**1. Introduction**

DifferencesnotDisabilities Ltd. is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We recognize our duty of care to ensure that our practices reflect statutory responsibilities and government guidance and comply with best practices.

**2. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to:

Protect children and young people who receive DifferencesnotDisabilities Ltd.’s services.

Provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

**3. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors, and any other individuals or groups working with or on behalf of DifferencesnotDisabilities Ltd.

**4. Legal Framework**

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, including:

Children Act 1989 and 2004

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991

**5. Definitions**

Child: A person under the age of 18.

Safeguarding: The action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Child Protection: Part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

**6. Roles and Responsibilities**

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): The DSL has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. This responsibility cannot be delegated.

All Staff and Volunteers: All individuals working for or on behalf of DifferencesnotDisabilities Ltd. have a responsibility to protect children and young people from abuse and neglect and to report any concerns immediately to the DSL.

**7. Safe Recruitment**

DifferencesnotDisabilities Ltd. follows safer recruitment practices to ensure that all employees and volunteers are suitable to work with children. This includes:

Undertaking enhanced DBS checks.

Verifying references and employment history.

Providing safeguarding training as part of the induction process.

**8. Training**

All staff and volunteers will receive training to ensure they are aware of the signs of abuse and neglect and know how to respond appropriately. Training will be updated regularly to reflect new guidance and legislation.

**9. Recognizing Abuse and Neglect**

Abuse can be:

Physical Abuse: Hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding.

Emotional Abuse: Emotional maltreatment causing severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Sexual Abuse: Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities.

Neglect: Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs.

**10. Responding to Disclosures and Concerns**

Listening to Children: Staff and volunteers should listen to children carefully and respond non-judgmentally.

Reporting: Concerns should be reported to the DSL immediately. If the DSL is not available, concerns should be reported to the deputy DSL or a senior manager.

Record Keeping: All concerns, discussions, and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing.

**11. Confidentiality**

All information regarding safeguarding concerns should be shared only with those who need to know to protect the child. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only.

**12. Allegations Against Staff**

Any allegations of abuse made against a member of staff must be reported immediately to the DSL. If the allegation concerns the DSL, it should be reported to the deputy DSL or a senior manager. The company will follow the procedures set out in statutory guidance and involve the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as required.

**13. Whistleblowing**

DifferencesnotDisabilities Ltd. encourages an open culture where staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about safeguarding practices. Whistleblowers will be supported and protected in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

**14. Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes in legislation or government guidance.

**15. Contact Information**

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Kurt King, 01233 368064

Deputy DSL: Michelle Elliott, 01233 368064

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):
 03000 41 08 88 kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk.

**16. Approval**

This policy has been approved and endorsed by [Company Director/CEO/Board].

Approved by:

Kurt King

Company Director

[Date] 24.7.24

This policy ensures that DifferencesnotDisabilities Ltd. meets its legal obligations and maintains a safe environment for all children and young people who interact with our services.