

**Record storage and retention policy**

As a charity we hold records about a child or adult, so this policy outlines the retention and storage of that information. As part of our safeguarding policy and procedures, these guidelines are for the retention, storage, and destruction of child protection records. These are records which relate to concerns about a child’s welfare and safety, and/or concerns about possible risks posed by people working or volunteering with children.

**Guiding principles of records management**

Records containing personal information will be:

• adequate, relevant, and not excessive for the purpose(s) for which they are held

• accurate and up to date

• only kept for as long as is necessary (Information Commissioner’s Office, 2021).

**Our organisation will**

 • know the reason for keeping records about children and/or adults (for example, because they relate to child protection concerns)

• assess how long we need to keep the records for

• have a plan for how and when the records will be destroyed.

Our files will

• be compiled and labelled carefully

•Files containing sensitive or confidential data will be secure and access on a ‘need to know’ basis

Records for child protection reasons, will not require consent from the adults and/or children concerned.

**Concerns about children**

Any concerns about a child or young person’s welfare or safety, is reported through our Safeguarding Policy and Procedure. Details of the disclosure will include

• the date and time of the incident/disclosure

• the date and time of the report

• the name and role of the person to whom the concern was originally reported.

• the name and role of the person making the report

 • the names of all parties who were involved in the incident, including any witnesses

• the name, age and any other relevant information about the child who is the subject of the

 concern (including information about their parents or carers and any siblings)

• what was said or done and by whom

• any action taken to investigate the matter

• any further action taken (such as a referral being made)

 • The record should always be signed and dated by the person making the report.

Child protection records are both electronic and paper-based, they will be kept confidential and stored securely.

* Electronic files will be password protected and stored on computers with protection against hackers and viruses.
* Information about child protection concerns and referrals will be kept in a separate child protection file for each child.
* The child protection file will be started as soon as we become aware of any concerns.
* Child protection files will be kept separate from a child’s general records.
* Notes will be made on the child’s general record to indicate that there is a separate child protection file.

In England, Scotland and Wales, the child protection files should be kept until the child is 25.

**Recording concerns about adult**

Sometimes concerns might be raised about an adult who works or volunteers with children. This could be because they’ve:

 • behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child

• committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child

• behaved in a way that indicated they are unsuitable to work with young people.

Mentor Link will keep clear and comprehensive records of all allegations made against adults working or volunteering with children, including:

• what the allegations were

• how the allegations were followed up

. • how things were resolved

• any action taken

• decisions reached about the person’s suitability to work with children.

 • These records will be used in response to future requests for a reference and disclosed as part of a vetting and barring check

• if allegations resurface after a period of time.

**Storing records relating to adults**

Records relating to adults will be kept in their personnel file at least until they reach their normal retirement age or for 10 years – whichever is longer. If we find that allegations are malicious, we will destroy the record immediately.

**Exceptions**

There are some situations where records retention period will be longer for children

• the records provide information about a child’s personal history, which they might want to access later

• the records have been maintained for the purposes of research

• the information in the records is relevant to legal action that has been started but not finished

• the records have been archived for historical purposes (for example if the records are relevant to legal proceedings involving the organisation).

• children who have been ‘looked after’ by the local authority

• adopted children and registered foster carers

• residential children’s homes.

Currently the length of time records should be kept for LAC is 75 years

**Destruction of child protection records**

When the retention period is finished, confidential records will be shredded and at the same time any electronic versions of the record must be purged.

Policies are reviewed annually.

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