

Safeguarding Policy
Version 2.0
Revision November 2024



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

children and young people

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SAFEGUARDING LEAD: BANDNA REKHI, CLINICAL DIRECTOR
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As Clinical Director, Bandna has oversight of all our clinical activities and takes responsibility for providing advice and support on all aspects of safeguarding, ensuring that it remains a priority.

If Bandna is not available, Karen Quatermass, Director (07966 192228) will act as deputy.

1. Introduction and aims

Questa Psychological Services Ltd is a practice providing assessments, psychological therapy and support to children, adults and families. We are, as a practice, committed to the welfare and safeguarding of children and young people across all of the activities we undertake.

2. Purpose

It is important for all our staff to recognise that our principal aim is to provide clients (patients) and their families with a safe and secure environment so that they are cared for by staff that are both trained and committed to protect them from all forms of potential abuse.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and associates without exception

We aim to create a culture of communication, trust and openness so that children and young people who come under our care have the opportunity to speak up and be supported at the earliest opportunity; to support the emotional and psychological wellbeing of any child or young person who may be being abused, exploited or neglected. A climate of 'openness, honesty and awareness' will be encouraged among staff through regular supervision meetings and an open door policy for people to raise concerns with the Directors.

3. Context

There is a great deal of legislation aimed at keeping children safe that we refer to, we have a responsibility to keep up to date with this. Some of the legislation we refer to includes:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
- Children's Act 1989 / 2004
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The Care Act 2014
- NICE (National Institute of Clinical Excellence) Guidance Looked After Children 2013
- NHS (National Health Service) England Safeguarding Policy 2015
- GMC (General Medical Council) on confidentiality 2009
- NHS England PREVENT Training and Competencies Framework 2015

4. Dissemination/Access

The policy is shared with all our staff and on our website for public viewing.

Questa's safeguarding lead provides regular weekly supervision and 'drop-ins' for our clinicians so that they can discuss any concerns they may have about a child's behaviour or responses.

5. Recognising signs and symptoms of abuse; responsibilities of staff

Questa is responsible for ensuring that members of staff receive training on safeguarding and ensuring that staff recognise when a child may be at risk so that they know what to do if they suspect there is an issue.

Staff are responsible for reporting any concerns promptly.

Staff are responsible for keeping accurate and detailed records of any concerns or reported abuse and of all action taken.

6. What to do if you suspect abuse

Identify and respond promptly to any allegation - report and discuss with lead, don't assume someone else must be aware.

Listen carefully to the person or child making the report, gather information respectfully and empathically and record name, address, date, time and a record of the what was reported. Advise that this information will need to be shared.

Discuss with lead to assess risk.

Immediate action should be taken if there is reasonable suspicion that the child has been or will be abused. The interests of the child are paramount so sharing information may be necessary to safeguard the child. This may mean breaking confidentiality and contacting the police or local safeguarding children team. Record action taken.

Parents/carers need to be informed about any referral to Social Care unless to do so would place the child at increased risk of harm.

7. If you suspect a staff member of abuse

A staff member who is reported for suspected abuse, will be dealt with according to the company's disciplinary procedure which, subject to risk assessment, will mean the individual being immediately suspended, without prejudice to that individual, pending investigation. Legal guidance may be sought prior to this decision being taken.

Staff and Directors will work closely with other relevant organisations where and whenever required, including the Police and Local Safeguarding Boards, and will always cooperate in any abuse investigations.

They will follow any protection plan agreed through multi-agency procedures in order to reduce the risk of further abuse after an actual or suspected case of abuse.

Questa adheres to safe recruitment guidelines to minimise the risk of someone working with children who might pose a risk to them. All Questa staff have enhanced DBS checks.

8. Confidentiality

Questa undertakes to maintain confidentiality and protect data as far as it is able, to share information on a need to know basis and in accordance with legal guidelines. We undertake to do our utmost to care for all parties, recognising that, ultimately, the perspective, needs and long term future of the child must take precedence.

Version control:

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Authors: Bandna Rekhi, Dr Karen Quatermass.

Next review January 2025