

Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy

Organisation Name	Shrewsbury House
Charity Number	1058694
Policy Owner	Chief Executive Officer
Approved By	Board of Trustees
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1. Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out Shrewsbury House's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. It explains the organisation's safeguarding principles, governance arrangements, responsibilities, training expectations and approach to continuous improvement. It should be read alongside the separate *Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures*, which provide practical guidance on recognising, recording, reporting and responding to safeguarding concerns.

2. Safeguarding Statement

2.1 Shrewsbury House is committed to safeguarding children and young people, promoting their welfare and maintaining a vigilant, safe and inclusive environment. Everyone connected with The Shewsy has a responsibility to act without delay where there are concerns that a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm.

2.2 This policy is supported by the separate *Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures*, which set out what staff, volunteers, trustees and visitors must do if they are worried about a child or young person. The procedures should be followed alongside this policy and provide the practical steps for reporting, recording, referral, escalation and emergency action.

2.3 Shrewsbury House works in partnership with families, carers and other agencies to improve outcomes for children and young people who are vulnerable, in need of help or protection, or affected by wider risks in the community or online. Our approach is child-centred: we consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child or young person.

2.4 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children, young people and their families has a role to play. All safeguarding decisions and actions must be child-centred, while recognising the importance of working with families

and partner agencies where appropriate.

3. Definitions

- **Child:** anyone under the age of 18.
- **Young person:** for the purposes of this policy, this usually means a child or young person under the age of 18 who uses, attends or is supported by Shrewsbury House.
- **Safeguarding:** protecting children and young people from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health or development; ensuring they grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care; and taking action to enable them to have the best outcomes.
- **Child protection:** part of safeguarding and refers to the action taken when a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead:** the person with lead operational responsibility for coordinating safeguarding responses, supporting staff, maintaining safeguarding records and making referrals where required.
- **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:** a person who supports the Designated Safeguarding Lead and can act on their behalf when required.
- **Board of Trustees:** the charity's governing body, which has overall accountability for safeguarding.
- **Staff and volunteers:** all employees, volunteers, sessional workers, contractors, trustees and anyone working with or on behalf of Shrewsbury House.
- **Safeguarding concern:** any worry about a child or young person's safety, welfare, wellbeing or risk of harm, whether this relates to home, the community, online spaces, peer relationships, adults or Shrewsbury House's activities.
- **Low-level concern:** any concern about an adult's behaviour towards a child or young person that does not meet the threshold for an allegation but may still be inconsistent with The Shrewsbury House's code of conduct, values or safeguarding expectations.
- **Allegation:** a concern that an adult who works with or around children may have harmed a child, may have committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or may pose a risk of harm to children.
- **Contextual safeguarding:** an approach that recognises that children and young people may experience harm outside the home, including in peer groups, schools, neighbourhoods, public spaces and online.
- **Early help:** support provided as soon as a problem starts to emerge, to prevent needs or risks from escalating.

3.1 Detailed guidance on recognising abuse, responding to disclosures and taking child protection action is contained in the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures*.

4. Policy Aims and Key Principles

4.1 The aims of this policy are to:

- a. Ensure Shrewsbury House takes appropriate and timely action to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people.
- b. Ensure staff, volunteers, trustees and visitors understand their safeguarding responsibilities and know where to find the practical procedures for recognising, recording, reporting and responding to concerns.
- c. Ensure Shrewsbury House safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements, local safeguarding procedures and recognised youth work practice standards.
- d. Provide assurance to children, young people, families, staff, trustees, funders and partners that safeguarding is actively led, monitored and improved across the organisation.
- e. Safeguarding at Shrewsbury House is based on the following principles:

1. The child's needs and welfare are paramount.
2. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
3. Children and young people should be listened to, taken seriously and involved in decisions that affect them wherever appropriate.
4. Safeguarding practice should be realistic, practical and proportionate, enabling children and young people to take part in positive, fun and appropriately risk-managed activities.
5. Shrewsbury House will work in partnership with families and other agencies to provide early help and prevent concerns from escalating wherever possible.
6. Concerns about a child or young person should always lead to appropriate help, support or protection.
7. Staff and volunteers should maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" and should be prepared to challenge poor, unsafe or inappropriate practice.
8. Scrutiny, challenge, supervision and organisational learning are essential to keeping children and young people safe.
9. Children and young people have a right to learn ways to keep themselves safe from harm, exploitation, abuse and unsafe online or community situations.
10. Information will be shared lawfully and proportionately where this is necessary to safeguard a child or young person; concerns about confidentiality must not prevent appropriate safeguarding action.

4.2 Practical reporting, recording and referral steps are set out in the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures*.

5. Legal and Practice Framework

5.1 The following legislation and guidance is relevant:

- a. The Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004 provide the legislative framework for child protection and inter-agency working in England.
- b. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 strengthens arrangements for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.
- c. Working Together to Safeguard Children provides statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- d. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on relevant organisations to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Shrewsbury House will ensure staff are aware of indicators of radicalisation and know how to respond in line with local and national guidance.
- e. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 is relevant to positions of trust and professional boundaries. Adults working with or around children and young people must maintain safe, appropriate and professional relationships at all times.

5.2 Shrewsbury House recognises specific safeguarding risks including child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, modern slavery, trafficking, serious youth violence, domestic abuse, online harm, radicalisation, female genital mutilation, forced marriage and other forms of so-called honour-based abuse.

5.3 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 applies to voluntary, charity, social enterprise and faith-based organisations, as well as statutory partners. It reinforces shared responsibility, child-centred practice, multi-agency working, family help, early help, information sharing, anti-discriminatory practice and recognition of harm outside the home.

5.4 The Charity Commission expects charity trustees to identify and manage safeguarding risks, maintain suitable policies and practices, carry out necessary checks, protect staff and volunteers, and handle and report incidents appropriately.

5.5 Shrewsbury House will have regard to the procedures and guidance of the Liverpool Safeguarding Children Partnership and will work with local safeguarding partners where this is required to protect children and young people or promote their welfare.

5.6 Shrewsbury House will keep this policy and its Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures under review to ensure they remain consistent with statutory guidance, local safeguarding partnership arrangements and Charity Commission expectations.

6. Safeguarding Governance and Trustee Oversight

6.1 The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are effective, proportionate to Shrewsbury House's work and regularly reviewed. Operational responsibility is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and relevant managers, but accountability remains with the Board.

6.2 The nominated Safeguarding Trustee will provide challenge and assurance to the Board and will support scrutiny of safeguarding systems, training, compliance and organisational learning. The Safeguarding Trustee does not manage individual child protection cases unless required through a formal complaints, disciplinary or governance process.

6.3 Trustees are responsible for ensuring that safeguarding policies, procedures and measures are fit for purpose and up to date; that everyone in the organisation understands their safeguarding responsibilities; that there is a nominated safeguarding trustee; that safeguarding decisions and systems are appropriately challenged; and that allegations or serious incidents are managed and reported in line with legal and regulatory requirements.

6.4 Safeguarding will be reported to trustees at least annually and more frequently where risks, incidents or organisational needs require this. Reports may include training completion, safer recruitment compliance, safeguarding concerns and referrals, themes and trends, complaints, whistleblowing, low-level concerns, policy updates, audit findings, partnership issues, emerging local risks and progress against the safeguarding action plan.

7. Annual Safeguarding Action Plan and Review

7.1 Shrewsbury House will maintain an annual safeguarding action plan. The plan will identify safeguarding priorities, responsible leads, timescales and progress updates. It will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees.

7.2 The action plan may include training priorities, safeguarding audit activity, safer recruitment checks in line with the *Recruitment Policy*, supervision arrangements, policy updates, young people's feedback, online safety improvements, learning from incidents, local risk themes and partnership actions.

7.3 An annual safeguarding review will consider whether this policy is understood, implemented and effective. Learning from incidents, near misses, complaints, audits, supervision and feedback from children, young people, families, staff and volunteers will be used to improve practice.

8. Safeguarding Training, Induction and Safer Recruitment

8.1 All staff, volunteers and trustees must receive safeguarding information appropriate to their role as part of induction. This includes how to recognise concerns, how to report concerns, who the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies are, how to record information, expectations around professional boundaries and what to do in an emergency.

8.2 Safer recruitment is part of Shrewsbury House safeguarding arrangements. Shrewsbury House will follow safer recruitment practice for all relevant roles, including appropriate pre-employment checks, safeguarding questions, references, DBS checks where required and role-appropriate induction. Detailed safer recruitment arrangements are set out in the *Recruitment Policy*.

8.3 The practical safer recruitment process, including checks, interview expectations, references, DBS arrangements and induction requirements, must be followed in line with the *Recruitment Policy* and relevant sections of the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures*.

8.4 At least one member of any recruitment panel for roles involving work with children and young people should have completed safer recruitment training. Job descriptions and person specifications for relevant roles should make clear reference to safeguarding and child protection responsibilities.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

9.1 The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for safeguarding at Shrewsbury House and for ensuring that appropriate policies, procedures, systems and assurance arrangements are in place.

9.2 The Chief Executive Officer has delegated operational responsibility for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are implemented, resourced, monitored and reviewed.

9.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are responsible for coordinating safeguarding responses, supporting staff, maintaining safeguarding records, making referrals where required and contributing to organisational learning.

9.4 All staff, volunteers, trustees, sessional workers, contractors and visitors must follow this policy and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures, report concerns promptly and act in the best interests of children and young people.

9.5 Role specific actions, including what to do if a concern arises, how to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead, when to contact children's social care and how to respond in an emergency, are set out in the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures*.

9.6 Managers are responsible for promoting safe practice, ensuring staff and volunteers understand the code of conduct, supporting a listening culture, ensuring safeguarding concerns are taken seriously and ensuring that children and young people are supported to understand how to keep themselves safe.

9.7 The specific duties of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, including referral, liaison, record keeping, escalation and support to staff, are set out in the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures*.

9.8 The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads must have appropriate training, support and time to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities. Their knowledge and skills should be refreshed regularly so they remain up to date with local and national safeguarding developments.

10. Safeguarding Practice Commitments

10.1 Shrewsbury House will maintain clear Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures that set out how concerns must be recognised, recorded, reported and responded to. These procedures apply to all staff, volunteers, trustees, contractors, visitors and anyone working with or around children and young people on behalf of Shrewsbury House.

10.2 The *Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures* cover child protection, disclosures, emergency action, early help, peer-on-peer harm, online harm, contextual safeguarding, exploitation, serious youth violence, professional boundaries, low-level concerns, allegations against adults, safe activities, trips, residentials, missing children and information sharing.

10.3 Shrewsbury House recognises that safeguarding concerns may arise from abuse or neglect within the family, from adults working with or around children, from peer relationships, from online activity, from exploitation or from wider community contexts. All concerns must be taken seriously and responded to in line with the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures*.

10.4 Shrewsbury House will ensure that safeguarding practice is embedded across all areas of its work, including youth work sessions, community activities, outreach, trips, residentials, digital communication, recruitment, supervision, complaints, partnership working and governance.

10.5 Staff and volunteers are expected to remain alert to signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation, harm outside the home and wider welfare concerns. Detailed indicators of abuse and practical response steps are set out in the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures*.

10.6 Shrewsbury House will respond to safeguarding concerns in a timely, proportionate and child-centred way, ensuring that concerns are recorded, shared and escalated appropriately in line with the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures*.

10.7 Shrewsbury House will maintain clear expectations for adult conduct, professional boundaries, lone working, use of physical contact, transport, photography, digital communication and the supervision of children and young people. These expectations are set out in relevant policies, codes of conduct and procedures.

10.8 Shrewsbury House will ensure that activities, trips, residentials and off-site work are planned and risk assessed in a way that balances safety with children and young people's right to take part in positive, adventurous and developmental opportunities.

11. Voice, Inclusion and Additional Vulnerabilities

11.1 Shrewsbury House will create opportunities for children and young people to share how safe they feel, raise concerns and influence safeguarding practice. This may include child friendly safeguarding information, visible routes to speak to trusted adults, informal check-ins, feedback activities, anonymous feedback routes and consultation about safe spaces and activities.

11.2 Staff must take children and young people seriously, respond respectfully to concerns and ensure their wishes and feelings are considered while recognising that safeguarding decisions must always be made in the child's best interests.

11.3 Shrewsbury House recognises that some children and young people may face additional barriers to being safe, being heard or accessing support. This may include disabled young people, young carers, care-experienced young people, children affected by poverty, homelessness, family stress, racism or discrimination, children with communication needs, children with mental health needs, children with SEND and young people who may be less likely to disclose harm.

11.4 Safeguarding practice must be inclusive, trauma-informed and responsive to individual needs. Staff should avoid assumptions, seek to understand each young person's communication preferences and ensure reasonable adjustments are made where needed.

