

# Safeguarding Policy

This policy is effective from 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024. The next review date is April 2026.

## 1. Introduction

1.1 Elk&Ether ('We' or 'our Practice') is a business currently offering the following services:

Arts Psychotherapy for adults aged 18+.

Individual & group sound healing sessions for adults aged 18+.

Individual & group cacao ceremonies for adults aged 18+.

1.2 Our Practice is based in Exeter, UK. Our psychotherapy sessions are held online or in person at Sapphire Practice Rooms, 10 Southernhay W, Exeter EX1 1JG. Our sound healing sessions & cacao ceremonies are held in various venues throughout Devon.

## 2. Purpose of the Policy

2.1 This policy is written in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004, Children and Social Worker Act 2017, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, EU GDPR (2016) and Data Protection Act 2018.

2.2 In this policy, the term child/children shall mean any person under 18 years of age.

2.3 In this policy, the term vulnerable adult shall mean someone who is aged 18 years of age or above and who is deemed unable to protect themselves from harm, abuse or exploitation. This may be as a result of a number of factors, including: age, disability, illness, mental illness, physical or mental impairment, social isolation or dependency on others.

2.4 Our Practice is committed to the protection of both children and adults. This policy is intended to provide overarching principles to those who represent the Practice on our approach to safeguarding.

### **3. Risks**

3.1 Children and adults can be vulnerable to different forms of abuse and harm. Our Practice recognises that safeguarding concerns can cover a wide range of circumstances and behaviour. Many of these require a different response on our behalf dependent on whether the individual(s) affected is a child, adult or vulnerable adult.

Some examples of abuse and harm that can present risk include, but are not limited to:

Physical abuse

Female genital mutilation

Domestic abuse/violence

Sexual abuse

Sexual exploitation

Psychological/emotional abuse

Financial/material abuse

Modern slavery/trafficking

Discriminatory abuse

Organisational/institutional abuse

Neglect/acts of omission

Self-neglect

Criminal Exploitation/gangs

Bullying/cyberbullying

Grooming

Historical abuse

Online abuse

#### **4. Our professional responsibilities before client contact**

4.1 We are both Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) registered Arts Therapists. You can check our registration via <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/check-the-register/> using our last names. We must comply with the professional standard set by HCPC and are required to inform our clients if the status of our registration has changed.

4.2 Lau Harp is a Sound Therapist having trained on a course that is registered with The College of Sound Healing (<https://www.collegeofsoundhealing.co.uk>). Lau is required to attend various continuous professional development trainings each year & evidence their competence to work in sound healing in order to maintain their registration with The College of Sound Healing.

4.3 Becca is a Cacao Practitioner having trained with Keith's Cacao (<https://www.keithscacao.com>). Becca has completed their "Power of Cacao: Practitioner Training Course" and is required to comply with their ongoing practitioner guidance in order to maintain her registration as a Keith's Cacao Practitioner.

4.4 We have both completed Safeguarding Children & Adults Level 3 and have a clear extended children and adult Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

4.5 If we were removed from working with anyone due to safeguarding concerns about our professional conduct or if we were convicted of a criminal offence, we are obligated to make a referral to the DBS and inform HCPC. We would also be required to inform Devon Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if the incident involved a child.

4.6 We have both familiarised ourselves with this Policy before making any client contact. we are aware that we have a duty of care to act upon any safeguarding concerns that present an immediate risk to someone's safety, where a child is deemed at risk or in relation to certain criminal activity.

4.7 We complete a risk assessment with each client either prior to them attending either a group sound healing session or cacao ceremony via the questions that are asked on our online booking form and follow up as required. All participants of group sessions are also required to read our booking policy and confirm they agree to this before their space is confirmed, which includes a link to our safeguarding policy.

4.8 Any client attending an individual sound healing session or cacao ceremony will also be asked risk assessment questions and additionally asked to provide GP and emergency contact information. Clients receiving individual support of this nature will also be provided with a link to our safeguarding policy.

