



FAMILY MATTERS YORK

Safeguarding Policy

1. The aims of Family Matters York

Family Matters York (FMY) aims to support, equip and encourage families. We work with parents and couples to prompt positive changes that help their relationships thrive. We offer a range of parenting courses and couples mentoring and events.

2. The purpose and scope of this policy

FMY is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults. We recognise our responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and protect vulnerable people from harm, abuse and exploitation. We acknowledge our duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. We embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of children, young people and adults.

The purposes of this policy are:

- to protect from harm children, young people and vulnerable adults known to us through our work with families; and
- to provide staff, volunteers and those who use our services with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.

This policy has been developed according to legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults, including the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, and The Care Act 2014.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of FMY, including the trustees, staff, volunteers and paid contractors.

FMY is committed to treating equally all staff, volunteers (both actual and potential) and all service users, regardless of age, gender or gender identity, ethnic or national origin, religion, political affiliation, educational background, disability, sexual orientation, marital/civil partnership status, beliefs or background. We aim to create an environment in which:

- all people feel welcome and respected;
- all people feel able to give of their best or receive our best support; and
- there is no harassment or discrimination.

This policy should be read alongside our other policies and guidance, in particular:

- Lone Working Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply in this policy:

- ‘Children’: those under the age of 18.
- ‘Young people’: those aged 11-17.
- ‘Vulnerable adults’: those who are or may be at risk by reason of mental disability, sensory impairment, age or illness, and who are or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.
- ‘Vulnerable people’ or ‘a vulnerable person’: this is to be read inclusively to refer to children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- ‘Staff’: anyone under contract to, and paid by, FMY to fulfil duties for FMY.
- ‘Volunteers’: anyone fulfilling a role for FMY in an unpaid capacity.
- ‘Supervisor’: for volunteers this will usually mean either the Relationship Support Lead or the Parenting Support Lead.

4. Safeguarding aims

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

- valuing, listening to and respecting them;
- appointing a Designated Safeguarding Lead who reports to the Board of Trustees;
- adopting safeguarding best practice through our policies and procedures;
- providing effective management of 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;
- recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made;
- recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance;
- building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, vulnerable people and their families treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns;
- making sure that vulnerable people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern;
- using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving vulnerable people and their families/carers appropriately;
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately;
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise;
- fostering an environment where staff and volunteers feel safe to express their concerns about the practice of others and ensuring we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place; and
- ensuring we provide a safe physical environment for all staff, volunteers and service users by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance (see FMY’s Health and Safety policy).

5. Responsibility

FMY's Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- promoting and overseeing safeguarding;
- ensuring staff and volunteers understand their legal and moral responsibilities to protect vulnerable people from harm, abuse and exploitation;
- ensuring this policy and guidance is reviewed annually and updated as necessary; and
- appointing a Designated Safeguarding Lead.

FMY's Designated Safeguarding Lead is the Charity Manager, who is **Kath Weston** - **kathweston@fmy.org.uk**.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- undertaking specialist safeguarding lead training;
- ensuring all those working on behalf of FMY have been recruited safely;
- ensuring all staff and volunteers working on behalf of FMY have read this policy;
- ensuring staff and volunteers have applied for the correct level of DBS check and supplied evidence of this (see section 7 below);
- ensuring all staff and volunteers have completed safeguarding training;
- keeping a record of DBS and safeguarding certificate information and informing staff/volunteers when DBS checks or training need to be updated;
- ensuring all staff and volunteers understand their duty to report concerns that arise about a child, young person or vulnerable adult to the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- establishing and maintaining links with the local authority and other bodies with regards to safeguarding;
- providing advice and support when a concern is raised and making contact with the relevant authorities as necessary;
- ensuring all parents and carers who participate in our work have access to our safeguarding policy and guidance;
- endeavouring to keep up-to-date with national developments relating to the welfare and protection of vulnerable people.

The Parenting Support Lead and Relationship Support Lead are responsible for:

- fostering a culture among volunteers where safeguarding is promoted, where each volunteer understands they have a part to play in protecting vulnerable people, and where volunteers feel able to raise concerns and feel supported;
- ensuring all volunteers know their role;
- supporting volunteers and being their first point of contact in FMY;
- screening service users before staff/volunteers work with them, to understand support needs.

Staff and volunteers working with service users are responsible for:

- complying with safe recruitment requests (see section 6 below);
- maintaining their own awareness of safeguarding issues, policies and procedures by completing safeguarding training and reading this policy and guidance;
- supervising service users where a service is being delivered at a venue shared by vulnerable groups (e.g. schools);
- following the guidelines for delivering online courses safely;

- immediately discussing any safeguarding concerns with their supervisor or the Designated Safeguarding Lead; if safeguarding concerns arise while working at a school, church or other community venue, the relevant designated person at that venue should also be notified; and
- keeping accurate, timely, dated and signed records of their concerns and actions.

Further practical guidance about recognising signs of abuse and safeguarding best practice can be found in Appendix 1.

6. Safe recruitment

To adhere to good practice in the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers, the following procedures will be followed.

6.1 Staff

Prior to appointment, all paid staff will have:

- completed an application form, including a self-declaration of fitness and suitability for the role;
- attended a formal interview, regardless of whether a competitive process is in operation;
- provided at least two references including, where possible, a reference from the current or previous employer;
- applied for a Basic or Enhanced DBS check (the level depends on their role – see section 7.2) and shared the certificate with the Trustees and/or the Charity Manager.

Upon commencement of their position, all staff will be required to complete a formal induction process as outlined in their role description and including any matters identified during the recruitment process.

6.2 Volunteers

Prior to appointment, all volunteers will have:

- completed an application form, including a self-declaration of fitness and suitability for the role;
- taken part in a formal discussion with a paid member of FMY staff to ensure their suitability and clarity of understanding of the role and its requirements;
- provided at least two references;
- been issued with a role outline.

Some volunteers will need to supply or apply for an Enhanced DBS check – see section 7.2.

Following appointment and prior to commencement of the role, volunteers will be required to complete a formal induction and training process as defined in the role description. All volunteers are supported in their role by a member of paid staff.

7. DBS checks

7.1 Recruitment of ex-offenders

In assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), FMY complies fully with the code of practice¹ and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. We will not discriminate unfairly against anyone undergoing a DBS check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed. We have a written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders, which is made available to all DBS applicants at the outset of the recruitment process. We make every subject of a DBS check aware of the existence of the Code of Practice (see footnote 1) and make a copy available on request.

FMY is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, volunteers, potential staff/volunteers or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents, age, physical/mental disability or offending background. We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

A DBS check is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. At present this includes our volunteer Parenting Facilitators and our paid staff who manage them. For those positions where a DBS check is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a DBS check will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the paid or voluntary role.

Where a DBS check is to form part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants to provide details of their criminal record² at an early stage in the application process, except for certain spent convictions and cautions which are 'protected' so not subject to disclosure to employers and cannot be taken into account. We request that any information not subject to this filtering is sent under separate, confidential cover, to a designated person within Family Matters York and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

We ensure that all those in FMY who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

At interview, or in a separate discussion before the individual commences their role, we will ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the role. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the role could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment. Withdrawal of the

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice>

² Unless the nature of the position allows FMY to ask questions about your entire criminal record, except for certain spent convictions and cautions which are 'protected' so not subject to disclosure to employers and that cannot be taken into account, we only ask about 'unspent' convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

opportunity to work with us based on information revealed in a DBS check will not be made without first discussing this with the applicant.

7.2 DBS check levels

All staff are required to apply for a Basic DBS check before commencing their paid position. Staff who will be managing our team of Parenting Facilitators will be required to supply or apply for an Enhanced DBS check. The Charity Manager, as the Designated Safeguarding Lead, will be required to supply or apply for an Enhanced DBS check.

Many of our volunteers are not required to apply for or supply a DBS check certificate because our work does not involve children, young people or vulnerable adults. However, our volunteers who are Parenting Facilitators are required to apply for, or supply, an Enhanced DBS check certificate. This is because our parenting courses are largely delivered from venues where vulnerable people are present, e.g. schools, Children's Centres/Family Hubs. These volunteers are considered to be trusted individuals who are working unsupervised in an environment with vulnerable people.

To minimise financial and reputational risk, and follow good practice, all Trustees are required to apply for a Basic DBS check.

7.3 Portability

FMY will accept a pre-existing DBS certificate obtained through work with another organisation, providing:

- the level of check carried out matches the level of check required (e.g. enhanced for those working in schools or Children's Centres/Family Hubs);
- the certificate covers the child workforce;
- the certificate is no more than three years old.

Although Trustees are required to share a Basic DBS check only, a higher level check (i.e. a Standard or Enhanced check) for another organisation will be accepted if offered by the trustee, providing the certificate is no more than three years old.

If the individual is registered with the Update Service, consent will be sought to check their record online.

7.4 DBS renewals

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will maintain a record of DBS certificate information to ensure all staff, volunteers (as applicable) and trustees have undergone a criminal record check and ensure checks are reviewed over time.

DBS checks will need to be renewed every three years. Where staff/volunteers have an Enhanced DBS check they will be encouraged to register with the UK government's Update Service to enable an online check of their record free of charge (with the individual's consent). It is not currently possible to register Basic DBS certificates on the Update Service, so a fresh Basic DBS certificate will need to be applied for.

7.5 Handling of DBS certificate information

As an organisation using the DBS checking service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, Family Matters York complies fully with the code of practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of certificates and certificate information. It also complies fully with its obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of certificate information and has a written policy on these matters.

Storage and access

Electronic records of certificate information will be kept securely on password protected laptops and shared folder system, with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

Usage and handling

Certificate information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given. In accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997, certificate information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom certificates or certificate information has been revealed and it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

Retention and disposal

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep certificate information for any longer than is necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep certificate information for longer than six months, we will consult the DBS about this and will give full consideration to the General Data Protection Regulation, Data Protection and Human Rights of the individual before doing so.

Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding the safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail. Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any DBS certificate information is immediately destroyed by secure means, for example by electronic deletion.

We will not keep any photocopy or other image of the certificate or any copy or representation of the contents of a certificate. However, notwithstanding the above, we may keep a record of the date of issue of a certificate, the name of the subject, the type of certificate requested, the position for which the certificate was requested, the unique reference number of the certificates and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

8. Safeguarding training

All FMY staff, trustees and volunteers are required to undertake basic training in safeguarding children **and** adults. For volunteers in service user facing roles, safeguarding training must be completed before they commence their role.

The FMY Board of Trustees will decide which training courses to use. Currently, staff and volunteers should access online training supplied by the City of York Council's Learning Management System. The requirement for staff and volunteers is to complete two separate modules of material covering safeguarding children and safeguarding adults:

- City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership Awareness E-Learning³
- Safeguarding Adults: E-learning for those not in the Adults Social Care Workforce⁴

It is possible that the content of safeguarding training may trigger a negative emotional response in people who can identify either personally or generally with the subject matter. This will be made clear to all staff and volunteers and they will be invited to discuss their needs and the possibility of alternative training if they feel they will be personally affected.

Once safeguarding training is completed, the individual must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead by sharing a record/certificate of completion. A note of this will be kept securely on the safeguarding database. These records will be reviewed over time to ensure that staff, trustees and volunteers undertake regular safeguarding training, at least every three years.

FMY will accept successful completion of safeguarding training undertaken with another organisation, providing:

- the individual can show a record or certificate of completion, which bears their name and the completion date; and
- the training was completed within the last two years.

9. Reporting a safeguarding concern

All reports of safeguarding concerns will be taken seriously.

All FMY staff and volunteers are encouraged to report any concerns about a vulnerable person, even if they are unsure about whether their concerns are well founded, to their supervisor or the Designated Safeguarding Lead. In an emergency, concerns should be reported to the Police by dialling 999.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will refer concerns to the local authority (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub – MASH – for concerns about children/young people; Safeguarding Adults

³ Course information: This online training package is aimed at individuals in organisations and voluntary groups who work with children and young people to give basic awareness of child protection issues and how to safeguard children from abuse.

⁴ Course information: This module deals with the safeguarding of adults at risk. It is aimed at those who may come into contact with adults at risk but who do not work in the field of adult services.

Board for concerns about vulnerable adults), which works with the Police to investigate safeguarding concerns.

Complete confidentiality cannot be offered to a person who reports a safeguarding concern/allegation/disclosure. However, other than sharing concerns with a supervisor, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and external agencies who need to know, all safeguarding concerns will be kept confidential. The limits of this confidentiality will be explained to the person reporting a safeguarding concern.

FMY will support all staff and volunteers who are concerned for the safety of a vulnerable person.

9.1 Process for responding to a safeguarding concern

In the event that a vulnerable person discloses abuse, or there are concerns about a vulnerable person, FMY staff and volunteers should do the following:

- Listen to them and/or closely observe their presentation and behaviour.
- Do not try to question the informant in detail. If they tell you someone has hurt/harmed them, listen carefully and explain that you will have to tell someone else who will help them. Tell them that you believe them.
- Make a note of what is said/observed as soon as possible, remembering their exact words if you can and noting **when** the disclosure was made/witnessed, **who** was involved and **what** you were told. Do not make personal judgements. Sign and date your notes. As soon as possible, complete the **FMY Safeguarding Incidents Report Form** (see Appendix 3).
- Inform your supervisor (Parenting Support Lead or Relationship Support Lead) or FMY's Designated Safeguarding Lead, Kath Weston, as soon as possible (see Contacts below).
- If it is an emergency situation, contact the Police on 999.
- Where possible inform the parent/carer of the disclosure and referral, **except where you feel this might place the vulnerable person at risk of further harm.**
- Do not discuss concerns/allegations/disclosures with other people except those who need to know. The vulnerable person and their family have a right to confidentiality.

Sometimes you may feel concerned about a vulnerable person but do not know whether to share your concerns or not. In this situation you should **always raise your concerns with your supervisor or the Designated Safeguarding Lead**, who will help you decide what to do.

9.2 Safeguarding investigations

It is not the responsibility of FMY's Designated Safeguarding Lead to investigate suspected abuse. Responsibility for investigating allegations of abuse, whether resulting from the disclosure of a vulnerable person or the concerns of an adult, lies with the local authority in collaboration with the Police. The Designated Safeguarding Lead may make a referral to these agencies but if you judge the situation to be urgent and/or you require immediate advice you can report your concerns directly to them (see Contacts below).

9.3 Allegations made against staff or volunteers

All organisations that work or come into contact with vulnerable people need to be aware of the possibility that allegations may be made against members of staff or volunteers.

Allegations may be made for a variety of reasons, for example:

- abuse has actually taken place;

- something happens to a vulnerable person that reminds them of an event that happened in the past and they are unable to recognise that the people and situation are different;
- your language or actions are misinterpreted because they remind the vulnerable person of someone else;
- some vulnerable people know how powerful an allegation can be and, if they are angry or upset with you, make the allegation as a way of hitting out; or
- an allegation can be a way of seeking attention.

Allegations may also be reported by a staff member/volunteer about another staff member/volunteer. FMY staff and volunteers are encouraged to express their concerns about the practice of others. If a member of staff or volunteer has concerns, they should not be victimised in any way for expressing them.

It may be difficult to accept that abuse could occur in FMY or that the person being named could be responsible, but **all allegations must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Board of Trustees.**

In the event of an allegation against a staff member or volunteer, the following steps should be taken:

- make sure that the vulnerable person is safe and away from the person alleged to have abused them;
- contact the local authority as explained above;
- contact the parents/carers of the vulnerable person if advised to do so by the social worker or police officer in charge of the investigation;
- irrespective of any investigation by the local authority or the Police, the appropriate internal disciplinary procedures should be followed. Common practice is for the alleged abuser to be suspended⁵ from activities until the outcome of any investigation is known;
- consider whether the alleged abuser has access to vulnerable people elsewhere and whether those organisations or groups need to be informed; and
- a trustee should be nominated to support the staff member/volunteer who is facing the allegation; they will provide the staff member/volunteer with information about accessing appropriate external help, such as counselling or legal services.

All incidents will be investigated internally, after any external investigation is complete, to review practice and put in place any additional measures to prevent a similar incident.

⁵ However, advice should be sought from the local authority and the Police regarding when a suspension should take place in order to ensure that any evidence is not lost or compromised.

10. Contacts

Emergency contacts

Police 999

Concerns about a child/young person:

Local Authority: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 01904 551900

Email mash@york.gov.uk

Out of hours (Emergency Duty Team) 0300 131 2131

Email edt@northyorks.gov.uk

Concerns about an adult:

City of York Adult Social Care 01904 555111

Out of hours 0300 131 2131

Safeguarding Adults Board www.safeguardingadultsyork.org.uk/

Reporting safeguarding concerns, help and guidance

FMY Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Kath Weston kathweston@fmy.org.uk
..... 07362 927178

FMY Relationship Support Lead:

Emma Marshall emmamarshall@fmy.org.uk
..... 07491 910239

FMY Parenting Support Lead:

Jen Wootten jenwootten@fmy.org.uk
..... 07393 147259

York Healthy Child Service 01904 555475

Email HCS-Secure@york.gov.uk

Raise York (Family Hub Network) www.raiseyork.co.uk

Helplines

Police (non-emergency)	101
NSPCC	0808 800 5000
Childline	0800 1111
Family Lives	0808 800 2222
National Domestic Abuse Helpline	0808 2000 247
IDAS (Independent Domestic Abuse Services)	03000 110 110
Samaritans	116 123

11. Review

This policy and the procedures outlined within will be reviewed every year.

Reviewed by: Jill Ross (Trustee)

Signed:



Date: 07/07/2026

Next review due: July 2027

Appendix 1 Safeguarding guidance

1. Understanding and recognising signs of abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child, young person or vulnerable adult. An abuser may inflict harm or fail to act to prevent harm. Vulnerable people may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger (e.g. via the internet). Abusers may be adults or children.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a vulnerable person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment, though it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse may involve the following:

- conveying to the vulnerable person that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person;
- not giving the vulnerable person opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate;
- age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, such as interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing a child participating in normal social interaction;
- seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another;
- serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing the vulnerable person frequently to feel frightened or in danger; or
- the exploitation or corruption of a vulnerable person.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a vulnerable person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males; women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. Sexual abuse may involve the following:

- physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex), or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing; or
- non-contact activities, such as involving the vulnerable person in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming them in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a vulnerable person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the person's health or development. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a vulnerable person's basic emotional needs. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a vulnerable person from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members. Anyone can be a victim or a perpetrator of domestic regardless of sexuality or gender.

Domestic abuse can include but is not limited to:

- **Physical abuse:** kicking, punching, hitting, strangling, drowning.
- **Sexual abuse:** rape, pressuring someone into sexual acts, non-consensual sexual acts, sexual violence.
- **Financial abuse:** controlling someone's finances, withholding their money, preventing someone from earning.
- **Psychological abuse:** Manipulation, gas lighting
- **Emotional abuse:** constant criticism, threats, belittling.
- **Stalking and harassment:** during a relationship or once the relationship has ended
- **Coercive control:** controlling what someone wears, eats or who they speak to; controlling where someone can or can't go, not letting someone leave the house; reading their letters, messages or emails.

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

The NSPCC states that witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse.

- Children may see the abuse.
- Children may hear the abuse from another room.
- Children may see a parent's injuries or distress afterwards.
- Children could be physically hurt by being near a physical incident.
- Children could be physically hurt when trying to protect their parent victim.

Additional information

Additional areas of safeguarding that we must be aware of include:

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Radicalisation (Prevent)
- Self-harm and suicide prevention
- Online safety

2. Safeguarding best practice

Do:

- Treat everyone fairly, with respect, and without prejudice, discrimination or favouritism.
- Respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and faith and challenge behaviour that demonstrates discrimination or prejudice.
- Endeavour, where possible, to always have at least two facilitators/mentors present at a group event or course.
- Ensure your own language, tone of voice and body language are respectful.
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned.
- Obtain consent for any photographs/videos before taking them and explain where and how they may be used and displayed.
- Respect a vulnerable person's right to personal privacy, protection and safe environment.
- Provide access and space for vulnerable people to talk about concerns they may have.
- Record any incidents that concern you or make you feel uncomfortable and report to your supervisor or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Kath Weston – kathweston@fmy.org.uk). This includes if you have acted in a way which others may have interpreted as inappropriate or if a vulnerable person has acted inappropriately towards you.
- Deal with any allegation about a child or adult in a confidential manner and only share the information with those who need to know.

Don't:

- Initiate physical contact with anyone, except where necessary (e.g. to avoid someone being hurt); if initiated by a child (e.g. if working in a school) do not pull away abruptly but do so gently, so physical contact is for the minimum amount of time.
- If working in a school, allow children to be left alone with you, especially where you cannot be observed by other adults.
- Provide personal contact details such as a mobile number, email or social media contact to FMY service users; instead, signpost them to the FMY website, to the info@fmy.org.uk email address, or FMY's social media pages.
- Permit abusive peer activities (for example, ridiculing, bullying, name calling).
- Let suspicion, disclosure or allegations of abuse go unrecorded or unreported.
- Jump to conclusions without checking facts.
- Believe 'it could never happen here' or 'it could never happen to me'.

Appendix 2 Safeguarding procedures

1. Safeguarding procedures for FMY parenting courses

1.1 In person courses

- **Venues:** Venues will be checked by FMY for suitability (access, space, facilities, other users). Facilitators will notify the Parenting Support Lead of any concerns about venues used.
- **Signing-in:** If the venue has a sign-in procedure, participants should comply with it.
- **Welcome:** Meet and greet course participants. Show them to the venue room.
- **Register:** Take a register to record who is attending (know how many people are in the room in case of fire!).
- **Housekeeping:** Show people the emergency exits in case of fire; inform them where toilets are.
- **Supervision:** Participants are our responsibility during a course. They need to be under our supervision throughout, to keep them and other venue users safe. In a shared use venue with vulnerable groups (children and/or vulnerable adults), participants should not leave the room unsupervised. Breaks should be supervised and 'toilet breaks' scheduled.

1.2 Online courses

- **Invitation only:** Online courses will be delivered via Zoom. Course participants will require a Zoom invitation, including a password.
- **Names on screen:** Participants and Facilitators should use their first name only.
- **Cameras on:** Participants and Facilitators should have their camera on as much as possible when taking part in a course, but specifically at the start of each session (for participant ID purposes). Participants will be informed of this safeguarding expectation prior to the course. Please note, in some circumstances, a parent may need to switch off the camera (e.g. children entering the room). Facilitators should make it clear that this is both acceptable and advisable. Facilitators should use their discretion when asking for cameras to be on (consider peoples' circumstances, mental wellbeing etc). Please remember, and remind participants, to check that their background does not reveal personal details or confidential information.
- **Use of recordings:** If the session is to be recorded, explain the reason. All participants must be informed and in agreement before recording commences. Any shared recordings should preserve people's identity, unless they have agreed and have given specific written permission for the recordings to be shared.
- **Use of chat:** Please ensure participants use this respectfully. If there is any concern about the chat content, screenshot the chat and inform participants.
- **Screen sharing:** Make sure that when you screenshare you do not show any personal information by accident e.g. emails.
- **Breakout rooms:** Where possible, have a minimum of three adults per breakout room.
- **Use of the 'Waiting Room':** Always ensure there are two Facilitators ready before you admit participants to the meeting.

2. Safeguarding procedures for *FMY Reconnect* and *Strong Foundations* (couples mentoring)

- **Initial phone call:** The Relationship Support Lead will speak with at least one partner from the prospective client couple (and both partners if they felt it was necessary) ahead of arranging an initial assessment visit in person. This early contact provides an opportunity to assess the couple's suitability for the service and any potential safeguarding concerns.
- **Initial assessment visit:** The Relationship Support Lead will meet with all prospective client couples ahead of matching them with a Support Couple. This conversation will include details of the service, the reasons why the couple has sought support and a check of their suitability for the service and whether they feel the service is right for them.
- **Peer supervision:** Halfway through the *Reconnect* or *Strong Foundations* sessions, Support Couples will meet with another Support Couple for peer-to-peer supervision. This is an opportunity to talk confidentially about the client couple, how the sessions have been going, which tools may be appropriate to conclude the sessions with, and to think about any other services the client couple could be signposted to for further support.
- **FMY supervision:** The Relationship Support Lead will check in with all Support Couples regularly between their client couple sessions and be available to talk through any issues (including safeguarding concerns), with them, or the client couple.
- **Suspected Domestic Abuse:** If a Support Couple becomes concerned about the immediate safety of a client, they may want to try to facilitate a brief conversation away from the person who may be suspected to be the perpetrator of the abuse. For example, half of the Support Couple could ask the individual they are concerned about to "Please give me a hand with taking the mugs to the kitchen" to provide an opportunity to talk, while the other half of the Support Couple talks with the other individual.
- **Suicide Risk:** If a Support Couple has a client couple that expresses suicidal feelings and shares that they have made a suicide plan, please encourage them to stay with you and ask if you can phone their GP or 111 (out of hours urgent care) together to seek support for them. If they choose to leave and you are concerned for their immediate safety, please call the Police and give them the person's name and their home address. Try to share with the client that you are going to do this.

Appendix 3 Safeguarding incidents report form



Incident Report Form

Please use this form to record information about a safeguarding incident/allegation/concern as soon as possible after the incident/disclosure. This record must be accurate, kept confidential and stored securely.

Date and time of incident/conversation:	
People involved	
Names:	Contact info:
Where/how incident reported/witnessed:	
Information about the incident/allegation/concern	
Details regarding Injury/abuse/harm:	
Victim's own words regarding the injury/abuse/harm (where applicable):	
Action taken/to be taken:	
Advice/information received and source:	
Outcomes:	
Recorded by:	Date and time recorded:

