



Safeguarding Children Policy

Last update: May 2024

Next update: May 2025

Charity name: URBOND

Responsible person: **Martina Elgue, Aidan Law & Ousmane Drame**

Responsible trustee: **Smangele Gwengwe**

Introduction

This policy sets out how URBOND operates to keep children and young people at risk safe from abuse.

Policy Statement

The policy is about stopping abuse where it is happening and preventing abuse where there is a risk that it may occur.

We have a Duty of Care to our children, young people, volunteers and any other service users. We are committed to the protection and safety and wellbeing of children and young people whether they are volunteers and/or participants in our activities. URBOND understand safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility and will ensure we are alert to and recognise child welfare issues, raise concerns, share information with others when necessary, make referrals when appropriate, contribute towards plans and decision about a child if necessary and challenge any poor practice in the workplace.

Aim and purpose of the Policy

This policy applies to all staff, trustees, and volunteers, as it is the responsibility of all of us to act if we have concerns about the safety of a child. The Board of Trustees, paid staff, and volunteers are all required to adhere to this policy.



The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect children and young people who receive URBOND services.
- Provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

Legislation

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- The Children's Act (1989), and the Children's Act (2004) revised
- The Care Act (2014)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023), Department for Education
- Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees (2017), The Charity Commission
- The Sex Offenders Act (1997) and the Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006), amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act (2012)
- The United Convention of the Rights of the Child (1991)
- The Data Protection Act (1998)
- The Human Rights Act (1998)
- Protection of Freedoms Act (2012)
- The Children and Families Act (2014)
- SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years (2014)
- Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners (2015)

URBOND recognises that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and should be child centred in its approach; as set out in Working together to safeguard children; a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; HM Government 2018.



- All children regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm and abuse.
- Some children and groups are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, disability, communication, and language needs e.g., English as a second language and other vulnerabilities e.g., Missing, Exploited and Trafficked (MET).
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers, and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.
- As well as threats to the welfare of children from within their families, children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. URBOND recognises the importance of Contextual Safeguarding. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines; trafficking, online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation.

Key principles will be communicated that;

- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part; and
- a child-centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

Child Protection Procedure

Child protection concerns and allegations must be taken seriously and be properly investigated. All URBOND staff must be alert to the signs of abuse and neglect. It is the professional responsibility of URBOND staff, volunteers and trustees, to report any signs of abuse, injury or comments made by a young person that may arouse suspicions.

Prevention:



URBOND will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Having a Designated Safeguarding and Child Protection Lead who has received appropriate training and support for this role to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable groups; this is the Chief Executive Officer of the organisation (Ousmane Drame) and the Youth Development Programme Manager (Martina Elgue) and our Youth Engagement Officer (Aidan Law).
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring checks are done, and following safer recruitment practices
- Providing appropriate training and support for the roles to safeguard children, young people, and vulnerable groups. Safeguarding courses must be completed every three years by all members of staff and regular volunteers. However, URBOND recommends and encourage their member of staff and volunteers to have a yearly refresher. Courses are provided by PCSP (Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership).
- Ensuring that staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and creating an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role.
- Ensuring all legislative requirements concerning the delivery of services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, as specified in Section 11 of The Children Act 2004 are followed.
- All members of staff and regular volunteers will have a DBS check which will be renewed every three years.
- The requirement to share appropriate information in a timely way and can discuss any concerns about an individual child with colleagues and local authority children's social care.
- The necessity to use their expert judgement to put the child's needs at the heart of the safeguarding system so that the right solution can be found for each individual child.
- The necessity to contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote a child's welfare and take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the child against specific plans and outcomes.



Because of the nature of the services provided by URBOND, there may be times when a child, young person or family member disclose personal or sensitive information to a worker or volunteer that suggests a child or young person may be at risk of significant harm through neglect or emotional, physical, or sexual abuse (see definitions of abuse and neglect within this policy) or might be putting others at risk.

URBOND shall take all disclosures seriously, properly investigate and forward information, without prejudice. **Examples of possible significant harm might** be (not an exhaustive list):

- A client talking about being sexually abused.
- A client suggesting, they intend to commit suicide.
- A client behaving in an unpredictable way.
- A client threatening to run away.
- A client talking about being hurt at home.
- A client talking about violence or abuse going on between adults at home who may be parent or carers.
- A client talking about having carried out or planning to commit offences.
- A client saying, they are going to attack someone.

What to do when you have concerns

Child protection issues and allegations must be taken seriously and be properly investigated. All URBOND staff must be alert to the signs of abuse and neglect. It is the professional responsibility of URBOND staff to report any signs of abuse, injury or comments made by a young person that may arouse suspicions.

