

The Mix Stowmarket, Ltd

Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy and Reporting Procedure

Young People's Version

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Safeguarding at The Mix – For Young People 4

1. What is Safeguarding? 4

1.1. Why This Matters at The Mix..... 4

1.3. What Are We Looking Out For? 4

1.4. What To Do If You’re Worried About Someone 5

1.5. How Staff & Volunteers Are Trained..... 5

1.6. Keeping Records Safe and Private 5

1.7. Safeguarding in Thrive 5

1.8. Keeping Records & Information Safe 5

1.9. If You're Unsure – Speak Up..... 6

1.10 What if the concern is about a staff member or volunteer?..... 6

2. Specific Safeguarding Concerns 6

2.1 Domestic Abuse 6

2.2 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) 6

2.3 County Lines (Child Criminal Exploitation)..... 6

2.4 Preventing Radicalisation..... 7

2.5 Staying Safe Online 7

3. Keeping Everyone Safe at The Mix 7

3.1 Face-to-Face Sessions 7

3.2 Online Sessions..... 8

4. If Someone at The Mix Is Accused of Harm 8

5. Working Safely with Children and Vulnerable Adults 8

5.1. Face-to-Face Sessions 8

5.2 Online Sessions..... 9

5.3 IT and Security..... 9

6. When a Staff Member or Volunteer Is Accused of Harm 10

This includes any case where a staff member: 10

7. What Happens When a Serious Allegation is Made..... 10

7.1 Step 1: First Look at the Allegation (Initial Consideration) 10

7.2 Step 2: What Happens After That (Next Actions)..... 10

7.4 What If the Allegation Is About Someone from Another Organisation? 11

7.5 Suspension for Serious Misconduct (Gross Misconduct) 11

8. What to Know and What to Do 12

8.1 Whistleblowing..... 12

8.2 What the Safeguarding Lead Does 12

9. Checking and Reporting 12

10. Annex 13

10.1 How to report a safeguarding concern flow chart 13

10.2 Safeguarding Team at The Mix..... 14

Safeguarding at The Mix – For Young People

1. What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding means keeping children and vulnerable adults safe from harm, abuse, and danger.

At The Mix, we believe that all children and young people have the right to:

- Feel safe
- Be looked after properly
- Get help if something is wrong
- Be listened to

Adults also have the right to be safe and free from harm. Everyone working or volunteering at The Mix must help protect others.

1.1. Why This Matters at The Mix

At The Mix, we want every young person to feel safe and supported. We believe that young people can make a difference in their communities and should have strong voices.

This policy helps us follow the law and make sure everyone knows what to do if someone is being hurt or at risk.

1.2. Who's Involved?

- **DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead):** The person in charge of safeguarding at The Mix. Caroline
- **ASL (Alternate Safeguarding Lead):** Helps the DSL and takes action when needed. Gert, Josh, Rebecca, Janie
- **All staff and volunteers:** Must report concerns and know what to do to keep young people safe.
- **CEO and Trustees:** Make sure safeguarding is taken seriously across the whole organisation.

1.3. What Are We Looking Out For?

Some examples of abuse or harm:

- Physical abuse (hurting someone)
- Emotional abuse (bullying, threats)
- Neglect (not being looked after properly)

- Sexual abuse
- Being forced into beliefs or groups (radicalisation/extremism)

1.4. What To Do If You're Worried About Someone

If you're a young person and you are worried about:

- Yourself
- A friend
- Or someone else you know

Tell an adult you trust at The Mix – a youth worker, volunteer, or member of staff. They will help.

1.5. How Staff & Volunteers Are Trained

Everyone working or volunteering at The Mix:

- Has a **DBS check** (to make sure it's safe for them to work with young people).
- Goes through **safeguarding training** when they join.
- Has **refresher training** every 3 years.
- Must know what to do if someone is in danger.

1.6. Keeping Records Safe and Private

If someone shares something important or worrying:

- Staff must **write it down clearly and truthfully**
- They will **keep it private** and **only share it with the people who need to know**
- All records are kept **locked away or securely online**
- Records must be written within **24 hours** if it's about a safeguarding concern

1.7. Safeguarding in Thrive

If you get support from Thrive :

- Any serious concern will be shared with your **school's safeguarding lead**
- The Mix team will also tell their own safeguarding lead
- Both The Mix and your school work together to keep you safe

1.8. Keeping Records & Information Safe

- Records are kept for **6 years** after you stop using The Mix

- They are safely stored and destroyed afterwards (like shredding paper)
- You will always be told what's being recorded and why

1.9. If You're Unsure – Speak Up

Safeguarding is about protecting people – **you are never alone.**

If something feels wrong or unsafe:

Speak to a trusted adult at The Mix

Ask questions if you're unsure

You won't get in trouble for speaking up

1.10 What if the concern is about a staff member or volunteer?

- If you're worried about the behaviour of someone working at The Mix, you can report it too.
- Don't worry – your concerns will be taken seriously, and you'll be supported.
- Tell the DSL. If your concern is about the DSL, tell the CEO or Chair of Trustees instead.

2. Specific Safeguarding Concerns

2.1 Domestic Abuse

- This is when someone at home hurts, threatens or scares another family member.
- Even if a young person isn't physically hurt, **just seeing or hearing** abuse is still harmful.
- You can report this without needing permission from a parent or carer, especially if the child may be in danger.

2.2 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- FGM is when a girl's private parts are cut or harmed for non-medical reasons.
- It's **illegal and very serious abuse**.
- If someone under 18 tells you this has happened or is going to happen, you **must** tell the police or DSL.

2.3 County Lines (Child Criminal Exploitation)

- Some young people are tricked or forced into delivering drugs for gangs.
- Gangs use phones to control them – this is called "county lines".
- It's illegal and very dangerous.

- If you suspect this is happening, tell someone straight away.
-

2.4 Preventing Radicalisation

- Radicalisation is when someone is persuaded to believe extreme ideas, including supporting terrorism.
- If you're worried someone is being drawn into this, tell the DSL.
- There is a support programme called **Channel** to help people at risk.

2.5 Staying Safe Online

Young people may face danger online through:

- Bullying or harassment
- Being pressured to share personal or private pictures
- Talking to strangers pretending to be someone else (catfishing)
- Being exposed to violence or hate messages
- Being tricked or groomed into sharing private information

If anything online makes you uncomfortable, confused, or scared, tell a trusted adult or the DSL right away.

Useful websites & helplines:

- **CEOP:** www.ceop.police.uk
- **NSPCC:** 0808 800 5000 / help@nspcc.org.uk
- **Safer Internet Centre:** helpline@saferinternet.org.uk

3. Keeping Everyone Safe at The Mix

3.1 Face-to-Face Sessions

- There must always be at least **2 adults** with a group of young people.
- Leaders shouldn't be alone with a young person unless it's part of a planned session and others are nearby.
- There must be a **consent form** for trips or off-site activities.
- Adults and young people must use different toilets at The Mix.

3.2 Online Sessions

- Online sessions must happen during normal hours unless allowed by the DSL.
- Always use **official accounts and equipment** – never personal ones.
- Young people should **turn off their camera** during sessions unless told otherwise.
- Staff must **know who is in the session** – no unknown or uninvited guests allowed.

4. If Someone at The Mix Is Accused of Harm

If someone working or volunteering at The Mix is accused of abuse:

- The concern must be reported **right away** to the DSL.
- If the DSL is the person involved, the CEO or Chair of Trustees will be told instead.
- The concern will be passed to the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** for investigation.
- The person accused **won't work with young people** until the investigation is done.

5. Working Safely with Children and Vulnerable Adults

5.1. Face-to-Face Sessions

These rules help keep **everyone safe** when working together in person:

- Never run a session if you **don't have enough adults**.
- Plan sessions carefully to **avoid being alone** with a young person.
- If you need to work 1-to-1 (e.g. coaching), you must have special permission and training.
- Never meet up with a young person outside The Mix without a parent or manager knowing.
- Always have at least **two adults** with a group — especially if you're the only group in the building.
- Follow the correct **adult-to-child ratio** (1 adult for every 15 children aged 9–18).
- Take a **register** of everyone at the activity — including emergency contacts.

Toilets:

- Adults and young people should use **different toilets** at The Mix.
- Young people use **accessible toilets**.
- Adults use **male/female toilets** unless they need accessible ones.

Important:

- Everyone who helps at The Mix must have a **DBS check** and **safeguarding training**.

- No one without a DBS should ever be left alone with young people.

Photos & Videos:

- We only take pictures or videos if permission has been given through our **registration system (Upshot)**.

5.2 Online Sessions

Sometimes support happens online — here's how to keep it safe:

- Online sessions happen during **working hours (9am–5pm)** unless the DSL says otherwise.
- We use **Microsoft Teams** for all sessions unless agreed with the DSL.
- Staff must use **work accounts and devices** — not personal ones.
- Volunteers tell a staff member when they're doing a session — staff must log it in the online diary.

Session rules:

- Keep it **professional** — dress appropriately, behave respectfully, and act like you're in the office.
- Make sure the young person is **fully awake, dressed**, and ready for the session.
- Everyone should be in a **quiet space**, and **confidentiality must be protected** (headphones help!).
- **Cameras off for young people**, unless agreed otherwise.
- Only invite people directly — **don't post links in public** or group chats.
- If you're not sure who someone is, remove them or end the session.

Notes must be taken after each session, just like face-to-face meetings.

Staff should use **Room B** at The Mix if doing an online session in the building.

5.3 IT and Security

Everyone must take care when using **computers, phones, or tablets**:

- Always **lock your screen** or log out if you step away — even in a safe place.
- Keep personal information **private and secure**.
- Don't save or share any images of young people that could be illegal — report it immediately.

