family composition details (including names of parent(s) and siblings)
- Any key professionals working with The Final Straw Foundation
- Factual information about the concerns you have

Trustees, staff and volunteers may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. They may see it happening, they may suspect it happening because of signs of abuse (as detailed in Appendix 1 & 4) or it may be disclosed by someone else or directly by the child or young person affected.

In the event of a disclosure by a young person (who is not deemed to be in immediate danger), it is particularly important to respond in a specific way. If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- **stay calm** so as not to frighten the young person.
- **reassure** the child that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell.
- **listen** to the child, showing that you are taking them seriously.
- **keep questions to a minimum** so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led, or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify.
- **inform** the child that you must inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the child this is to help keep them safe.
- **safety of the child** is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention, call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue.
- **write down** exactly what the child has said without adding any interpretation.
- **report** the incident to the deputy safeguarding officer/Lead Safeguarding officer as soon as possible.

Asking questions is fine to help understand what the issue is BUT you must ensure the questions are open and give the child the ability to clarify.

- It is important NOT to ask leading questions e.g. Did ----- Was it -----?.
- It is important to know when to stop asking questions and listen.
- It is important not to interrogate.

Types of Questions you can ask:

- Tell me? (tell me what happened)
- Explain? (explain what you meant by)
- Where did this happen/where were you?
- When did this happen?

Remember you are only clarifying with the child if something concerning did happen or could have happened from the information, they give you.

### *2.2.2 Recording Information*

To ensure that information is as helpful and factual as possible, a detailed record in the child's / young person's own words should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. When recording this information, the individual should only note facts and distinguish what is personal knowledge and what others have said. Own opinions should not be included.

This should be recorded on the standard The Final Straw Foundation safeguarding 'Record of Disclosure' form ([see Appendix 3](#)) and shared immediately with the DSO/LSO. The project coordinator is then responsible for deciding on the most appropriate action, if necessary, seeking further advice from professionals in the local area and recording the actions together with the person raising the initial concern.

Information should include the following:

- the child's full name, age and date of birth (correct spelling)
- the child's home address and telephone number
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also, any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- details of witnesses to the incidents
- the child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred
- have the parents been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail

### *2.2.3 Reporting a Concern*

All concerns, allegations and disclosures must be reported appropriately. The Final Straw Foundation expects its volunteers and staff to discuss any safeguarding or child protection concerns they may have about the welfare of a child immediately with the DSO/LSO and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

Should a DSO/LSO not be available members should take responsibility, and they should contact the duty officer at the local area safeguarding board to seek advice (contact information detailed in [Appendix 2](#)).

If anyone has a concern about an employee or a volunteer this must be reported to The Final Straw Foundation Lead Safeguarding Officer or safeguarding trustee who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- The Final Straw Foundation will refer the matter to the local area safeguarding board



- The parent/carer of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the local area safeguarding board
- The chairperson will be notified to decide who will deal with any media enquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings
- If the Lead Safeguarding Officer is the subject of the concern or allegation the report must be made to the appropriate manager or the Safeguarding Trustee who will refer the matter to the local area safeguarding board.

### *2.2.4 Confidentiality*

The Final Straw Foundation's approach to confidentiality is set out in its Confidentiality Policy.

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Confidentiality needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. No employee or volunteer must ever guarantee confidentiality to any individual including parents, children, colleagues. Staff should make children aware that if they disclose information that may be harmful to themselves or others, then certain actions will need to be taken.

Wherever possible, consent should be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances, obtaining consent may not be possible or in the best interest of the child or young person, e.g., where safety and welfare of that child or young person necessitates that the information should be shared. The law permits the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child or young person. Disclosure should be justifiable in each case, according to the particular facts of the case, and legal advice should be sought if in doubt.

Information should be shared on a need-to-know basis only. This may include the following persons:

- The Lead Safeguarding Officer / Deputy Safeguarding Officers
- The parents or carers of the child/young person
- The person(s) making the allegation
- Local area safeguarding board if appropriate
- The alleged abuser (and parents or carers if the alleged abuser is a child)
- School Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Leads

DPA and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

### **3 Managing complaints, allegations, grievances, incidents and bullying**

The Final Straw Foundation recognises its duty to act on any safeguarding or child protection concerns raised by service users and their parents/carers and maintains a complaints procedure to address these. It also recognises its' duty to report any concerns or allegations against its staff (paid or unpaid) within the organisation and provides procedures on whistleblowing for staff, interns or volunteers to feel safe to raise any concerns.

All young people, their parents/carers will be given guidance on The Final Straw Foundation website about what to do if they have a safeguarding or child protection complaint

#### **3.1 Managing complaints**

Should a service user, parent/carer or referrer wish to report a concern and seek a resolution:

1. If a complaint is made verbally or in writing to a volunteer or outreach officer, they should raise this with the individual mentioned.
2. Should the complaint involve the outreach officer, the volunteer, parent/carer should contact a member of the management board.
3. All discussions and documentation should be recorded along with agreed actions towards resolution.

#### **3.2 Managing allegations**

Should a service user, parent/carer or referrer wish to raise an allegation against a volunteer or member of The Final Straw Foundation:

1. Any member of staff (paid or unpaid) from The Final Straw Foundation is required to report any concerns in the first instance to the named, Lead safeguarding officer. A signed written record of the concern is to be completed to document this discussion.
2. The Lead safeguarding officer will then contact a) a trustee from the board and b) the relevant local area safeguarding board for advice and follow the LADO guidance for their local area.
3. All agreed actions will be documented in writing along with all subsequent correspondence with that member of staff.

#### **3.3 Managing grievances**

Should a member of staff, volunteer or person related to the organisation raise a concern and wish to seek a resolution:

1. The individual is to contact The Final Straw Foundation either in person or via written communication

2. Should the concern involve the member of staff the individual should contact Bianca Carr to arrange a meeting or telephone discussion about their concerns.
3. Any discussion should be documented in accordance with data protection procedures and the Final Straw Foundation's Confidentiality Policy. Agreed actions towards resolution are also documented and signed by all those involved in the discussion.

### 3.4 Managing incidents

Should an incident occur during a Final Straw Foundation club session, workshop or litter pick whereby a young person is harmed:

1. Emergency procedures should always be followed wherever required. Where emergency services are in assistance their advice and guidance should be followed by staff, volunteers and service users.
2. There should be access to a qualified first aider available at each Final Straw Foundation session and they should be called upon to address any minor injuries not requiring emergency support.
3. For any incident, a report form should be recorded by the coordinator overseeing the session and a copy given to parents/carers and a copy sent to the central Final Straw Foundation office for records.

### 3.5 Addressing bullying

Service users are given clear guidance about the code of conduct expected within The Final Straw Foundation clubs and workshops. This includes rules that all service users are asked to agree to, and they are reminded of these during each session.

If a service user has a concern related to bullying, they are encouraged to raise this with either a volunteer or member of staff they are comfortable with.

That volunteer or member of staff is then expected to discuss this and then seek to find a resolution on the matter with those involved.

## 4 Personnel working with children and young people

### 4.1 Safer recruitment process

Safe recruitment processes apply to The Final Straw trustees, staff, and volunteers, both full and part time. The following steps are taken when recruiting to ensure appropriate protection within the organisation. Volunteers are recruited to contribute to the project under the direct supervision of staff, or a designated lead volunteer, at all times. Any volunteer working in a supervising capacity will have been subject to the same recruitment practices and safeguarding training as The Final Straw Foundation staff.

#### **Trustees and Staff:**

- All new trustees and staff complete an application process. The application process elicits information about the applicant's past and includes a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Two confidential references, including one involving previous work with children are obtained. These references are taken up, confirmed through telephone contact and held on central record.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo) is obtained and held on central record.

