

Athena Mentors CIC

Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy

Organisation Name: Athena Mentors CIC

Date Created: 01.05.2025

Review Date: 01.05.2026

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Genene Wilson

Deputy DSL(s): most senior person onsite

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1. Introduction

It is expected that the existence of this policy, and in particular the limits of confidentiality, will be made clear to all staff employed by Athena Mentors CIC.

All Athena Mentors CIC staff must be given a copy of this policy and will be asked to sign a statement that they have received it, read and understood it, within one week of their service with Athena Mentors CIC, beginning.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- promote the welfare of children and young people, ensuring they are safe and protected from harm, whilst engaging in any Athena Mentors CIC services
 - have a clear policy of zero-tolerance of abuse within Athena Mentors CIC services
 - outline the responsibility of Athena Mentors CIC staff
 - provide a framework of key arrangements and systems within Athena Mentors CIC, to ensure that any concerns regarding children and young people safety, or well-being is reported and addressed appropriately
 - ensure Athena Mentors CIC services, comply with local policies and procedures and statutory requirements
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3. Scope

This policy applies to...

- children and young people under the age of eighteen (18) years old, or twenty five (25) years old, with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), engaging with Athena Mentors CIC services

The policy will also apply to:

- all Athena Mentors CIC staff (full-time, part-time, temporary, and volunteers)
 - any third parties or contractors involved in the care of children and young people, attending Athena Mentors CIC services
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4. Policy Statement

Athena Mentors CIC is committed to creating a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment for all children and young people engaging with our services, regardless of; age, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, belief, sex, sexual orientation or disability, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave.

Athena Mentors CIC services can include:

- group counselling and psychotherapy
- creative therapeutic workshops (e.g., art and crafts projects), including training workshops
- outdoor therapeutic activities (e.g., walk and talk)
- therapeutic residentials (e.g., holistic psychotherapeutic retreats)

Athena Mentors CIC and it's staff, recognise the responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, abuse, and exploitation and will work in partnership with children, young people, families, Local Authority - [Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership \(BSCP\)](#), West Midlands Police and any other statutory agencies in accordance with local and national safeguarding legislations and procedures.

5. Legislative and Policy Context

This policy is underpinned by the following legislations:

- [Children Act 1989](#)
- [Children Act 2004](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#)
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)

This policy is underpinned by the following guidance:

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2023 \(GOV.UK\)](#)
 - [Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2024 \(GOV.UK\)](#)
 - [Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership \(BSCP\) Procedures](#)
 - [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused - Advice for Practitioners, 2015 \(GOV.UK\)](#)
 - [Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years, 2014 \(GOV.UK\)](#)
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6. Safeguarding Principles

Safeguarding principles include:

- the welfare of children and young people, is paramount
 - safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
 - all children and young people have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse, regardless of age, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, belief, sex, sexual orientation or disability, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave
 - Athena Mentors CIC, recognise some children and young people, may be more vulnerable than others (e.g., those with SEND, mental health difficulties, or looked after)
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7. Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for:

- taking responsibility for safeguarding and child protection
- making referrals to BSCP, as needed
- maintaining secure safeguarding records
- ensuring all Athena Mentors CIC staff are trained, understand procedures and are equipped to handle safeguarding issues appropriately
- liaising with external relevant authorities, including BSCP, when necessary

All Athena Mentors CIC staff are responsible for:

- understanding safeguarding responsibilities
- attending reflective supervision and debriefs

- attending regular safeguarding training, to refresh their knowledge and stay updated on any changes in the safeguarding legislations or procedures
 - maintaining appropriate professional boundaries, including; confidentiality and a duty of care
 - acting in the best interests of the children and young people, at all times
 - reporting any concerns, allegations or disclosures about any child's/young person's safety or well-being promptly, to the DSL
 - notifying management if there are any concerns about the conduct of a colleague or another adult working with children and young people
 - notifying [BSCP](#) regarding a concern, allegation or disclosure, when they cannot approach the DSL in situations (**12.3 Reporting and Recording Concerns**) or ([whistleblowing](#))
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8. Safer Recruitment

Athena Mentors CIC and it's staff, will follow safer recruitment practices, including:

- Disclosure & Barring (DBS) checks for all Athena Mentors CIC staff
 - identity verification
 - reference checks from previous employers or relevant authorities to ensure all Athena Mentors CIC staff are suitable to work with children and young people
 - induction and training on safeguarding policies
 - signed code of conduct agreements
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9. Types of Abuse

We are aware of the four main categories of [child abuse](#):

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

and wider types of child abuse, such as:

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
 - Child Trafficking
 - Criminal Exploitation and Gangs
 - Domestic abuse
 - Bullying and Cyberbullying
 - Online Abuse
 - Female Genital Mutilation
 - Grooming
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10. Safe Practice in Counselling & Psychotherapy Services

Safe Practice, within Athena Mentors CIC, counselling & psychotherapy services include:

- our therapeutic commitment to Athena Mentors CIC clients

- parental/carer consent is obtained for all children and young people who engage in Athena Mentors CIC services
- ensuring that all children and young people, including those with specific needs, can communicate concerns or experiences of abuse in a way that is accessible to them
- thorough pre visit planning and risk assessments are completed for all Athena Mentors CIC activities, highlighting any child or young person, at risk, with specific individual safeguarding concerns.
- Athena Mentors CIC Staff, to child/young person ratios and group sizes, are appropriate for any Athena Mentors CIC activity
- emergency contact details collected (register of names, addresses, next of kin and contact addresses and telephone numbers) for emergencies
- emergency protocols and parental/carer consent is obtained for any necessary medical treatment and first aid required in an emergency
- confidentiality is maintained but not when safety concerns arise
- safe use of any materials and equipment used for Athena Mentors CIC activities
- safe space, adapted for accessibility, for Athena Mentors CIC activities and workshops
- supervision at all times, during any Athena Mentors CIC activities, by a DBS checked Athena Mentors CIC staff member
- emotional support provided by the relevant therapeutic Athena Mentors CIC staff member, in case sessions evoke distress
- safeguarding sleeping arrangements for all Athena Mentors CIC staff, children, young people and families
- clear boundaries established e.g. behavioural expectations, respect and confidentiality, are highlighted for all Athena Mentors CIC staff, children, young people and families
- emergency evacuation plans

11. Staff Training

Athena Mentors CIC is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and young people engaging with Athena Mentors CIC services. Therefore, all Athena Mentors CIC staff members will be provided with an induction and ongoing training (according to **15. Policy Review**), regarding safeguarding children and young people.

This will include:

- Legislations and legal frameworks when referring to terminologies; Safeguarding, Child Protection, Significant Harm, Working Together to Safeguard Children, Safer Caring, Position of Trust, Duty of Care and Whistle Blowing
- varying forms of [child abuse](#), signs and vulnerabilities, in children and young people
- further support, guidance and advice, they can seek for themselves as professionals and those they support
- how to deal appropriately with any child or young person, who discloses their own, or another's' abuse
- how to report and record concerns, allegations and disclosures, factually and securely using the **Incident Form** and **Body Map** (please see **Forms Pack** handed with this policy)

- the protocols and procedures of reporting and recording concerns, allegations and disclosures, to the DSL immediately
 - how and when the boundaries of confidentiality should be observed and when they should be broken in any child and/or young person's, own interests
 - sharing information with statutory agencies confidentially, where appropriate
 - notifying the [BSCP](#) regarding a concern, allegation or disclosure, when unable to approach the DSL (**12.3 Reporting and Recording Concerns**) or ([whistleblowing](#))
 - the importance of whistleblowing, where appropriate
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12. Reporting and Recording Concerns

1. Athena Mentors CIC staff will always follow Athena Mentor CIC protocol, if they have concerns a child/young person has suffered, is suffering, or is at risk of suffering harm, by:
 - a. documenting any concerns, including any disclosures or allegations made by the child and/or young person
 - b. reporting to DSL, as soon as possible
 2. Where there is a risk to the life of a child and/or young person, significant harm, or the possibility of serious immediate harm, contact emergency services (police) by dialling **999**
 3. Athena Mentors CIC Staff will notify [BSCP](#), or follow [whistleblowing](#) procedures, when they cannot approach the DSL in situations, where:
 - a. the DSL, or Athena Mentors CIC as a company, is the abuser
 - b. Athena Mentors CIC does not have clear safeguarding procedures to follow
 - c. concerns are not dealt with properly or may be covered up
 - d. a concern that was raised has not been acted upon
 - e. you are worried that repercussions are likely to arise if you raise a concern
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13. Allegations Against Staff

Any allegations, disclosures or concerns regarding the behaviour of Athena Mentors CIC staff members, will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly, by following the steps:

1. Report the Concern: Any allegation must be reported immediately to the DSL
 2. Immediate Suspension (if necessary): If the allegation, disclosure or concern is of a serious nature, the Athena Mentors CIC staff member may be suspended from their duties immediately, pending investigation
 3. Investigation: The matter will be referred to the [Local Authority Designated Officer \(LADO\)](#), in Birmingham, who will lead the investigation
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14. Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Athena Mentors CIC and its staff, will share information in line with the [Data Protection Act 2018](#). We will only share relevant and proportionate, confidential information, with consent or when legally required for safeguarding purposes.

15. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or after:

- significant safeguarding incident
 - updates in legislation or best practice guidance
 - changes to services provided
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16. Get Help

➤ **Athena Mentors CIC**

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): [Director: **Genene Wilson**
Email: safeguarding@athenamentors.co.uk
- Athena Mentors Deputy DSL(s): [most senior person onsite]

➤ **In an emergency, phone 999**

➤ **Children's Advice and Support Service (CASS)**

- Monday to Thursday (8.45am - 5.15pm) and Friday (8.45am - 4.15pm)
- 0121 303 1888 and select Option 2, then Option 2
- <https://www.birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/report-a-concern>
- Outside of normal office hours (Emergency Duty Team) 0121 675 4806

➤ **Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP)**

- PO Box 16616, Birmingham, B2 2HN
- https://www.birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/info/3/information_for_professionals/311/i_need_professional_help_with

➤ **NSPCC (Whistleblowing)**

- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>
 - 0800 028 0285
 - Email help@NSPCC.org.uk
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Signed:

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Genene Wilson

Date Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy and Forms Pack, allocated:

Date Children and Young People Safeguarding training delivered:

Date signed Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy received back:

Athena Mentors CIC Staff Member name:

Athena Mentors CIC Staff Member position:

Date signed Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy and Forms Pack received:

Date Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy and Forms Pack read:

Date Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy and Forms Pack understood: