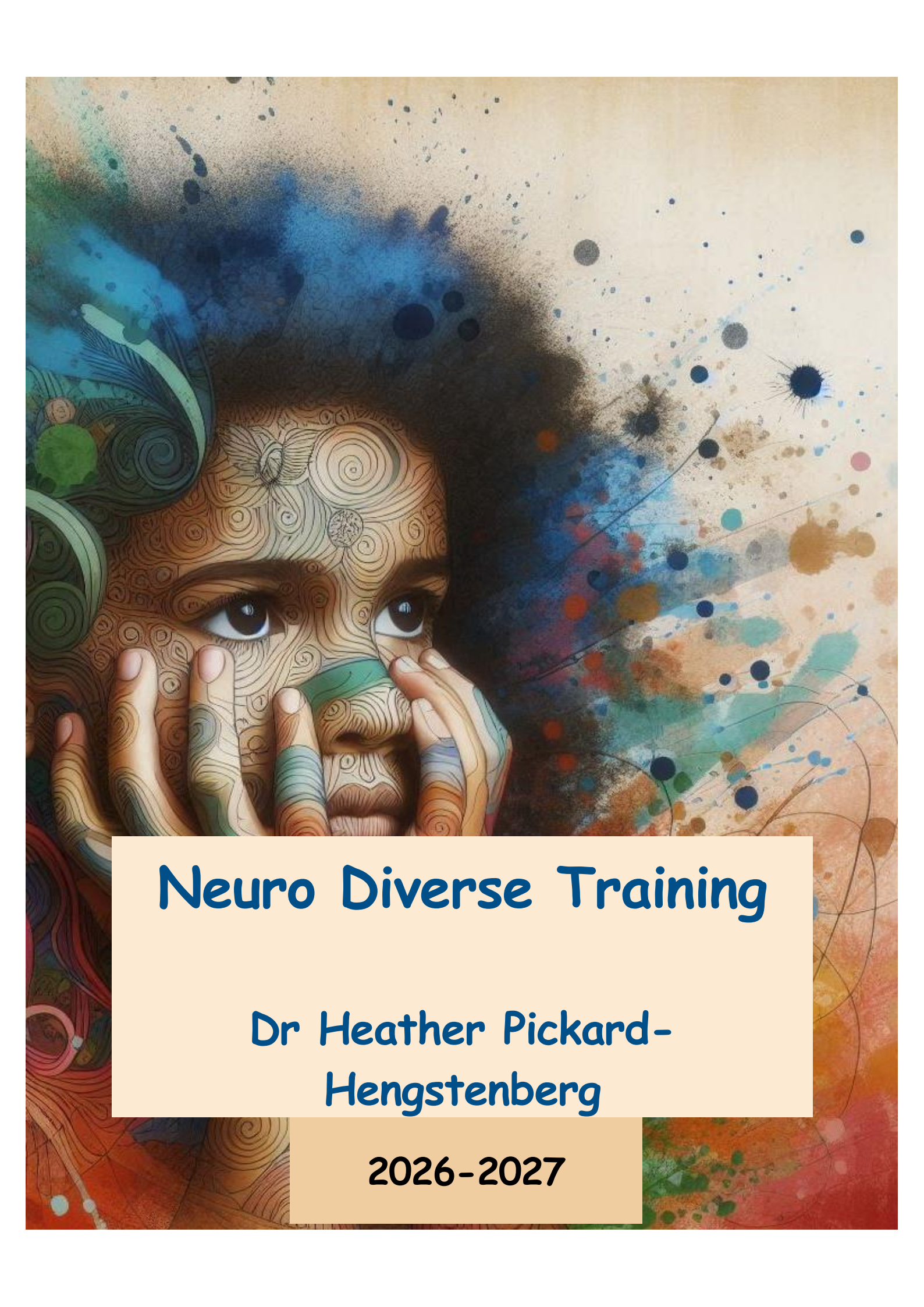




Neuro Diverse Training

Dr Heather Pickard-
Hengstenberg

2026-2027

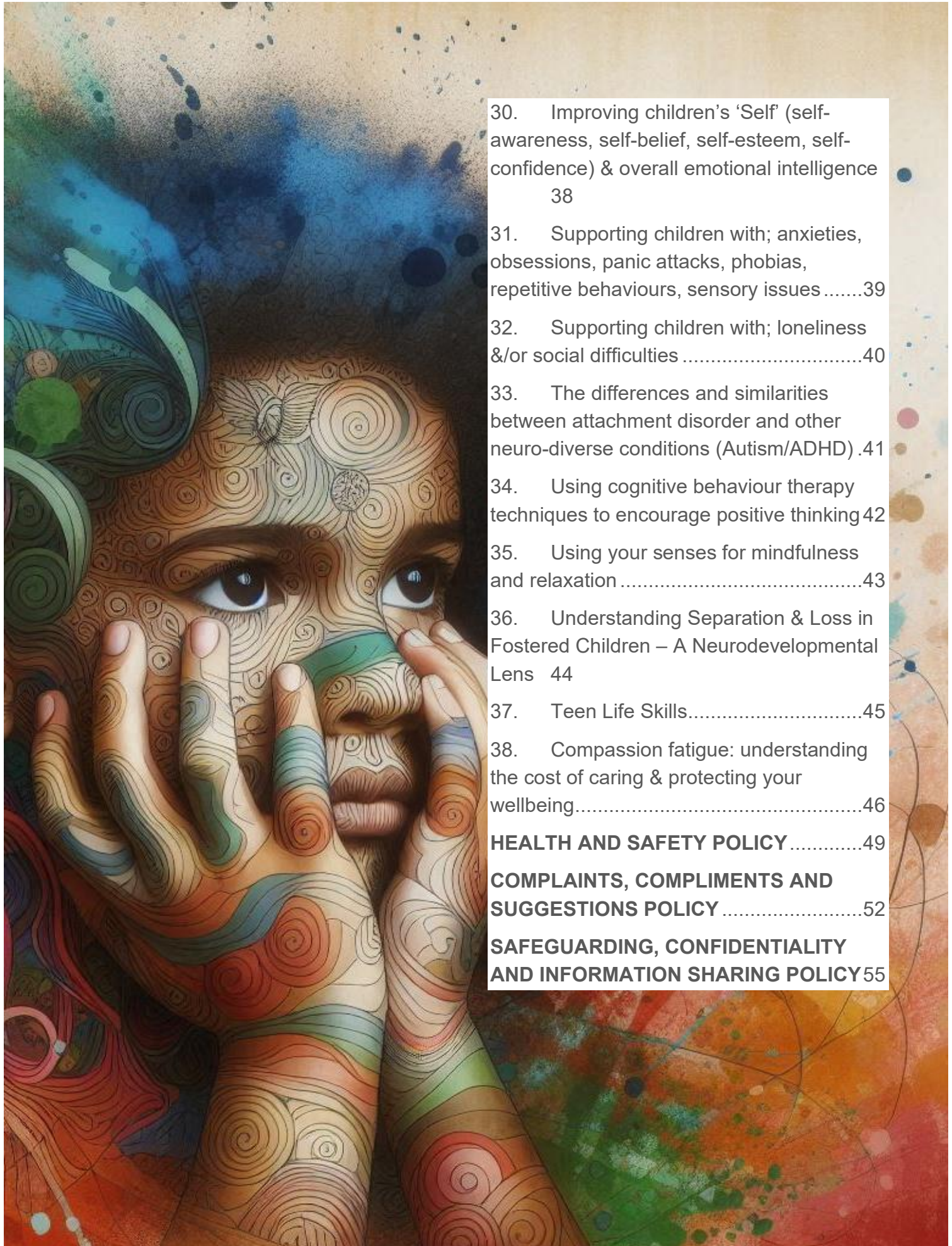


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Introduction



My passion is to support individuals (their families) with and without a neuro-diverse diagnosis to truly understand their difficulties & differences, to positively embrace these so that they can reach their full potential in life. My personal and professional experiences, as well as MSc. and PhD. in this field, have equipped me with the tools to provide wellness support, consultancy, and training throughout the UK to individuals, families, education, and health authorities.

My work experiences are wide ranging: I have been working for 16+ years delivering foster care training, I previously worked as a lecturer, then as an autism practitioner at Swansea University, now continuing as a free-lance neuro-diverse trainer, consultant, wellness Practitioner and writer. My published PhD research is in the process of resulting in published materials which will support day-to-day transitions and transitions from one educational phase to another. I am writing and about to publish several books relating to neuro-diversity.

Currently I deliver foster care training, consultancy and one-to-one neurodiverse wellness practitioner sessions to TACT fostering and others' throughout the UK.

Services & Pricing:

- Virtual Foster Care Training (10.00-12.30): £350 (including all materials)
- Virtual Foster Care Consultancy (2 hour) plus written report (professional letter summarising): £200
- 1:1 Neuro Diverse Wellness Practitioner sessions (1 hour including written summary following every appointment): £50

References are available upon request.

Core foster care training courses (encompassing 'national fostering framework: learning and development targets')

1. ADHD
2. Challenging Behaviours
3. Change & Transitions
4. Child Development
5. Diversity
6. Enabling SEN children to positively communicate and interact
7. Health & Wellbeing
8. Self-regulation & De-escalation
9. Supporting Education and Development
10. Teenage Brain
11. Trauma & Self-harm
12. Understanding Children and Young people's mental health

1. ADHD



During this training the trainee will gain a greater awareness of the; myths, facts and diagnostic criteria of ADHD, it's co-morbidity with other disabilities (e.g. ASD, OCD, DCD, etc.). We will focus on how it feels to have ADHD, through the eyes of a child, the amazing characteristics of this condition that can be enhanced, the techniques that can be used to enable a child to overcome any difficulties that they might have so that they can "reach their full potential"; academically, emotionally, socially & legally (considering their human and legal rights). We will pay particular attention to positive strategies that can be used to help to manage specific challenging behaviours that often occurs as a result of this condition. We will conclude with all the advice and support that is available for a child with ADHD and their family.

2. Challenging Behaviours



Encompassing the learning framework: Understanding Challenging Behaviour and Promoting Positive Strategies

The trainee will:

- Be aware of what is expected behaviour for children and young people at different stages of development and to consider why children might behave in certain ways
- Develop practical skills in behaviour identification and strategies to support the longevity and stability of placements
- Understand the need to adapt their behaviour and communication in order to influence that of the children and young people they are caring for
- Understand the need to look after themselves in order to be able to respond appropriately to the children and young people they are caring for

This training will enable the foster carer to:

- Identify why the child in placement might be behaving in a certain way and consider the most appropriate response to that.
- Describe how they are positively promoting the behaviour of the child in placement.