11.5 All staff and volunteers should be particularly alert to children and young people who may benefit from early help, including those who are disabled, young carers, missing from home or care, affected by substance misuse, domestic abuse, adult mental health difficulties, exploitation, radicalisation, private fostering arrangements, or early signs of abuse or neglect.

11.6 Shrewsbury House recognises that children with SEND, disabilities, communication needs, care experience or other additional vulnerabilities may face increased risk and additional barriers to disclosure. Staff must not assume that indicators of harm relate only to a child's disability, behaviour or circumstances without further consideration.

11.7 Where a child or young person has additional needs, communication needs or increased vulnerability, staff should follow the practical guidance in the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures* and make reasonable adjustments to ensure concerns can be heard, recorded and acted on appropriately.

12. Supervision, Recording, Monitoring and Learning

12.1 Safeguarding supervision and reflective practice are essential to safe youth work. Staff should have opportunities to discuss concerns, patterns, professional judgement, uncertainty and emotional impact with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, line manager or another appropriate senior colleague.

12.2 Debriefs should be offered after significant incidents, disclosures, emergency responses or distressing events. Supervision should support staff wellbeing, strengthen decision-making and ensure safeguarding concerns are followed up effectively.

12.3 Safeguarding records will be used not only to respond to individual concerns but also to identify themes, patterns and areas for improvement. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will monitor safeguarding information proportionately and confidentially.

12.4 Monitoring may include safeguarding concerns, referrals, early help activity, incidents, emerging themes, repeat concerns, low-level concerns, actions taken and learning identified.

12.5 Detailed requirements for safeguarding records, confidentiality, information sharing and secure storage are set out in the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures* and the *Data Protection Policy*.

13. Online Safety, Data Protection and Photography

13.1 Shrewsbury House recognises that technology is a significant feature of many safeguarding risks, including exploitation, radicalisation, harmful contact, harmful content and unsafe online conduct. Online safety is therefore part of Shrewsbury House's wider safeguarding culture and must be considered in youth work, communications, digital activity, publicity and organisational systems.

13.2 Shrewsbury House will maintain expectations for safe and responsible use of technology, mobile phones, images and digital communication. Particular care will be taken where children and young people may be placed at risk through publicity materials, photographs, online contact or the sharing of personal information.

13.3 Staff and volunteers must raise concerns about risky or harmful online behaviour, digital communication, image use or technology-related safeguarding issues in line with the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures*.

14. Partnership Working and Escalation

14.1 Shrewsbury House will work with relevant partners to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. This may include children's social care, early help, police, schools, health services, CAMHS and mental health services, youth justice, community safety partners, domestic abuse services, exploitation teams, housing and homelessness services and other voluntary and community organisations.

14.2 Staff should share information lawfully and proportionately where this is necessary to safeguard a child or young person. Concerns about consent or confidentiality must not prevent action where a child is at risk of harm.

14.3 If Shrewsbury House believes a child's needs remain unmet, risk is not reducing or a referral has not led to appropriate action, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or senior manager will escalate concerns through local safeguarding escalation procedures and continue to advocate for the child or young person.

14.4 Escalation routes, urgent referral steps and emergency contact arrangements are set out in the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures*.

15. Complaints, Whistleblowing and Concerns About Adults

15.1 Complaints about safeguarding practice should be addressed in line with Shrewsbury House's *Complaints Policy*, except where an immediate safeguarding response, allegation process or referral to external agencies is required.

15.2 Shrewsbury House will ensure that concerns about adults working with or around children are taken seriously and managed in line with relevant procedures and statutory guidance.

15.3 Staff, volunteers and trustees should feel able to raise concerns about unsafe practice, safeguarding failures, professional boundaries or organisational culture. Shrewsbury House's *Whistleblowing Policy* or *Complaints Policy* provides a route for concerns to be raised where someone does not feel able to use ordinary line management or safeguarding reporting routes

16. Useful links and documents

16.1 The following internal policies contain additional information and guidance:

- a. Recruitment Policy*
- b. Whistleblowing Policy*
- c. Complaints Policy*
- d. Data Protection Policy*
- e. Health & Safety Policy*
- f. Social Media Policy*
- g. Computers, Email and Internet Policy*

17. Administration of the Policy

17.1 *Designated Safeguarding Lead* is responsible for the administration of the Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy. Should you have any feedback contact them.