

Child Protection & Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding

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Policy statement on Child Protection & Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding

As an employer and service provider, The Keen Group acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children which refers to anyone under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflecting statutory responsibilities, government guidance and that The Keen Group complies with best practice and works in accord with the local authorities and other related organisations for which it serves.

The policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children and vulnerable adults are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, gender, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic background, all children have a positive, safe and comfortable experience of transportation with The Keen Group. The Keen Group in its provision of services sees its role as pivotal in ensuring that children and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse whilst being transported or in any pickup or drop-off points relating to the specific transport requirements provided.

The Keen Group acknowledges that some children, including disabled children and young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare. As part of our safeguarding policy The Keen Group will promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and ensure that everyone within the organisation understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and are provided with appropriate learning opportunities and training to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people.

Definitions

A Child

Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.

Child Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purpose of statutory guidance under the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 respectively as:

- Protecting children from 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 outcomes.

Child Protection

Child Protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Harm

Harm is defined as the ill treatment or impairment of health and development. This definition was clarified in section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (implemented on 31 January 2005) so that it may include "impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another" for example, where there are concerns of Domestic Abuse.

Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child, and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Possible types of abuse are:

- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Domestic Abuse
- Online Abuse
- Child Exploitation

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is:

- To protect children and young people who receive The Keen Group's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.
- Promote a safe and inclusive environment for all.
- To provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child and vulnerable protection.
- That the policy is intended for all those who occupy positions of responsibility, who work, volunteer or come into contact with children and young people as part of their role with the organisation.
- That the policy is publicly available and promoted by the organisation.
- That the policy defines the key safeguarding roles, so that everyone knows who is responsible and to whom a concern can be raised.
- That the policy sets out:
 - the steps to be taken if someone is worried about a child or young person.
 - the steps to be taken if there are concerns about a someone working, volunteering or occupying a position of trust or engaging with children and young people.
 - how to escalate concerns, whistle-blow and share information.
 - how appointments will be made safely.
 - a toolkit of supporting procedures and guidance.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of The Keen Group, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

Commitment to Safeguarding

The Keen Group:

- Have appointed a Senior Lead, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead
- Adopting child protection and adult safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff.
- Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- Prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals through safer recruitment processes; and ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently.
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with staff, children and their families via leaflets, posters and other forms of communication and with the General Public.
- Making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- Using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise.
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- Building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns
- Our procedures for safeguarding children comply with the London Safeguard Procedure

Legal Framework

This policy is based on the following Legislation and Guidance:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2023)
- London Child Protection Procedures
- The Children Act 2004
- The Children Act 1989
- Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners 2018
- Safer recruitment
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Policy on Whistle Blowing
- Policy Statement on Anti-Slavery
- Data Protection Policy
- The Care Act 2014

Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Bernard Strange

0208 875 4972

bernardstrange@thekeengroup.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Chantelle Landon

chantellelandon@thekeengroup.co.uk

Senior Lead

Keith Keen

keithkeen@thekeengroup.co.uk

All staff

- Must read and understand this policy.
- Must attend safeguarding training as required.
- Must report any concerns about a child or vulnerable adults to the DSL.
- Take all suspicions and/or allegations of abuse or risk to children / vulnerable adults seriously and respond swiftly in accordance with this policy. This includes taking seriously any allegations made against an adult working or volunteering with children / vulnerable adults.
- Escalate matters of concern as required and be alert to our Whistleblowing Policy
- Ensure that all concerns and discussions about a child /vulnerable adult's welfare, the decisions made and the reasons for those decisions are recorded in writing.
- Listen to the children / vulnerable adults and respect them.

A structured programme of induction is provided for all new staff that takes account of their level of knowledge about children and vulnerable adults at risk. Induction will ensure that employees know what behaviour is and is not acceptable, understand what might constitute abuse and who should be informed if abuse is suspected. All staff that come into regular contact with passengers and their families will be made aware of the vulnerability of our users and will be taught to recognise and appropriately respond to suspicions or allegations of abuse.

Code of Conduct

All representatives of The Keen Group must:

- Treat everyone with respect and dignity.
- Avoid inappropriate physical or verbal contact.
- Not spending time alone with a child or vulnerable adult unless absolutely necessary and in line with safeguarding procedures.
- Never engage in or tolerate any form of abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

Safer Recruitment

The Keen Group is committed to safe recruitment practices by:

- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring that all necessary steps are taken and checks made, in line with best practice and legal requirements.
- Having a recruitment and selection policy in place that includes explicit reference to safeguarding children and young people.

- Including a generic statement in every job description that outlines the safeguarding expectation of the post-holder. For example: "Everyone has a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. The post holder will undertake the appropriate level of training and is responsible for ensuring they understand and work in line with the relevant safeguarding policies and associated guidance."
- Including a definition in each job description of the supervision that a post-holder will receive
- Requiring a new DBS check at enhanced level for relevant roles consistent with existing legislation.
- Conducting repeat checks every three years on every member of staff who works directly with, or has regular contact with, children and young people.
- Recommending all members of staff register on the DBS annual update service.
- Taking up a minimum of two references, one of which must be from the most recent employer
- Ensuring that every member of staff or volunteer engaged in recruitment receives and can evidence that they have received recent safe recruitment training.

Reporting Concerns

If you have a safeguarding concern:

1. Report it to the DSL immediately
2. If the DSL is unavailable, contact the Deputy DSL.
3. In emergencies, contact:
 - i. Police: 999
 - ii. Childrens Social Services for the relevant council
 - iii. Adult Social care for the relevant council
 - iv. NSPC: 08088005000

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved within The Keen Group. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal from the organisation.

Monitoring

The policy will be reviewed a year after development and then annually, or:

- where changes in legislation and/or government guidance occur.
- as required by the Local Safeguarding Children Board or the local authorities that the Company serves; or
- as a result of any other significant change or event.