**Volunteers:**

- All Volunteers work under the direct supervision of The Final Straw Foundation staff. They are expected never to be alone with any child, young person or vulnerable adult. Clear information on this is provided during induction and in the volunteer handbook.

**Young Volunteers:**

- Some young people may wish to volunteer to support the Final Straw Foundation. This is permitted for volunteers over the age of 14.
- Where young people are acting as volunteers, they are considered as under the care of the Final Straw Foundation. Therefore, all parts of this policy apply to the volunteer as a young person, to ensure appropriate safety/protection of the young person.
- For volunteers under the age of 16, written consent from parents must be gained or supervised by the parent/guardian.

## 4.2 Induction

The Final Straw Foundation commits resources for induction, training of staff (paid and unpaid) effective communications and support mechanisms in relation to Safeguarding and Child Protection.

All employees receive formal induction during which:

- A check is made that the application form has been completed in full, including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures.
- Their qualifications are substantiated.
- The job requirements and responsibilities are clarified.
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures are explained, and training is undertaken.

Each member of staff and volunteer is expected to read the Safeguarding policy and understand the process to follow if a concern is raised.

Induction for staff and volunteers includes:

- Discussion of the Safeguarding Policy and confirmation of understanding.
- Ensuring familiarity with reporting processes the roles of designated child protections officers and who acts in their absence.
- Initial training on safeguarding.

## 4.3 Training

- Lead DSO and Deputy DSO complete safeguarding training with an approved body.
- All staff and volunteers receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing them what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person
- All staff have an up to date first aid qualification
- All staff who, through their role, are in contact with children and /or vulnerable adults will have access to online safeguarding training at an appropriate level.

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes ongoing available training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child
- Work safely and effectively with children

## 4.4 Ongoing Support

Safeguarding issues and practices will be a standing item for staff team meetings in order to address any arising matters relating to this area.

We recognise that involvement in situations where there is risk, or actual harm can be stressful for staff concerned. The mechanisms in place to support staff include:

- Debriefing support for paid and unpaid staff so they can reflect on the issues they have dealt with.
- Staff who have initiated a safeguarding concern will be contacted by the lead safeguarding officer within one week.

## 5 Online Sessions

The Final Straw Foundation may facilitate live online sessions with children and young people. Keeping children and staff safe during these sessions is essential. Staff delivering remote sessions should be aware that the same principles set out in the code of conduct apply.

- It is the outreach officer's responsibility to make sure that parents, carers and children understand the benefits and risks of online sessions and get written consent for children to be involved.
- Outreach officers should try to find a quiet or private room or area to facilitate any online session from and should consider what will be in the background. This includes checking that nothing personal or inappropriate can be seen or heard on screen
- Online sessions can be facilitated using Microsoft Teams and staff must use Final Straw Foundation accounts for all sessions/correspondence, and must not use personal accounts.
- It's best practice to ask children to be in a common space during an online session, rather than a personal space such as a bedroom. Ask parents and carers to be within earshot of the session so that the child is not completely alone with you.
- Outreach officers can offer children the option to turn their cameras on but should be aware that some children may not feel comfortable doing so, for a variety of reasons.
- Make a record of the session once it's finished
- If staff have any concerns about anything they have seen or heard during online sessions, staff will follow the procedures outlined in section 2.2.3 'Reporting a concern'.

- If volunteers are attending online sessions, it is the staff members responsibility to ensure that they do not have access to any child's personal information or contact details (such as an email address) and that all activity is fully supervised by the staff member (i.e. no unsupervised 'break out rooms').
- If volunteers need to use a personal email address to join a session, it is the project coordinator's responsibility to ensure the session is set up as such that this is not accessible to any of the children or young people joining the session.

## 6 Code of Conduct

Whether in position as a trustee, member of staff, volunteer or client, all members have a responsibility to ensure that everyone involved in The Final Straw Foundation are protected from harm and are free to enjoy and participate in all activities safely.

The Final Straw Foundation is a small charity in which everyone works together to provide the best outcomes for clients and their families. The Final Straw Foundation commits to providing a happy, safe environment for all its trustees, staff and volunteers. All are therefore expected to adhere to the following code of conduct:

It is the responsibility of each adult working at The Final Straw Foundation to ensure that:

- their behaviour is always appropriate.
- they observe the rules established for the safety and security of children, young people and vulnerable adults and provide a role model for these.
- they follow the procedures following any disclosure or safeguarding concern (as detailed in this policy).
- they recognise the position of trust in which they have been placed and, in every respect, the relationships they form with the children, young people and vulnerable adults in their care are appropriate.
- they follow the data protection guidance including the policy on photographic images and the storage of these.

### 6.1 Code of Conduct for all adults

- DO put this code into practice at all times.
- DO treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- DO set an example you would wish others to follow.
- DO treat all young people equally.
- DO respect the right to personal privacy of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- DO allow children, young people and vulnerable adults to talk about any concerns they may have.
- DO encourage others to challenge any attitudes or behaviours they do not like.
- DO take any allegations or concerns of abuse seriously and refer immediately (procedures found in this safeguarding policy).

- DO NOT form a relationship with a child, young person or vulnerable adult that is an abuse of trust.
- DO NOT engage in inappropriate behaviour or contact - physical, verbal, sexual.
- DO NOT make suggestive remarks or threats to a young person, even in fun.
- DO NOT use inappropriate language via any medium including verbally, in writing, by telephone, on email or the internet.
- DO NOT let allegations, suspicions, or safeguarding concerns go unreported.
- DO NOT give out personal details including addresses and mobile telephone numbers to children and vulnerable adults.

## 6.2 Code of Conduct for all participants of the Final Straw Foundation

To follow the agreed rules for all Final Straw Foundation activity sessions:

- We must look after each other
- We must stay safe
- Follow the group leader instructions
- Use the equipment and resources safely
- Use kind hands and kind words with leaders, other children and parents
- We must listen to people who are helping us

The expected code of conduct is made accessible to all members of The Final Straw Foundation and through the initial letter to clients and their families. The code of conduct is shared in each project location during all Final Straw Foundation project events and activities.

## 7 Running a safe session

All staff follow the following procedures for running a safe session.

The outreach officer has the responsibility for overseeing each session and is responsible for the following duties:

- Signing service users in and out of each session.
- Ensuring that service users are reminded of the code of conduct.
- Providing clear direction to service users about the expectations for the sessions.
- Organising staff and volunteers to provide adequate ratios in relation to the individual needs of service users.
- Familiarising and sharing what to do in the event of a fire
- Sharing information as appropriate with staff and volunteers about the individual needs of service users to support the session e.g. best form of communication, specific strategies to support inclusion.
- Completing an incident form following any incident and sharing this with parents/carers and the central Final Straw Foundation Office.



An adult with appropriate and up to date first aid training is present at each session and is on hand to deal with any minor injuries. The procedures for reporting incidents are to be followed at each session.

## **8. Lone Working**

FSF Leaders, Outreach Officers and volunteers have varied roles and work with groups of children. In most situations FSF follows best practice to have at least two adults present when working with children and young people.

Sometimes it may be appropriate or necessary for an adult to supervise a small group of children on their own. It is everyone's responsibility to protect children.

### **8.1 DBS**

Any member of staff working alone with children or young people, whether online or face-to-face, Final Straw Foundation needs to make sure staff have gone through the appropriate criminal records and barring checks (an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check in England).

### **8.2 Choosing a Venue**

Choosing a suitable venue for working alone with children is an important part of making them feel safe and protecting yourself.

- Work in a room that has windows and make sure curtains are open
- Keep any doors to the room open. If you must close the door for privacy, make sure it's kept unlocked
- Make sure you can always access a working phone in case of emergency.
- Choose somewhere easily accessible for the children or young people and yourself
- Never drive children without a parent or carer, even on short journeys, unless you are a registered driving instructor teaching a lesson
- Choose a public place or the work office to meet any volunteers in person.