3. Change & Transitions



Encompassing the learning framework: Transitions for children and young people

The trainee will:

- Gain a greater awareness about the impact of change on children and young people

This training will enable the foster carer to:

- Reflect upon how previous transitions will impact on subsequent ones
- Consider how this can effect day to day changes such as starting school or going on holiday
- Consider changes in placement and ways to prepare for these
- Examine how a foster carer can help a child or young person manage such transitions
- Describe how they will help the child in placement to manage the changes in their life, taking in account their past experiences.

4. Child Development



Encompassing the learning framework: Child Development

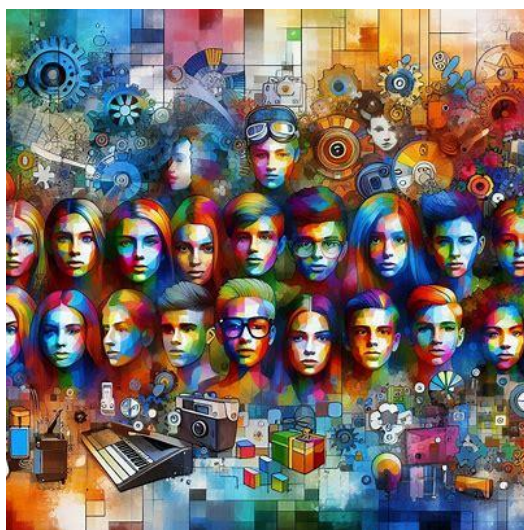
The trainee will:

- Gain knowledge of key child development milestones for children and young people (0-18)
- Explore the link between play and development
- Consider the factors that can delay or interrupt a child's development (e.g. poor early years experiences, the impact of trauma and nutrition).
- Understand the need to meet the child's development stage rather than their chronological age
- Consider approaches that they can use to support children and young people's development

This training will enable the foster carer to:

Identify the stage of development of the child in placement and the impact of their past experiences upon that. The foster carer will be able to use this knowledge to adapt their parenting and care giving approach.

5. Diversity



Encompassing the learning framework: Diversity

The trainee will:

- ❖ **Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, respect & the law**
 - The Equality Act 2010, Human rights act 1998 & The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (16+)
 - Hate Crimes
- ❖ **Equality Act 2010: Protected characteristics and individuals' rights**
 - Age, Disability, Marriage, Pregnancy, Race, Religion and belief, Sex, Gender, Sexual orientation
- ❖ **Human Rights Act 1998: Fairness, Respect, Equality, Dignity, Autonomy**
 - How to be mindful of 'FREDA'
- ❖ **Discrimination, Harassment & Victimisation**
 - Discrimination: Direct (including by association & perception) and Indirect.
 - Harassment
 - Victimisation
 - Unconscious bias, prejudice, stereotype and assumptions
- ❖ **Hate Crimes (& Hate incident)**
 - Hate Crime & the law
 - Types of Hate Crimes
 - Reporting a hate crime

This training will enable the foster carer to:

- Learn and reflect on the varied backgrounds that children, young people and their families originate from
- Learn about legislation relevant to this subject
- Promote each child and young person's uniqueness
- Discuss the different forms of discrimination and consider strategies to address
- Discuss their understanding of discrimination and evidence their ability to promote anti-discriminatory practice

6. Enabling SEN children to positively communication and interact



Encompassing the learning framework: Child Development - All Wales Induction Framework for Health and Social Care:

- Section 2: Principles and values of health and social care (children and young people)/subsection 7 - Communication
- Section 4: Health and Well-being (children and young people)/subsection 1. Wellbeing/subsection, 2. Factors that impact upon health and wellbeing/ subsection, 3. Positive environments for the health, well-being and development of children and young people/subsection, 5. Speech, language and communication

The trainee will:

- Understanding Challenging Behaviour and
- Promoting Positive Strategies
- Living with Teenagers

This training will enable the foster carer to:

During this training the trainee will gain a greater awareness of how specific disabilities/S.E.N. may impair a child's ability to positively communicate &/or socially interact with others. We will focus in depth on the varied forms of communication (verbal and non-verbal) and the positive strategies that we can use with a child to enable them to overcome any difficulties that they may have in terms of communication &/or social interaction.

7. Health & Wellbeing



Encompassing the learning framework - Promoting good health & wellbeing - Caring for the whole child:

The trainee will:

- Advance their knowledge of the health outcomes for looked after children and young people
- Increase their understanding of specific health topics such as mental health
- Develop their understanding of their role as the foster carer in promoting the health and wellbeing of looked after children
- Gain awareness of their responsibilities under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

This training will enable the foster carer to:

Identify the ways in which they promote the health and wellbeing of the child in placement in accordance with their care and support plan.

8. Self-regulation & De-escalation



Encompassing the learning framework: Self-regulation & De-escalation

The trainee will:

This training will focus on what self-regulation means, how the brain makes this possible, why some individuals find it difficult to regulate their emotions and why it is important. We will then move on to focus on a pro-active strategy to teach your child the skills needed to self-regulate their emotional responses. Finally, we will look at the most appropriate reactive response strategies and de-escalation techniques to use to diffuse emotional outbursts and or meltdowns.

9. Supporting Education & Development



Encompassing the learning framework: Supporting Education & Development

- Identifying the key difficulties that may affect the education of children and young people in care
- Exploring the impact of unmet attachment needs and trauma on the ability of children to achieve their educational potential
- Identifying ways to encourage and support children and young people with their education (including early years, further education, training) and help them overcome setbacks

The trainee will:

Identify the ways in which they promote the education of the child in placement.