In a situation where a member of staff suspects that a child may have been subject to abuse, they must immediately notify in person or by phone, their URBOND Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) or/ and the Safeguarding and Welfare Officer or/and the CEO of the organisation:

Contact:

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Martina Elgue - 07496 426314 - Martina.elgue@urbond.org
- **Safeguarding and Welfare Officer:** Aidan Law - 02392 293765 - Aidan.law@urbond.org

Registered in England and Wales No. 1184273

Registered Address Unit 15 Challenge Enterprise Centre, Sharps Close, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO3 5RJ, United Kingdom



- **Safeguarding Trustee:** Smangele Gwengwe – 07456 565366
- **Chief Executive Officer:** Ousmane Drame - // 07792429366 – Ousmane.drame@urbond.org



A verbal report must be followed up with a written report using the Incident / [Safeguarding Reporting Form](#) and sent to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Officer, no later than within 24 hours (either in person or electronically). The DSL will support and advise on the next steps such as requesting that an inter-agency referral is completed, contact is made with the relevant Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and/or forwarding Child Protection Incident Reports by telephone and in writing to either Children’s Services or Police. It is the responsibility of the Child Protection Officer to ensure that the relevant authorities have been informed (See Appendix 1).



The DSL (person who dealt with the initial concerns) will **confirm receipt** and update the Local Safeguarding Log.



Where appropriate ensure that verbal information is provided to Children’s Services or the Police and is followed up in writing within 48 hours (The DSL who has dealt with the Safeguarding/Child Protection incident is responsible for ensuring this has occurred)



DSL reviews incident or disclosure within 3 working days and will ensure incident is reviewed regularly until there has been a suitable resolution with updates recorded on the Safeguarding log.



All Safeguarding Incidents will be reviewed monthly by the Designated Senior Lead – Martina Elgue, Safeguarding Officer – Aidan Law, and the CEO – Ousmane Drame – Safeguarding Trustee – Smangele Gwengwe.



Concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, should be reported to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) following the process set out above. The MASH is a team including Police, Health, Education, Children's Social Care and Safeguarding, Probation, Adult Social Care, Mental Health and others. The benefit is that they can quickly share information and make decisions as to the required level of intervention.

The following contact numbers are for staff to use in an emergency whereby the Local Safeguarding Officers, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Chief Executive Officer and Duty/Line Managers are not available, or if a young person is at immediate risk of harm/danger:

- **Portsmouth MASH:** 023 9268 8793 Daytime (8am-5pm), out of hours (5pm - 8am weekdays, weekends and Bank Holidays): 03005 551373
- **Hampshire MASH:** Daytime (08.30-17.30) 0300 5551384, out of hours 03005 551373
- **Portsmouth Social Services – Safeguarding Adults:** 023 9268 0810 **or Out of Hours:** 023 9282 2251
- [Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton \(HIPS\) safeguarding children](#)
- **Hampshire Social Services:** 0300 555 1386
- **Hampshire Constabulary (Police):** 101
- Or, if an adult or young person are in immediate danger **Police Emergencies:** 999

Managing allegations against staff and volunteers

If a child, young person, or family member suggests that an URBOND employee or volunteer has behaved abusively, the same procedures as outlined below must be followed. (Also see **Complaints** and **Whistleblowing**).

In addition to these procedures, [the Local Authority Designated Officer \(LADO\)](#) must be informed where it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or



- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he will pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children

LADO deals with complaints/concerns about staff members where there is a suspicion of harm or abuse of a child, or where there is information that indicates they are not suitable to be working with children. They further provide advice and guidance to employers including voluntary organisations, liaise with the police and other agencies, and monitor the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process. The Designated Senior Safeguarding/Child Protection Lead (Chief Executive Officer) or their deputy in their absence who is responsible for making initial contact with the LADO.

Contact details of the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

- **Portsmouth LADO** – on [023 9288 2500](tel:02392882500) or email LADO@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
- [Click here for more information on LADO](#)

Responding to a Disclosure:

In the event of a child, young person or family member making a disclosure URBOND staff must do the following:

DO:

- Listen carefully and actively to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief. Allegations must be taken seriously.
- Remain calm and level-headed.
- Let them know that you are taking what they say seriously.
- Re-assure the child or adult making the disclosure, but only as far as it is honest and reliable.
- It should be explained to the person making the disclosure that for their/the child's well-being Children's Services or the Police might be contacted.
- The person disclosing information must be allowed to do so without questioning or prompting.



- Record carefully what the child has said including how and where the account was given. Date and sign the record and pass immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- If the incident is part of a more complex situation which may have implications for the organisation, relationships with other agencies, or media interest – the Chief Executive Office must be informed.
- The Chief Executive Officer and DSL must be informed **immediately**, or within 2 hours at the latest. The Chief Executive Officer or their Lead in their absence will subsequently inform the appropriate LADO.

DON'T:

- Do not promise confidentiality; URBOND has a duty to refer.
- Do not rush the child's account.
- Do not ask leading questions or try to interview the child.
- Do not make assumptions.
- Do not show you are upset or angry.

Definition of Types of Maltreatment

The following definitions are taken from the Department of Health Publication No Secrets 2000 (Care Act 2014) and Designated Safeguarding Lead course (2023).

- **Definitions of Abuse and Neglect:** Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. (*No Secrets 2000*).
- **Physical abuse:** including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions;



- **Emotional abuse:** The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- **Sexual abuse:** including rape or sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting;
- **Child Sexual Exploitation:** Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.
- **Psychological abuse:** including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks;
- **Financial or material abuse:** including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits;



- **Neglect and acts of omission:** including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition, and heating; and
- **Discriminatory abuse:** including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs, or similar treatment.
- **Child Criminal Exploitation:** Child criminal exploitation is increasingly used to describe this type of exploitation where children are involved, and is defined as: "Child criminal exploitation is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology." Criminal exploitation of children is broader than just county lines, and includes for instance children forced to work on cannabis farms or to commit theft.
- **Domestic Abuse:** Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between people who are, or who have been in a relationship, regardless of gender or sexuality. It can include physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse. Exposure to domestic abuse is child abuse. Children can be directly involved in incidents of domestic abuse or they may be harmed by seeing or hearing abuse happening. Children in homes where there is domestic abuse are also at risk of other types of abuse or neglect
- **Bullying and cyberbullying:** Bullying is when individuals or groups seek to harm, intimidate or coerce someone who is perceived to be vulnerable. Bullying includes; verbal abuse, such as name calling, non-verbal abuse, such as hand signs or glaring, emotional abuse, such as threatening, intimidating or humiliating someone, exclusion, such as ignoring or isolating someone, undermining, by constant criticism or spreading rumours, controlling or manipulating someone, racial, sexual or homophobic bullying, physical assaults, such as hitting and pushing, making silent, hoax or abusive calls. Bullying can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. When bullying



happens online it can involve social networks, games and mobile devices. Online bullying can also be known as cyberbullying.

- **Cyberbullying** includes, sending threatening or abusive text messages, creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos, 'trolling' – sending menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chatrooms or online games, excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups, setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child, encouraging young people to self-harm, voting for or against someone in an abusive poll, creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name.
- **Child Trafficking:** Child trafficking is child abuse. It involves recruiting and moving children who are then exploited. Many children are trafficked into the UK from overseas, but children can also be trafficked from one part of the UK to another. Children may be trafficked for, child sexual exploitation, benefit fraud, forced marriage, domestic servitude such as cleaning, childcare and cooking, forced labour in factories or agriculture, criminal exploitation such as cannabis cultivation, pickpocketing, begging, transporting, drugs, selling pirated DVDs and bag theft. Children who are trafficked experience many forms of abuse and neglect. Physical, sexual and emotional abuse is often used to control them and they're also likely to suffer physical and emotional neglect. Child trafficking can require a network of organised criminals who recruit, transport and exploit children and young people. Some people in the network might not be directly involved in trafficking a child but play a part in other ways, such as falsifying documents, bribery, owning or renting premises or money laundering (Europol, 2011). Child trafficking can also be organised by individuals and the children's own families. Traffickers trick, force or persuade children to leave their homes. They use grooming techniques to gain the trust of a child, family or community.
- **Grooming:** Grooming is when somebody builds an emotional connection with a child either online or face to face – gaining their trust for the purpose of sexual abuse, exploitation, radicalisation, or trafficking.
- **Harmful Sexual Behaviour – HSB** is when children display developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour for their age. It is seen as a continuum, from behaviour which is deemed to be inappropriate to that which is abusive and violent. It can happen in person or online (or both).



- **Forced Marriage/Underage marriage** – It is illegal to force a child to get married in the UK, volunteers and staff must be alert to this when working with clients.
- **FGM – Female Genital Mutilation** – FGM is practised predominantly amongst communities from Sub-Saharan Africa. If it comes to your attention that a young girl is about to undergo FGM here or in another country, a child referral must be made to children's services and soon as possible. If you become aware that a young girl has recently undergone the procedure, a referral must be made to social services.
- **Breast ironing** – Breast ironing or flattening is when a girl's breasts are flattened over time to prevent them from growing. This can involve using heated or heavy objects, as well as elastic belts or binders
- **Radicalisation** – Terrorist groups which pose a threat seek to radicalise and recruit young people, if you have concerns, please raise this with your line manager or the designated safeguarding officer.
- **Modern slavery** is a type of abuse that is more likely to be associated with adults, but children can also be victims of modern slavery. It encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. It can also be linked to exploitation, such as CSE and CCE

Any or all these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence, or ignorance.

Staff awareness

All staff will be made aware of this policy as part of their initial induction process and there will be regular briefings and updates for all staff.

Where necessary or possible, staff will be encouraged to attend appropriate training courses.



Reviewing the Policy and Procedure

This policy and procedure will be reviewed every year, this will include checking telephone numbers, accuracy of personnel details, and any updates required by a change in local or national policy.

This policy was last reviewed on: May 2024

Signed:

Martina Elgue

Aidan Law

Ousmane Drame

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elgue", written over a horizontal line.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ousmane Drame", written over a horizontal line.

Date: 09/05/24

Appendix 1

