



Safeguarding Policy Statement

June 2021

Your Autism Mentor promotes a nurturing culture of safety, equality and respect for autistic children, young people and adults (hereafter referred to as “mentees”) who enter mentoring relationships with us. This reflects our ethos of working with our mentees in a person-centred, strengths-based mentoring approach.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to ensure mentees entering mentoring relationships with **Your Autism Mentor** are protected from harm (including physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect)
- to provide mentors and mentees with overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding
- to provide an outline of the processes which will be followed should a safeguarding concern arise

We believe no one should ever experience abuse of any kind and promote the welfare of all our mentees and mentors to keep them safe. **Your Autism Mentor** recognises that some autistic children, young people and adults can be particularly vulnerable to harm and we commit to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their wellbeing.

Legal Framework

This policy has been prepared with reference to legislation, policy and guidance that protects children, young people and vulnerable adults in England, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, racial origin, religious belief or sexual identity, from harm. A summary of key legislation/advice includes, but is not limited to:

- Working together to Safeguard Children 2018
- The Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (Department of Education advice for practitioners) 2015
- Keeping children safe in education 2019
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Autism Act 2009
- UN Convention on Rights of the Child 1989



- The National Autistic Society's 'Safeguarding Autistic Young People on the Autism Spectrum'
- The Care Act 2014

Supporting Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with **Your Autism Mentor's** other policies:

- Privacy/Data Protection Policy
- Engagement Policy
- End of Engagement Policy

We seek to keep our mentees and mentors safe by:

- ensuring all mentors are suitably trained in the mentoring approach
- ensuring all mentors have a theoretical and lived experience knowledge and understanding of autism and the heterogenous nature of the autistic neurotype in a social model approach, including: how the autistic neurotypical differs to neurotypical profiles; awareness of differences in social communication and interaction; perspective taking; sensory sensitivities; use of evidence-based strategies to help unpick these differences to ensure effective shared understanding
- ensuring all mentors receive regular supervision and have access to on-going continued professional development (CPD)
- ensuring all mentors have valid enhanced disclosure barring (DBS) service checks in place
- developing effective procedures to respond to safeguarding concerns (see Appendix 1)
- ensuring all mentors and mentees understand and adhere to the professional and personal boundaries within our mentoring relationships (see Appendix 2)
- having documented guidelines on effective mentoring practice, boundaries, confidentiality (see Appendix 2)
- recording and storing information professionally and securely
- sharing relevant information and concerns as required legally with any individuals or agencies who need to know, including partner organisations and local safeguarding leads
- actively listening to the views of our mentees, taking account of their wishes when reaching decisions that affect them as individuals, in-line with legislation
- creating an anti-bullying environment and guidelines for responding to reports of bullying behaviours (see Appendix 3)



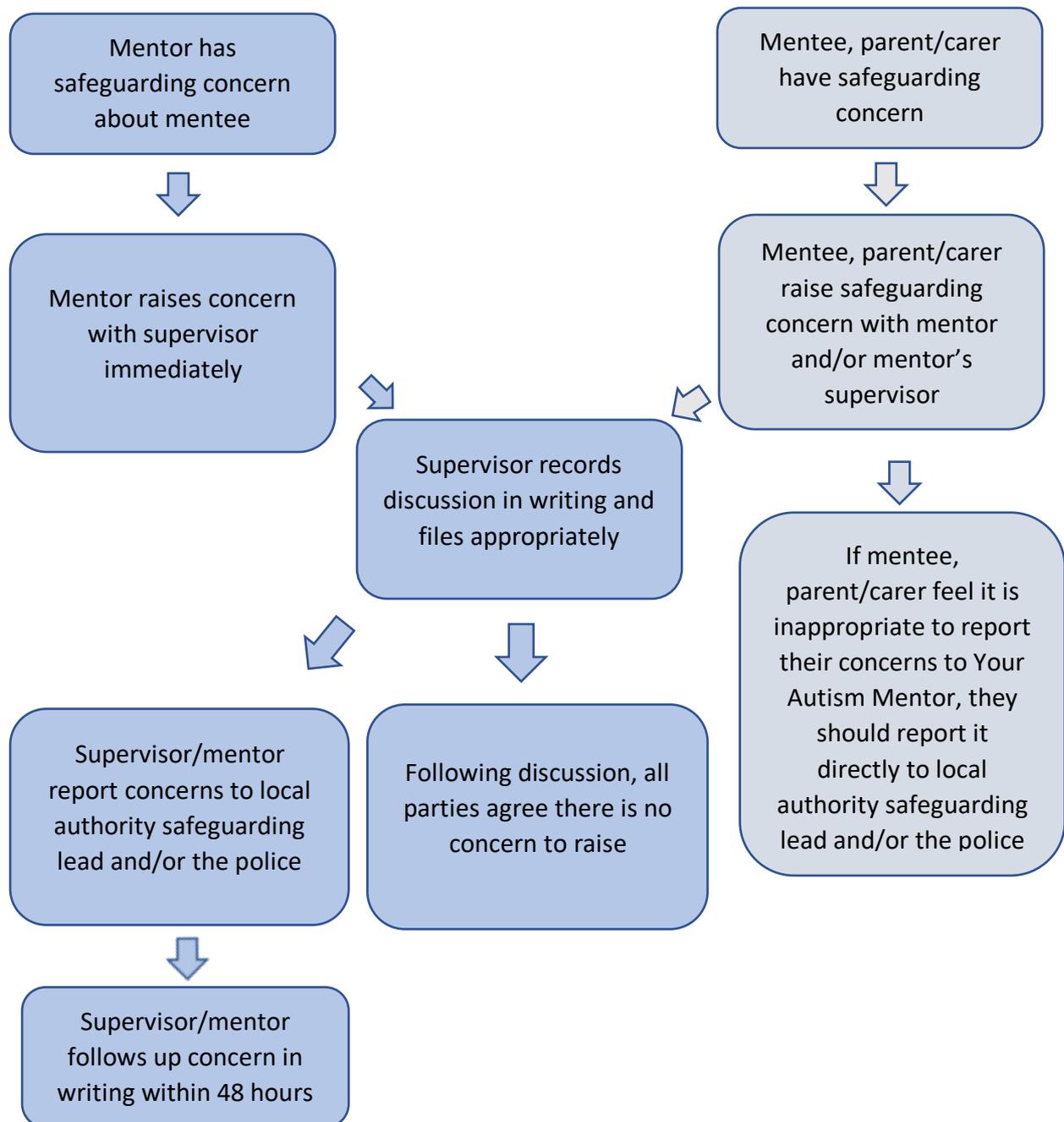
- applying Health & Safety measures to ensure all activities are delivered in a safe and supportive environment (see Appendix 4)
- ensuring our mentees and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern (see Appendix 1)
- ensuring our mentors know what to do if they have a concern or if someone raises a concern against them (see Appendix 1)
- regularly reviewing and updating our safeguarding procedures and policies using a safeguarding checklist tool (<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-checklist>)

Wendy Pearson

26/06/2021

Appendix 1

Your Autism Mentor procedure for responding to safeguarding concerns:



Appendix 2

Your Autism Mentor – Mentoring Approach

- **Your Autism Mentor** provides mentoring relationships which involve an experienced, knowledgeable person (the mentor) working with a mentee in a person-centred, strengths-based approach
- Well-being is always at the heart of **Your Autism Mentor's** work
- Mentoring relationships are based on trust from the start
- Mentoring sessions are time-limited, goal-orientated individual sessions (unless otherwise specified, e.g., where small group work is agreed), consistent, reliable and carried out in an autism-friendly environment, at a mutually agreed time, e.g., weekly one-to-one sessions of one hour for twenty weeks
- Mentoring sessions follow professional boundaries where roles and the nature of the mentoring relationship are firmly established and communicated during the initial session and re-iterated at the beginning of each subsequent session
- Mentors make a conscious decision on the approach they will use which is tailored to the needs of the mentee and works towards their individual goals, e.g., mentors consider mentees learning and communication preferences, levels of emotional intelligence and mindset
- Mentors work together with their mentees to build a trusted equitable relationship, using their informed knowledge and experience to lead their mentees to person-focused solutions
- Mentors use guided dialogue, conversation and a range of evidence-based resources to mutually create decisions and goals
- Mentees are given the time and space to be listened to, reflect and consider different perspectives
- Mentoring relationships are confidential unless the mentee gives the mentor reason to have safeguarding concerns for their mentee or others
- Mentoring relationships provide opportunities for mentees to: have greater control over their own lives, express their own identities, transfer their skills and knowledge, feel valued as an individual, reflect on past experiences; move towards self-identified goals

Appendix 3

Your Autism Mentor – Anti-Bullying Procedures:

In-line with **Your Autism Mentor's** nurturing culture of safety, equality and respect for all individuals, we adhere to the principles of the Equality Act 2010 employing an anti-bullying approach to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conducts
- advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between autistic individuals (regarded as a disability and therefore a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010) and neurotypical individuals
- prevent, de-escalate or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour
- react to reports of bullying in a reasonable and consistent way
- safeguard mentees who have experienced bullying and, if appropriate, signpost to sources of support

In the unlikely event a mentee or member of their family has a concern around bullying behaviour by Your Autism Mentor, they should raise this with their mentor and/or mentor's supervisor, or, if appropriate, seek guidance from their local authority anti-bullying lead.



Appendix 4

Your Autism Mentor – Health & Safety Policy

Your Autism Mentor will take reasonable measures to always ensure the health and safety of both its mentees and mentors.

Unless otherwise required, mentors will not require adjustments made to your home. Mentors will require a suitable confidential, quiet space for mentoring sessions with safe seating.

If any physical obstacles or dangerous situations are observed, the mentor will conclude the mentoring session.

Your Autism Mentor's mobile phones will be fitted with automatic tracking.

Precautions due to Covid:

- Up to date government guidelines will be followed at all times
- **Your Autism Mentor** will carry out lateral flow tests twice weekly whilst restrictions apply
- When visiting homes, **Your Autism Mentor** requests that all surfaces are clear and clean