



Safeguarding and DBS Policy

This policy applies to all volunteers volunteering for Treasure Chest.

The purpose of this policy:

- To protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who receive voluntary services from Treasure Chest
- To provide volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

Treasure Chest believes that a child, young person or vulnerable adult should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and keep them safe. We are committed to practise in a way that protects them.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults including The Children Act 2004.

Responsibilities

Treasure Chest has designated personnel responsible for safeguarding and safe recruitment through the form of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. In particular they are responsible for:

- Ensuring children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from harm
- Ensuring the production and availability of good information related to this policy
- Establishing and maintaining links with City of York Council around safeguarding
- Safe recruitment through conducting DBS checks (see section below)
- Ensuring all team members know their role
- Ensuring regular supervision of volunteers
- Reviewing the policy annually or when required
- Providing advice and support when a concern is raised

Peer Supporters are responsible for:

- Ensuring children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from harm
- Maintaining their own awareness of safeguarding issues and policies and procedures through attending training and supervision sessions
- Immediately discussing concerns with a designated person. For Treasure Chest this is Kath Weston (Safeguarding & DBS Co-ordinator). If Treasure Chest are volunteering at a Children's Centre setting there will be details of the relevant designated person available there
- Keeping accurate, timely, dated and signed records of their concerns and actions

Criminal record checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

To adhere to good practice in the safe recruitment of volunteers, all Peer Supporters will be expected to apply for a DBS check before commencing peer supporting.

In assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service, Treasure Chest complies fully with the code of practice¹ and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly.

Treasure Chest will discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual before starting as a Peer Supporter or before withdrawing the opportunity to act as a Peer Supporter.

The Safeguarding & DBS Co-ordinator will maintain a record of DBS certificate information to ensure all active Peer Supporters have undergone a criminal record check and ensure checks are reviewed over time. This data will be kept securely in compliance with obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and other legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of data (please see Treasure Chest's Data Protection policy.)

DBS checks will be reviewed every five years. When individuals receive their initial DBS certificate they will be encouraged to register with the Update Service. This will enable the DBS Co-ordinator to check, free of charge, whether any information has been added to the individual's record. The individual's consent will be sought before any Update Service checks are performed. Active peer supporters who do not register with the Update Service will be asked to make a fresh DBS application after five years.

The nature of volunteering for Treasure Chest often changes over time. Peer Supporters who do not continue in the role of peer supporting face-to-face at support groups in community centres, Children's Centres or at York Hospital, or online Zoom groups (e.g. volunteers who provide written support on the Facebook group, help run the ante-natal workshops, or conduct administrative tasks) will not need to re-apply for a DBS certificate or have their record reviewed on the Update Service.

Treasure Chest will accept a pre-existing DBS certificate obtained through work with another organisation, providing:

- an enhanced check was performed;
- the certificate is no more than five years old;
- the certificate covers the same workforce (child workforce for Peer Supporters working in support groups at community centres or Children's Centres, or online using Zoom; adult and child workforce for Peer Supporters volunteering at York Hospital); and
- the organisation is based in the York area and the individual's address shown on the certificate is in the York area.

A Peer Supporter who only has a DBS certificate countersigned by York Hospital will not need another certificate to volunteer in the groups in community centres, Children's Centres or via Zoom, providing it is no more than five years old.

It is the responsibility of individual peer supporters to familiarise themselves with this policy and to read and understand its content.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice>

Safeguarding training

As part of Peer Supporter training, all Peer Supporters will undertake basic training in safeguarding. This must be completed before commencing peer supporting.

The Core Committee will decide which training course to use. Currently, the City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership offer a free, online safeguarding course. More information can be found here: <https://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/safeguarding-online.htm>.

It is possible that the content of safeguarding training may trigger a negative emotional response in people who can identify either personally or generally with the subject matter. This will be made clear to all Peer Supporters-in-training and they will be invited to discuss their needs and the possibility of alternative training if they feel they will be personally affected.

Once safeguarding training is completed, Peer Supporters must inform the Safeguarding & DBS Co-ordinator by sharing a record/certificate of completion. A note of this will be kept on the Safeguarding/DBS database. These records will be reviewed over time to ensure that peer supporters undertake regular safeguarding training, at least every 5 years.

Treasure Chest will accept successful completion of safeguarding training undertaken with another organisation, providing:

- the Peer Supporter can show a record or certificate of completion, which bears their name and the completion date;
- the training was completed within the last 5 years;
- the training was for safeguarding children and young people as a minimum; training for safeguarding vulnerable adults only will not be accepted.

Date of last review: November 2020

Reviewed by: Kath Weston

Date of next review: November 2023