### **8.3 Online Sessions**

If you're doing an online session, you still need to take safeguarding measures, just as if you were meeting with a child face-to-face.

- Make sure you are in a suitable location. This includes checking that nothing personal or inappropriate can be seen or heard on screen
- It's best practice to ask children to be in a common space during an online session, rather than a personal space such as a bedroom. Ask parents and carers to be within earshot of the session so that the child is not completely alone with you
- Make a record of the session once it's finished

## 8.4 Risk Assessments

FSF are aware of the risks to children and carry out risk assessments to manage and mitigate any risks you or the child/children may encounter. You will need to do an assessment for each child or group you work with.

Risk assessments must consider:

- the type of activity
- the behaviour and abilities of the child
- any special medical needs
- the suitability of the location
- Make sure you know where the fire exits are and the evacuation plan for the building

### . Communicating the policy with service users

Safeguarding information is shared at induction training for all staff and volunteers. All trustees, staff and volunteers are expected to read the policy and abide by the procedures stated.

## 9. Monitoring and Reviewing arrangements

This policy (which is locally tailored with individual region details) is reviewed by the board of trustees annually or in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and/or government guidance.
- As required by the Local Safeguarding Children Board and/or guidance for sports councils.
- As a result of any other significant change or event.

## 10. Acceptance of Policy

Policy signed and ratified at a trustee board meeting held on:

## **Appendices 1: Understanding Abuse**

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, disability, gender, sexual orientation or identity, racial heritage, religious belief or social status.

Abuse can take the form of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person. Abuse in all of its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood

Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

### **Signs and Indications of abuse**

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent.
- the young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them.
- another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a young person.
- unexplained changes in a young person's behaviour e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.
- inappropriate sexual awareness.
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour.
- distrust of adults, particularly those whom a close relationship would normally expect.
- difficulty in making friends.
- being prevented from socialising with others.
- displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite.
- losing weight for no apparent reason.
- becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt.
- Signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes.
- a shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions.

## **Bullying / Peer on Peer Abuse**

Bullying (including cyber bullying) may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are three main types of bullying. It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments) and including sexting.

Signs of bullying / peer on peer abuse can include:

- behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go training or competitions.
- an unexplained drop off in performance.
- physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes.
- a shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions.

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place. It is **NOT** the responsibility of those working in The Final Straw Foundation to decide that child abuse is occurring. However, it **IS** their responsibility to act on any concerns.

## Appendix 2: Key contacts for the local area safeguarding board

Area	Contact
West Sussex	<p>Integrated Front Door (IFD) during office hours on the numbers below.</p> <p><b>Telephone: 01403 229900</b></p> <p>Out of hours enquiries :033 022 26664.</p> <p><a href="http://WSChildrenservices@westsussex.gov.uk/">http://WSChildrenservices@westsussex.gov.uk/</a></p>
Hampshire	<p>Hampshire Children's Services 0300 555 1384 (Monday to Friday: 8:30 – 5pm)</p> <p>Out of hours: 0300 555 1373</p>
Dorset and Bournemouth	<p>Child Advice and Duty Service Telephone: 01305228866 (Monday to Friday: 9am to 5pm)</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:childrensadvicanddutysevice@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk">childrensadvicanddutysevice@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</a></p>

### Appendix 3: The Final Straw Foundation– Record of Disclosure Form

Standard 'Record of Disclosure' form for recording and reporting all safeguarding and child protection concerns and disclosures. To be used across all project areas.

Record of Disclosure (form) 2025		
Name of Client / Young Person		
Date safeguarding concern / disclosure was raised		
Details of safeguarding concern / disclosure  (Please refer to guidance in The Final Straw Foundation Safeguarding Policy)		
Actions taken / proposed to help resolve concern raised.		
Person(s) raising concern		
Name of coordinator		
Signature		Date