10. Teenage Brain



Encompassing the learning framework: Living with teenagers

- Understanding teenage brain development, puberty, and the impact on behaviour
- Exploring a range of communication skills that can be used to maintain relationships, for example negotiating rules and boundaries
- Understanding the importance of social development and presentation in adolescence
- Exploring how to help teenagers manage transitions and access appropriate support

The trainee will:

Describe the needs of teenagers with increased insight into how they will meet them.

During this training the trainee will gain a greater awareness of how a teenager's brain changes neurologically during puberty and the effects that this has on them in terms of:

- Their emotional state, focussing in particular on sudden difficulties with empathy
- Their behaviour state, focusing on why they begin to take more risks
- Their general mental health, focusing on; addictions, depression, self-harm
- Their sleeping patterns, why a regular sleep pattern is essential

Throughout this training particular attention will be placed on improving understanding of the teenage brain, from their perspective, and the positive steps that can be implemented to enable them to achieve their full potential.

11. Trauma & Self-Harm



Encompassing the learning framework:

- Child Development
- Supporting Education and Development
- Advanced Attachment and Trauma
- Domestic Abuse
- Understanding Children and Young People's Mental Health

All Wales Induction Framework for Health and Social Care:

- Section 5: Professional practice as a health and social care worker
- Section 6: Safeguarding individuals

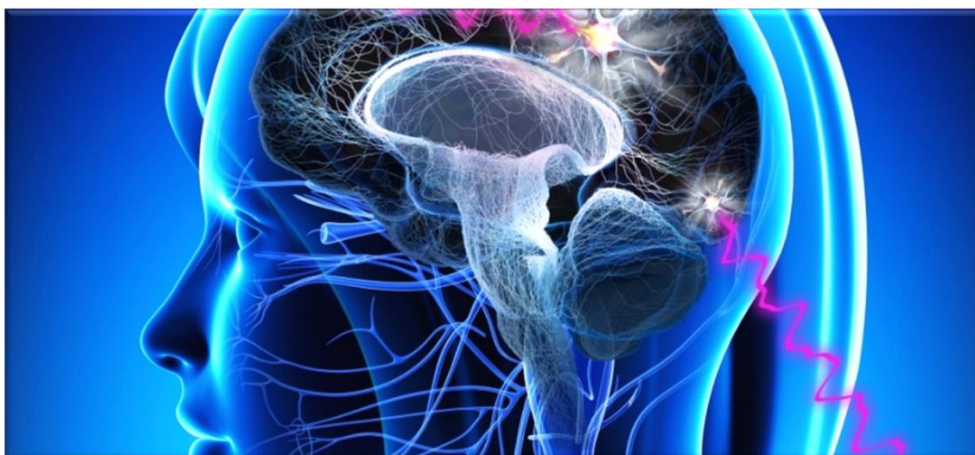
The trainee will:

During this training the trainee will gain a greater awareness of how the effects of trauma (abuse & neglect) can result in them self-harming. We will consider the following:

- The self-harm spectrum in terms of behaviour (Sleeping, eating, exercising, self-injury, addiction, etc.)
- What triggers self-harming behaviours
- The urges that triggers often cause

Throughout this training particular attention will be placed on improving understanding of what self-harm means, how to spot the signs, the reasons why an individual self-harms (from their perspective) and the positive steps that can be implemented to enable them to recover.

12. Understanding Children & Young people's mental health



Encompassing the learning framework:

- Increase knowledge of specific mental health topics such as self-harm, eating disorders and suicidal thoughts
- Understand the role of the foster carer in promoting the mental health and well-being of looked after children
- Gain awareness of the different types of support available for children and young people who are experiencing mental health difficulties

The trainee will:

Describe what they will do to support children and young people facing mental health issues.

Neuro Diverse Training Courses

13. Children with NDD/ASD and sensory issues with food
14. Eating disorders & disordered eating
15. Critical life skills that a child needs for adulthood
16. Enabling children to be assertive & problem solve when faced with; challenges, confrontation, issues, mistakes.
17. Enabling children to live healthily (the importance of exercise, nutrition & sleep).
18. Enabling children to positively change through the use of 'motivational interviewing' techniques
19. Enabling children to positively manage change and transitions
20. Enabling children to reach their full potential
21. Enabling children/teens with social (awareness, interaction &/or understanding) difficulties to positively communicate and socially interact
22. Enabling S.E.N. children to; plan, organise themselves and learn.
23. Encouraging your child to be independent and overcome executive functioning difficulties (difficulties with the concept of time, organisation, multi-tasking, remembering, planning and problem-solving)
24. Energy: balancing your day-to-day life and improving your wellbeing
25. Holistic understanding of A.S.C./Autistic Spectrum condition through the child's eyes & appropriate positive strategies.
26. Holistic understanding of sensory processing disorder (S.P.D.) through the child's eyes & appropriate positive strategies
27. Holistic understanding of sleep problems through the child's eyes & appropriate positive strategies
28. How the results of trauma (abuse & neglect) can result in self-harm

