Digital safeguarding policy statement

Purpose

Restitute works with children and families as part of its activities. These include: support work, parenting, therapeutic support, visits, video calls and other digital and face-to-face contact.

The purpose of this policy statement is to:

- ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is paramount when adults, young people or children are using the internet, social media or mobile devices
- provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to online safety
- ensure that, as an organisation, we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use online devices.
- The policy statement applies to all staff, volunteers, children and young people and anyone involved in Restitute's activities.

Scope

- All staff and volunteers contracted by Restitute
- Associated personnel whilst engaged with work or visits related to Restitute, including but not limited to the following: consultants; volunteers; contractors; programme visitors including journalists, celebrities and politicians

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and vulnerable adults in England

Summaries of the key legislation and guidance are available on:

- online abuse: learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/online-abuse
- bullying: learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying
- child protection: learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system

Policy Statement

- children and vulnerable adults people should never experience abuse of any kind
- children and adults should be able to use the internet for education and personal development, but safeguards need to be in place to ensure they are kept safe at all times
- Restitute commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response

We recognise that:

- the online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however, it can also present risks and challenges
- we have a duty to ensure that all children, young people and adults involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online
- we have a responsibility to help keep children and young people safe online, whether they are using Restitute's services, systems and devices or not
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare and in helping young people to be responsible in their approach to online safety.

We will seek to keep children, young people and adults safe by:

- appointing an online safety coordinator. Restitute's online safety co-ordinator is Chris Halliday (chris@restitute.org)
- providing clear and specific directions to staff and volunteers on how to behave online
- supporting and encouraging the young people using our service to use the internet, social media and mobile phones in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others
- supporting and encouraging parents and carers to do what they can to keep their children safe online
- developing clear and robust procedures to enable us to respond appropriately to any incidents of inappropriate online behaviour involving our staff, volunteers, clients or their dependents, whether by an adult or a child/young person example online safety policy statement
- reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly

- Specifically:
    - Staff should not 'friend' or 'follow' clients on any social media platform
    - Staff should be mindful of clients' communication preferences but limit these to: Phone, text, Zoom, Teams, WhatsApp following guidance to ensure that their privacy and that of their clients is secured
    - Names of Clients should only be stored in devices that are secure[1], and with first name (or initials)
    - Notifying the online safety coordinator if their client wishes to use a communication method not listed above.
- ensuring that usernames, logins, email accounts and passwords are used effectively (in line with National Cyber Security Centre guidelines; https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/small-business-guide/using-passwords-protect-your-data) ensuring personal information about the adults and children who are involved in our organisation is held securely and shared only as appropriate
- ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after their written permission has been obtained, only for the purpose for which consent has been given and retained only as long as necessary under GDPR
- providing supervision, support and training for staff and volunteers about online safety
- examining and risk assessing any social media platforms and new technologies before they are used within the organisation.

If online abuse occurs, we will respond to it by:

- having clear and robust safeguarding procedures in place for responding to abuse (including online abuse)
- providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of abuse, including bullying/cyberbullying, emotional abuse, sexting, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation
- making sure our response takes the needs of the person experiencing abuse, any bystanders and our organisation as a whole into account
- reviewing the plan developed to address online abuse at regular intervals, in order to ensure that any problems have been resolved in the long term.

[1] "Secure" in this context means protected by strong passwords (laptops and desktop computers), two-factor authentication (database), passcode, finger-print or facial recognition (mobile devices including tablets and mobile phones). Laptop and desktop computers should have bitlocker enabled where available to encrypt hard drives in the event of theft or loss.

Related policies

Related policies and procedures this policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures, including:

- Safeguarding Children and Adults
- Code of Conduct
- Anti-Bullying and Harassment policy
- Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace (Whistleblower) policy
- Complaints Policy