Empowering children, young people and families living with Usher syndrome

Safeguarding Policy
(Plain Language Version)

Date of publication June 2026 (v3.1)

Owner CEO/Designated Safeguarding Officer

1. Purpose of this policy

Usher Kids UK exists to support children and young people aged 0–25 with Usher syndrome, and their families.

We are committed to keeping children and adults at risk safe from harm.

This policy explains:

- how we protect people from harm
- what staff and volunteers must do if they have concerns
- how we respond to safeguarding issues

This policy applies to:

- staff
- trustees
- volunteers
- mentors
- anyone working on behalf of Usher Kids UK

A child is anyone under 18.

An adult at risk is someone aged 18 or over who:

- has care and support needs
- may be at risk of abuse or neglect
- may not be able to protect themselves

2. What we mean by safeguarding and abuse

Safeguarding means protecting children and adults at risk from harm.

Abuse happens when someone causes harm or fails to prevent harm. It can happen:

- in families
- at events
- online
- by someone known or unknown

Abuse includes:

- physical abuse
- emotional abuse
- sexual abuse
- neglect

Abuse can be carried out by:

- adults
- children and young people (child-on-child abuse)

More detail is in Appendix B.

3. Our commitment to safeguarding

We believe:

- everyone has the right to be safe
- safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility

We will:

- listen to children, young people and adults at risk
- treat everyone with respect
- respond to concerns quickly and appropriately
- work with other organisations where needed

We will also:

- recruit staff and volunteers safely
- provide training
- follow clear procedures
- keep information secure
- support people to raise concerns

We make sure:

- people know how to report concerns
- safeguarding information is available at events and on our website
- information is accessible to our community

4. Safeguarding roles

We have a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) who:

- leads on safeguarding
- receives concerns
- decides what action to take

Our Designated Safeguarding Officer is Emma King. She can be emailed at emma.king@usherkidsuk.org

We also have:

- a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer who can be contacted by email at penny.lockhart@usherkidsuk.org
- a Trustee Safeguarding Lead who can be contacted by email at laura.ross@mft.nhs.uk
- a Chair of Trustees who can be contacted by email at chloe.joyner@usherkidsuk

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, but the DSO leads the process.

5. What to do if there is a safeguarding concern

A concern might arise if:

- someone tells you they are being harmed
- you are worried about someone
- something does not feel right
- you see behaviour that concerns you

If there is immediate danger:

- Call **999**
- Make sure people are safe
- Then inform the DSO as soon as possible

If there is no immediate danger:

1. Make sure the person is safe and supported
2. Do not investigate
3. Do not discuss with others
4. Report the concern to the DSO as soon as possible

Important:

- Always take concerns seriously
- Do not wait for proof
- Do not promise confidentiality

If you are at a face-to-face event, you should speak to the DSO as soon as possible. If you are not near Emma, you should phone her. The phone number of the DSO will have been

shared before the event starts, and can also be found on posters at the event.

6. If the concern is about the DSO

If your concern involves the Designated Safeguarding Officer:

- report to the Trustee Safeguarding Lead by sending an email to laura.ross@mft.nhs.uk or the Chair of Trustees by sending an email to chloe.joyner@usherkidsuk.org

If you cannot report internally:

- contact the **NSPCC Helpline (0808 800 5000)**
- or contact the relevant local authority safeguarding team

7. Responding to a disclosure

If someone tells you they are being harmed:

- listen carefully
- stay calm
- take them seriously
- reassure them it is not their fault

Do not:

- ask leading questions
- investigate
- speak to the alleged abuser

Always report the information to the DSO.

8. Recording concerns

You must record concerns clearly and accurately.

Include:

- what you saw or heard
- the date, time and place
- the exact words used (if possible)

Use the safeguarding concern form (Appendix A).
Reports must be completed within 24 hours.

9. Sharing information

You must share safeguarding concerns with the DSO, even if:

- you do not have consent
- the person asks you not to tell anyone

Safeguarding is a valid reason to share information.

The DSO will decide:

- what information should be shared
- who it should be shared with

10. External reporting

If needed, concerns will be shared with:

- local authority children's or adult social care (where the concern occurred)
- the police (if a crime may have been committed)

If you cannot contact the DSO, you can contact:

- NSPCC Helpline: **0808 800 5000**
- Emergency services: **999**

11. Recording and storing information

Safeguarding records:

- must be accurate and factual
- must be stored securely

Records are:

- kept securely in password-protected systems
- not stored on personal devices
- kept for as long as necessary and then securely deleted

12. Child-on-child abuse

Children and young people can harm others.

We:

- take this seriously
- respond quickly
- support everyone involved

Staff and volunteers must:

- report concerns immediately
- not investigate

13. Training and safer recruitment

We:

- check staff and volunteers before they work with us
- provide safeguarding training
- refresh training regularly

All staff and volunteers must:

- read the safeguarding policy
- follow safeguarding procedures

14. Raising concerns about staff or volunteers

If you are worried about someone working with children:

- report it to the DSO immediately

You do not need proof.
Do not investigate.

All concerns will be taken seriously and handled appropriately.

15. Policy review

This policy is reviewed every year by:

- the Designated Safeguarding Officer
- the Trustee Safeguarding Lead

Please contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer should you require this policy in an alternative format or if you require support in completing the safeguarding concern form.

Appendix A: Record of safeguarding concern form

Record of safeguarding concern form

This form should be used to document clear and comprehensive records of all safeguarding incidents, allegations or concerns, which occur in the course of the work of Usher Kids UK.

Section A: To be completed by the person who is reporting the incident, allegation or concern	
Name and role of person completing this form	
Names of person(s) involved in incident, allegation or concern and nature of the named person's involvement: (i.e. alleged victim, witness, alleged perpetrator etc). Include any witnesses.	
Date, time and location of the incident, allegation or concern	
What has occurred / What are the allegations or concerns?	
How were you made aware of the incident/concern/allegation?	
Date and time this incident, allegation or concern was first reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer	
Signed and dated by witness/reporter	

THANK YOU

Please return this form via password protected email to emma.king@usherkidsuk.org within 24 hours of the incident/concern.

If you are reporting a safeguarding incident that occurred during an Usher Kids UK event which resulted in first aid treatment, emergency service involvement or behavioural/disciplinary procedures being triggered, you will also need to complete an incident form.

SECTION B: To be completed by the designated safeguarding officer	
Date and time form received by designated safeguarding officer	
Who has been contacted for advice on actions to take?	
What follow up actions have taken place?	
Who has information been shared (including with parents/carers, referrals made to outside agencies and the trustees)?	
Was consent requested and received prior to sharing information? (If no, please state why consent was not given (if known) and why it was felt necessary to share information without consent)	
What feedback has been given to people involved (including the person who made this report)?	
What decisions have been reached about changes required to Usher Kids UK processes and policies as a result of this concern/incident?	
Signed and dated by the designated safeguarding officer	
Please save this form, with section A and B completed, in the confidential safeguarding folder in Charity Governance/CEO in a folder named after the child/adult at risk. File name should be the full name of the child/adult at risk involved and the date of the incident, allegation or concern. Password protect the file.	

Appendix B: Types of Abuse

Abuse is a form of harm. It can happen when someone causes harm, or when they fail to act to prevent harm.

Abuse can happen:

- in families
- at events or activities
- online
- by someone known or unknown

Abuse can be carried out by:

- adults
- children and young people

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately causes physical harm.

This may include:

- hitting
- shaking
- throwing
- poisoning
- burning
- causing injury in other ways

It may also include making up or causing illness.

Possible signs include:

- unexplained injuries
- injuries that do not match the explanation
- fear of certain people

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is when someone repeatedly treats a person in a way that harms their emotional wellbeing.

This may include:

- making someone feel worthless or unloved
- putting too much pressure on them
- stopping them from expressing their views
- bullying, including online
- humiliation or intimidation

Possible signs include:

- low confidence or self-esteem
- withdrawal
- anxiety
- extreme behaviour

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is when someone forces or encourages a person to take part in sexual activity.

This can include:

- physical contact
- non-contact activities such as showing images
- grooming or online exploitation

Possible signs include:

- changes in behaviour
- inappropriate knowledge for age
- avoiding certain people or situations

Neglect

Neglect is when someone does not meet a person's basic needs.

This may include:

- lack of food, clothing or shelter
- lack of supervision
- failure to provide medical care
- emotional neglect

Possible signs include:

- poor hygiene
- hunger or malnutrition
- untreated health issues
- lack of supervision

Additional note

Abuse can happen once or over time. It can happen in person or online.

It is important to consider all signs in context.

These definitions are based on NSPCC safeguarding guidance. More detailed information can be found here:

Types of Child Abuse & How to Prevent Them | NSPCC

Appendix C

Safeguarding Reporting Flowchart