4.9 We complete a risk assessment for psychotherapy clients during the initial session, which includes taking GP and emergency contact information. We also ask all psychotherapy clients to read and sign a psychotherapy agreement prior to beginning any sessions, which includes a link to our safeguarding policy as well as information on our cancellation policy, limitations of our support etc.

## **5. Our professional responsibilities during sessions**

5.1 We will verbally communicate the confidential nature of our psychotherapy sessions as well as our duty of care to share safeguarding concerns at the beginning of such support. We will also ensure clients are aware that we are not an organisation offering crisis support and provide them with the contact details for such support should it be required.

5.2 During group or individual sound healing sessions and cacao ceremonies, knowledge of our safeguarding policy will be assumed if a

client has agreed to our booking policy, but will be explained verbally if necessary or on request.

5.3 We will examine the room used for in person sessions to safeguard clients from potential physical or accidental harm. We will risk assess where possible during online sessions for the potential of physical or accidental harm.

5.4 We will challenge inappropriate or harmful behaviour of other professionals and report these when appropriate.

5.5 We will be present throughout the entirety of each session. In the unlikely event that we need to step out of the room, we will try to ensure this is minimal and risk assess before leaving the room to help ensure there is no immediate risk of harm.

5.6 We will be mindful of the materials we use in sessions to ensure they are appropriate for each individual client or group.

5.7 All personal information and clinical notes we process are stored in accordance with our privacy policy which can be located at <https://www.elkandether.co.uk/privacy-policy>. All clinical notes are confidential except when the therapist has a safeguarding concern regarding the client.

## **6. Our professional responsibilities relating to safeguarding concerns**

6.1 We acknowledge that safeguarding concerns can arise through conversation in sessions, through our observation during sessions or through communications between ourselves and clients outside of sessions.

6.2 If a client is exposed to imminent danger that is life threatening or has active suicidal ideation that they intend to act upon, we would call 999 to ensure their safety immediately.

6.3 If a client is exposed to imminent danger or active self-harming that is not life threatening but still presents a significant risk of harm, we may call 111 or contact their GP and/or emergency contact to ensure their ongoing safety.

6.4 If a client discloses criminal activity that we have a legal obligation to report, such as drug trafficking, terrorism activity or money laundering, we are required by law to report this to the police without your consent or knowledge.

6.5 If a client discloses information that relates to the safeguarding of a child, we have a duty of care to report this information to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as well as any other relevant professionals and/or organisations that are relevant to the child and their situation.

6.6 If a client discloses safeguarding concerns and is deemed a vulnerable adult or the information shared is in relation to a vulnerable adult, we may be required to inform other relevant professionals and/or organisations as well as their GP and/or emergency contact.

6.7 If a client discloses information that is of concern but they do not currently appear at immediate or significant risk of harm, and are not deemed a child or vulnerable adult, we may work with them to help maintain and support their safety as opposed to breaking confidentiality in the first instance. This may include actions such as, but is not limited to: creating a safety plan, providing them with crisis support and specialist support contact details, encouraging them to speak to other professionals and those they trust and discussing their situation in a supervisory setting without sharing their confidential details. Examples of times when this may be appropriate include, but is not limited to: suicidal ideation without intent to act; historical suicidal ideation that is not currently present; self-harming ideation without intent to act or that does not currently cause significant harm; historical self-harming behaviour without intent to act; a potentially abusive situation in which the client does not feel at immediate risk. We reserve the right to use our clinical judgement in regard to such situations and may decide we need to break confidentiality to ensure the safety of a client or someone else at any time.

6.8 We will always endeavour to inform our client of such actions in relation to safeguarding; however, we may proceed without their knowledge or permission should we feel it is necessary for their safety or the safety of someone else, or if we have a legal obligation to do so.

*R Harp*

Signed by: Rebecca Harp

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024

*L Harp*

Signed by: Lau Harp

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024