



Peer on Peer Abuse Policy

Turning Heads directors are responsible for ensuring that those benefiting from us or working with us are not harmed in any way. The directors of Turning Heads have a legal duty to act prudently, and this means that they must take all reasonable steps within their power to ensure that no one is harmed. It is particularly important where beneficiaries are vulnerable persons or children in the community.

This policy applies to all those involved in Turning Heads, including, but not exclusively, administrators, volunteer drivers, parents, young people, and third party suppliers.

Turning Heads recognises that children are vulnerable to and capable of abusing their peers. We take such abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. This includes verbal as well as physical abuse. Peer on peer abuse will not be tolerated or passed off as part of “banter” or “growing up”.

We are committed to an approach to ensure the prevention, early identification and appropriate management of peer on peer abuse within our organisation. In cases where peer on peer abuse is identified we will follow our child protection procedures, taking a contextual approach to support all children and young people who have been affected by the situation. We recognise that peer on peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways such as:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Sexting or youth produced digital imagery
- Upskirting
- Bullying
- Radicalisation
- Abuse in intimate relationships
- Children who display sexually harmful behaviour
- Gang association and serious violence (County Lines)
- Technology can be used for bullying and other abusive behaviour

All behaviour takes place on a spectrum. Understanding where a child's behaviour falls on a spectrum is essential to being able to respond appropriately to it. In this policy we recognise the importance of distinguishing between problematic and abusive sexual behaviour (Harmful Sexual Behaviour HSB). We are adopting the NSPCC definition of HSB as: - "Sexual behaviours expressed by children...that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child...or adult."

Turning Heads recognise that all children can be at risk however we acknowledge that some groups are more vulnerable. This can include: experience of abuse within their family; living with domestic violence; young people in care; children who go missing; children with additional needs (SEN and/or disabilities); children who identify or are perceived as LGBT and/or have other protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010.

All reports of peer on peer abuse will be made on a case by case basis with the DSL taking a leading role using their professional judgement and supported by other agencies such as social care or the police as required. The immediate response to a report is;

- Turning Heads will take all reports seriously and will reassure the victim that they will be supported and kept safe.
- All staff will be trained to manage a report.
- Staff will not promise confidentiality as the concern will need to be shared further (for example, with the designated safeguarding lead or social care) staff will however only share the report with those people who are necessary to progress it.
- A written report will be made as soon after the interview as possible recording the facts as presented by the child. These may be used as part of a statutory assessment if the case is escalated later.
- Where the report includes an online element we will follow advice on searching, screening and confiscation. The staff will not view or forward images unless unavoidable and only if another member of staff (preferably the DSL) is present.

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the DSL will make an immediate risk and needs' assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Any report to the police will generally be made through the MASH referral process. The DSL will follow local processes for referrals. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is this will be passed on to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice, approach.

Where required, advice from the police will be sought in order to help us. Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator, we will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions we take do not jeopardise the police investigation.

Turning Heads will take seriously all forms of peer-on-peer abuse (no matter how low level they may appear) and ensuring that no form of peer-on-peer abuse is ever dismissed as horseplay or teasing. We will aspire to and realise safe and healthy relationships by;

- Creating a culture in which everyone can feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgmental environment, and have them listened to; and
- Responding to cases of peer-on-peer abuse promptly and appropriately.

Appointed Person

An appointed person should be made known to members, volunteers and parents alike; as the designated person to whom concerns should be addressed. If the concern is about this designated person, please report to **Alan Tilley, Turning Heads**.

The appointed person at Turning Heads is:

Name: Alan Tilley Contact number: 0781777739

Reviewed: 1 February 2022

Next Review: 1 February 2024