6. When a Staff Member or Volunteer Is Accused of Harm

This is what happens if a **staff member or volunteer is accused** of hurting or abusing a young person or vulnerable adult:

- It is reported **straight away** to the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead).
- If the DSL is involved, it is reported to the **CEO or Chair of Trustees**.
- The DSL (or Chair/CEO) will contact the **LADO (Local Area Designated Officer)**.
- The staff member or volunteer will **not be allowed near the young person** while it's investigated.

This includes any case where a **staff member**:

- Hurts or might hurt a young person
- Breaks the law in a way that involves a young person
- Acts in a way that shows they shouldn't be working with young people

7. What Happens When a Serious Allegation is Made

This explains what The Mix does if someone makes a serious claim (called an "allegation") about a **staff member or volunteer** possibly hurting or putting a young person at risk.

7.1 Step 1: First Look at the Allegation (Initial Consideration)

- If someone is accused, The Mix talks to the **LADO** (Local Authority Designated Officer).
- The LADO and the Safeguarding Lead (or CEO/Chair of Trustees) check the facts.
- If the accusation is clearly false, it may stop there.
- If it seems serious or possibly true, they may call the **police**.
- Everyone involved will work together to decide what happens next.
- They may use special paperwork called **Signs of Safety** to help make the right decision.

7.2 Step 2: What Happens After That (Next Actions)

If the police are **not** involved:

- The Mix may still take action, especially if the person broke a rule.
- If no formal hearing (meeting) is needed, action should happen within **3 working days**.
- If a hearing is needed and doesn't need more investigation, it must happen within **15 working days**.
- If they need to **investigate more**, they'll agree on who will do that investigation.
- Someone from outside The Mix might do it to make sure it's fair and neutral.

- A report should be written within **10 working days**.
- Once the report is done, The Mix decides within **2 days** if a hearing is needed.
- If a hearing is needed, it happens within **15 days** of the decision.

Staff members can bring someone with them to the hearing — like a union rep or a ‘McKenzie’s Friend’.

7.3 Suspension (Taking Someone Off Duty Temporarily)

Sometimes, The Mix might **suspend** (pause) someone’s role if there’s a risk to young people. Here’s what that means:

- Suspension is only used if really needed.
- It’s to protect the young person, not to punish the adult.
- The **Chair of Trustees** decides if someone should be suspended.
- The LADO gives advice, but they **can’t force** a suspension — The Mix decides.
- If there’s a formal meeting (called a “strategy meeting”), they’ll talk about whether suspension is best.

Suspension doesn’t mean the person is guilty — it just keeps everyone safe while things are sorted out.

7.4 What If the Allegation Is About Someone from Another Organisation?

- The Mix will speak to the **LADO** to agree who contacts the other organisation.
- But if the young person is in **immediate danger**, The Mix must contact the LADO **right away** — no waiting.

7.5 Suspension for Serious Misconduct (Gross Misconduct)

If someone **admits** they put a young person at serious risk, or hurt them:

- That person may be **suspended immediately** by the **Chair of Trustees**.
- This is called **gross misconduct**.
- It’s not a punishment — it just removes the person from their role for now.
- A full internal investigation will happen **later**.
- The suspension won’t affect what the police or LADO are doing — those are separate.

8. What to Know and What to Do

8.1 Whistleblowing

If someone at The Mix sees something **wrong or unsafe**, they should speak up — even if it's about another adult. This is called **whistleblowing**.

There's a full Whistleblowing Policy that explains how to do this.

8.2 What the Safeguarding Lead Does

If something serious happens and the **LADO (a special officer)** is involved:

- The **Safeguarding Lead** at The Mix makes sure the young person is safe.
- They talk with the LADO and follow the right steps (from earlier).
- If they think someone has been hurt or is in danger, they must **tell the police or social services**.

All information is kept safe:

- Paper files are locked away.
- Computer files are password protected.
- Young people's names are kept secret — only a **code** is used.

8.3 If Someone Is Removed from Their Role

If The Mix **removes someone** from their job (or they leave before being removed) because they might be dangerous to others:

The Mix must tell a government group called the **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)**.

The DBS decides if the person should be **banned from working with children or vulnerable adults**.

9. Checking and Reporting

- The **Safeguarding Lead** sends a report every 3 months showing:
 - How many cases were reported
 - What happened with them
- A **safeguarding trustee** checks files and procedures every 3 months.
- The **Safeguarding Group** reviews the rules every year (or sooner if laws change).

10. Annex

10.1 How to report a safeguarding concern flow chart

Reporting a Safeguarding Concern



Tell an Adult

Tell a
trusted adult
you have a concern



Explain Concern

Explain the
concern to the
adult



Adult Passes On

That adult will pass
the concern to the
Safeguarding Team

10.2 Safeguarding Team at The Mix

THE MIX SAFEGUARDING TEAM



Caroline
DSL



Gert
(Front of House)



Rebecca
(Schools Team)



Josh
(Open Access)



Janie
(Empower)