Neuro Diverse Training 2026-2027

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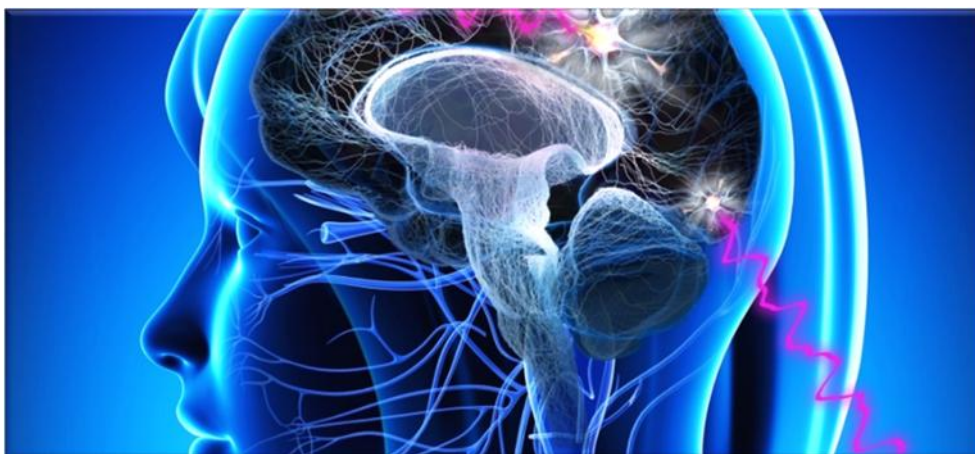
- 29. How trauma impacts the child in terms of their neurology, 'self' identity and over all well-being.
- 30. Improving children's 'Self' (self- awareness, self-belief, self-esteem, self-confidence) & overall emotional intelligence.
- 31. Supporting children with; anxieties, obsessions, panic attacks, phobias, repetitive behaviours, sensory issues.
- 32. Supporting children with; loneliness &/or social difficulties.
- 33. The differences and similarities between attachment disorder and other neuro-diverse conditions (Autism/ADHD)
- 34. Using cognitive behaviour therapy techniques to encourage positive thinking
- 35. Using your senses for mindfulness and relaxation
- 36. Understanding Separation & Loss in Fostered Children - A Neurodevelopmental Lens
- 37. Teen Life Skills

13. Children with NDD/ASD and sensory issues with food



This training will focus on the reasoning behind a child having issues with food, from their perspective. Looking at children, whether diagnosed or not, presenting with neuro-developmental disorders (NDD), such as autism, ADHD, dyspraxia/DCD (developmental co-ordination disorder), who have issues with food. We will focus on their sensory system differences and how these may influence eating habits and or unusual eating behaviours. We will consider co-occurring conditions such as OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder) and mental health, and the part that this might also play. We will then discuss how you can empathetically support the child to form a positive relationship with food. Finally, we will touch on professional support services that might need to be considered if 'issues with food' develop into to eating disorders.

14. Eating disorders & disordered eating



This training will focus on the reasoning behind a child having issues with food, from their perspective. Looking at children, whether diagnosed or not, with an eating disorder such as; anorexia, bulimia, binge eating, avoidant restricted food intake, PICA. We will also consider children, whether diagnosed or not, presenting with neuro-developmental disorders (NDD), such as autism, ADHD, dyspraxia/DCD (developmental co-ordination disorder), who have issues with food. We will focus on their sensory system differences and how these may influence eating habits and or unusual eating behaviours. We will consider co-occurring conditions such as OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder) and mental health, and the part that this might also play. We will then discuss how you can empathetically support the child to form a positive relationship with food. Finally, we will touch on professional support services that might need to be considered when 'issues with food' turn to eating disorders.

15. Critical life skills that a child needs for adulthood



During this training the trainee will gain a greater awareness of the critical life skills needed for adulthood:

- Behaviour
- Mobility
- Money management
- Personal care
- Physical and mental health
- Social
- Work habits

We will focus on the barriers that some children face transitioning into adulthood, how to effectively support any difficulties, and support services that may be available. We will pay particular attention to positive parenting strategies that can be used to enable the child to learn the necessary critical life skills so the child can reach their full potential (whatever that may be) as they transition into adulthood.

16. Enabling children to be assertive & problem solve when faced with; challenges, confrontation, issues, mistakes



During this training the trainee will gain a greater awareness of the importance of a child being able to be assertive and be able to problem solve when faced with; challenges, confrontation, issues &/or mistakes, in relation to a child's; academic, emotional and social life. We will look at the reasons why a child might have difficulties being assertive &/or problem solving and the positive techniques that we can use with them to enable them to be assertive &/or problem solve. We will then look at examples of: challenges, confrontation, issues & mistakes, that foster carer's children are currently experiencing and will consider appropriate positive techniques that could be used in each specific example.

17. Enabling children to live healthily (the importance of exercise, nutrition & sleep)



Exercise

During this training the trainee will gain a greater awareness of the importance of; exercise, nutrition and sleep, for the child's; physical health, mental health, growth and overall development. We will focus on why exercising and taking part in physical activities is sometimes difficult for children with; disabilities, S.E.N., suffering from trauma, etc., and, with this in mind, ways we can encourage them to take part. We will pay particular attention to the importance of developing fine motor skills (hand eye co-ordination) and major motor skills (body co-ordination) for the body and mind. We will consider appropriate positive techniques that we can use with a child to encourage them to be active. We will consider the importance of your child's mental health, why a healthy mind is sometimes difficult from their point of view and ways to encourage positive mental health in a fun way that they'll enjoy.

Nutrition

We will discuss the importance of nutrition and why eating/drinking healthily is sometimes difficult for a child from their perspective. We will focus on the ways that you can teach a child about healthy eating and the importance of water, in a manner that is relevant to them.

Sleep

Finally we will discuss the importance of sleeping a 'reasonable' number of hours per night and why this is sometimes difficult for a child from their perspective. We will focus on how food & exercise can help or hinder sleep and the positive techniques that you can use with a child to enable them to have a healthy sleeping regime.

18. Enabling children to positively change through the use of 'motivational interviewing' techniques

During this training the trainee will gain a greater awareness of what 'Motivational Interviewing' techniques involve. They will learn the key principles for positive behavioural change to take place, the techniques that they can use with their foster child to encourage this and why the following are vital for positive change to happen:

- Building positive rapport with their foster child by; expressing empathy towards them, their needs, feelings, perspective, etc., and by becoming more aware of how difficult and stressful change/transitions can be for certain children in their everyday lives.
- Supporting their foster child's 'self-belief' that they have the capacity to change (self-efficacy), focusing on their success, highlighting their skills and strengths to be able to succeed in positively changing, in turn enabling them to have 'hope' in their future. As well as the importance of praise/positive encouragement so that we reinforce changed behaviour and the overall well-being of the child.
- Managing their foster child's resistance to positive change through a non-confrontational approach using de-escalation techniques when necessary.
- Developing their foster child's ability to examine their discrepancies, any mismatch between where they currently are and where they want to be, as well as their future goals.
- Motivating their foster child to want to positively change through the use of: Open-ended questioning techniques, Affirmations (recognising strengths), Reflection (reflective listening and responding) and Positive summarising (recapping what's been discussed/occurred)

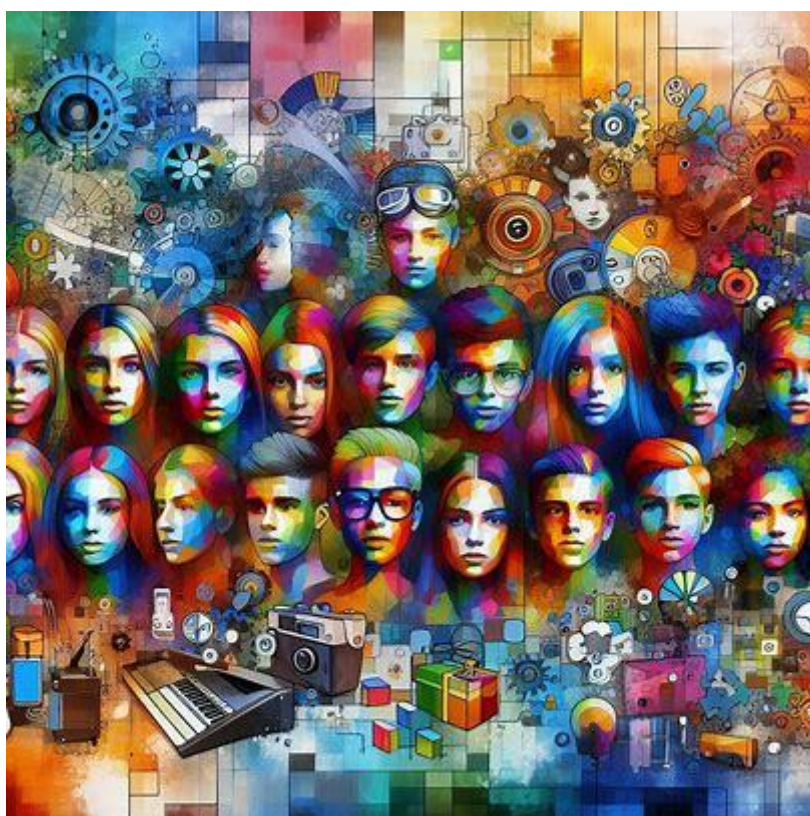
Finally, the trainee will learn about the change cycle, the importance of facilitating change/transition, rather than dictating it, by taking into account the following essential things that a child needs in order to be able to manage change/transition; hope in their future, appropriate information/help, the ability to change, as well as the ability to set their own positive goals. We will look at the strategies which will encourage a child to use "change talk", through a variety of simple conversational techniques, how 'Change Talk' is the pathway to a child's commitment to change, being ready to change and take the important steps needed for positive change to begin.

19. Enabling children to positively manage change and transitions



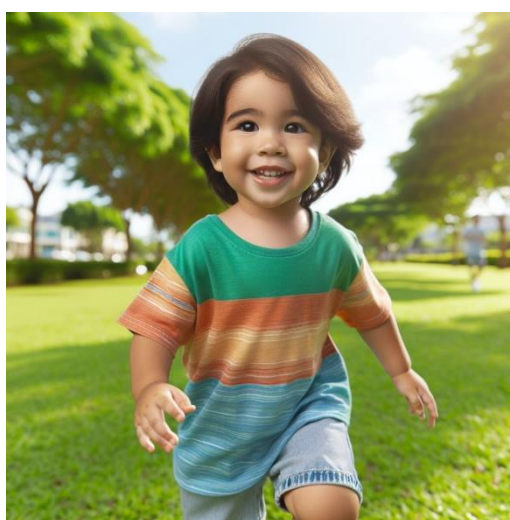
During this training the trainee will gain a greater awareness of how difficult and stressful change/transitions can be for certain children in their everyday life, particularly children on the Autistic spectrum. We will look at the reasons why a child might react in a challenging way to change/transitions, how we can take into account their point of view and make the overall process easier for them. We will pay particular attention to the importance of helping a child to learn specific key skills that will help them to cope and manage the features of change/transitions, the: what, where, when, how and who. We will focus on positively facilitating change/transition, rather than dictating it, by taking into account the following essential things that a child needs in order to be able to manage change/transition; hope in their future, appropriate information/help, the ability to change, as well as the ability to set their own positive goals. Finally we will focus on specific questioning techniques that will enable the trainee to positively influence a child's decision to change &/or manage transitions as well as learning about the techniques we can use with a child to help to reduce their anxieties during this process. Finally, we will look at the importance of praise and positive encouragement so that we reinforce the changed behaviour and overall well-being of the child.

20. Enabling children to reach their full potential



During this training the trainee will gain a greater awareness of; what is meant by an individual being able to “reach their full potential” and the factors that may prevent this from happening. We will focus on positive techniques that we can use with a child to ensure that they are provided with the opportunities to “reach their full potential” and the positive strategies that we can use with them to enable this to happen. We will pay particular attention to the child’s human and legal rights to be able to “reach their full potential” and the measures that may need to be put in place in school to ensure that this happens.

21. Enabling children/teens with social (awareness, interaction &/or understanding) difficulties to positively communicate and socially interact



During this training the trainee will gain a greater awareness of the root causes of a child's/teen's social (awareness, interaction &/or understanding) difficulties. How abuse, neglect, specific disabilities (S.E.N.s), &/or trauma can have a negative impact on these areas. We will look at the negative consequences that often occur when a child/teen experiences such difficulties, for example: anxiety, inappropriate behaviour, etc. We will focus in depth on how to support children/teens having social difficulties, the importance of enabling them to learn how to communicate (verbal & non-verbally) appropriately as well as the positive strategies that can be used to encourage them to communicate and socially interact. Throughout this training particular attention will be placed on the importance of improving a child's/teen's: Emotional intelligence, Life skills, 'Self' (self-awareness, self-belief, self-esteem, self-confidence), and how each of these areas influence a child's/teen's ability to positively communicate and socially interact.

22. Enabling S.E.N. children to; plan, organise themselves and learn



During this training the trainee will gain a greater awareness of how specific disabilities/S.E.N. may impair a child's ability to; plan, organise themselves & learn. We will consider the important role we play in enabling a child to reach their full potential; academically, emotionally and socially, by improving our understanding of their conditions and difficulties. Finally, we will focus in depth on relevant positive strategies and teaching techniques that we can use with a child, which are specific to each child's individual difficulties.

23. Encouraging your child to be independent and overcome executive functioning difficulties (difficulties with the concept of time, organisation, multi-tasking, remembering, planning and problem-solving)



During this training the trainee will gain a greater awareness of executive functioning difficulties such as:

- Managing Time (the concept of time)
- Organising themselves
- Managing tasks/multi-tasking
- Remembering information
- Planning
- Problem solving

We will focus on why some children have executive functioning difficulties, how to effectively support these difficulties, and any additional support services that should be provided to the child by their school/college. We will pay particular attention to positive parenting strategies that can be used to enable the child to overcome their executive functioning difficulties, improving their outcomes; academically, emotionally, socially, so that they can reach their full potential.

24. Energy: balancing your day-to-day life and improving your wellbeing



This training will focus on you. Starting with: Day-to-day stressors, energy takers, what these might be and how these take energy from you (mentally and physically). Day-to-day energy givers, what these are and how to ensure that these become a natural part of your day. We will then discuss techniques to ensure that you balance energy taking activities and energy giving activities to optimise your overall health and wellbeing.

25. Holistic understanding of A.S.C./Autistic Spectrum condition through the child's eyes & appropriate positive strategies



During this training the trainee will gain a greater awareness of individuals with Autistic Spectrum Condition, their areas of difficulties (communication, social, obsessive interests & repetitive behaviours). We will focus on the uniqueness of each individual in terms of:

- Capabilities & needs
- How ASC is usually linked to other conditions
- Behavioural characteristics associated with ASC and how to positively respond to these
- How to communicate effectively with them

Finally, we will discuss the importance of person-centred support in terms of:

- Structure & routines
- Others (school, family members, social workers, etc.)
- Formal/informal support networks

to ensure that the individual's learning and mental health needs are fully understood so that they can reach their full potential.

26. Holistic understanding of sensory processing disorder (S.P.D.) through the child's eyes & appropriate positive strategies



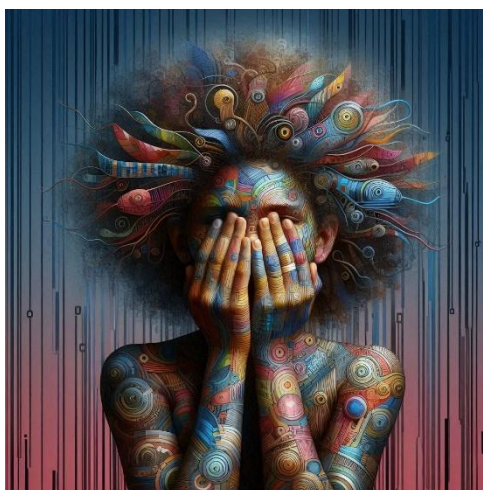
During this training the trainee will gain a greater awareness of the; myths, facts and diagnostic criteria of S.P.D., it's co-morbidity with other disabilities especially A.S.D. (as well as: A.D.H.D., O.C.D., D.C.D., etc.). We will focus on how it feels to have S.P.D. by viewing it through the eyes of a child, looking at how the sensory system works (the senses, proprioceptive & vestibular systems), paying particular attention to the amazing characteristics of this condition that can be enhanced, the techniques that can be used to enable the child to overcome any difficulties that they might have so that they can "reach their full potential"; academically, emotionally, socially & legally (considering their human and legal rights). We will pay particular attention to positive strategies that can be used to help to manage specific challenging behaviour that often occur as a result of this condition. We will conclude with all the advice and support that is available for a child with S.P.D. and their family.

27. Holistic understanding of sleep problems through the child's eyes & appropriate positive strategies



During this training the trainee will gain a greater awareness about the importance of sleep and why a child may experience difficulties sleeping (e.g. due to A.D.H.D., A.S.D., S.P.D., trauma, diet, exercise, stress...). We will focus in depth on the positive strategies and techniques that can be used with a child to enable them to sleep better by taking into consideration external and internal factors related to sleeping (e.g. the sleeping environment, stimulants, A.D.H.D. medication stopping the production of melatonin, etc.).

28. How the results of trauma (abuse & neglect) can result in self-harm



During this training the trainee will gain a greater awareness of how the effects of trauma (abuse & neglect) can result in them self-harming. We will consider the following:

- The self-harm spectrum in terms of behaviour (Sleeping, eating, exercising, self-injury, addiction, etc.)
- What triggers self-harming behaviours
- The urges that triggers often cause

Throughout this training particular attention will be placed on improving understanding of what self-harm means, how to spot the signs, the reasons why an individual self-harms (from their perspective) and the positive steps that can be implemented to enable them to recover.

29. How trauma impacts the child in terms of their neurology, 'self' identity and over all well-being



During this training the trainee will consider what trauma means, including lack of proper attachment, the effects that this has on the developing brain during key developmental stages and the neurological changes that occur. We will focus on ways in which traumatic stress manifests from child to child, possible reasons for differences (e.g. genetics, other conditions), the brain's reaction to persistent stress, and the resulting symptomology (presentation). We will consider risk and protective factors, the impact of trauma on long term physical health/well-being as well as the power of neuroplasticity to heal. Finally, we will conclude with the impact of trauma on 'Self' identity (the false self, victimhood thinking, passive-aggressive and passivity), psychological issues resulting from childhood trauma, the importance of mindfulness for general well-being and how we can support a traumatised child (individual).

30. Improving children's 'Self' (self-awareness, self-belief, self-esteem, self-confidence) & overall emotional intelligence



During this training the trainee will gain a greater awareness of what 'self' skills are (e.g. self-awareness, self-esteem) and why it is vital for a child to positively develop these skills in order for them to live a happy/healthy/successful life. We will also focus on the importance of a child developing their emotional intelligence which is another important element needed for a positive life. Particular attention will be paid to positive strategies that we can use with a child to enable them to develop each of their 'self' skills and their overall emotional intelligence.

31. Supporting children with; anxieties, obsessions, panic attacks, phobias, repetitive behaviours, sensory issues



During this training the trainee will gain a greater awareness of the facts & myths about:

Panic Attacks

We will focus on how it feels for the individual suffering with a panic attack, what is really happening inside their body/mind (negative associated thoughts) and the ways we can positively help them to avoid/prevent future attacks. We will conclude with all the advice and support that is available for an individual suffering with panic attacks.

Anxiety

We will focus on how it feels for the individual, what is really happening inside their body/mind (negative associated thoughts) and the ways that we can positively help an individual with anxiety. We will conclude with all the advice and support that is available for an individual suffering with anxiety.

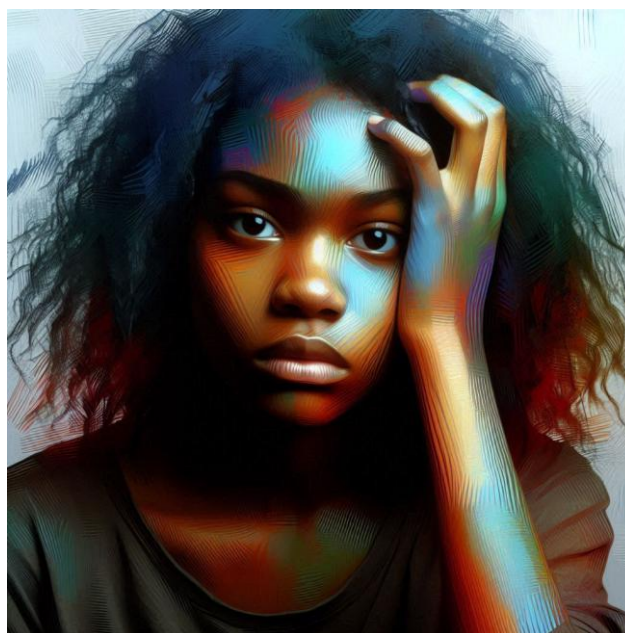
Obsessions &/or Phobias

We will focus on how it feels for the individual, conditions that are usually linked with this such as; A.S.D., O.C.D., etc., what's really going on inside their body/mind (negative associated thoughts) and the ways that we can positively help them with their obsessions &/or phobias. We will conclude with all the advice and support that is available for an individual suffering with obsessions &/or phobias.

Repetitive behaviours &/or sensory issues

We will discuss the facts and myths about repetitive behaviours & sensory issues. We will focus on how it feels for the individual, conditions that are usually linked with this such as; A.S.D., O.C.D., etc., what's really going on inside their; body (the sensory system), mind (negative associated thoughts), and the ways that we can positively help them with their repetitive behaviours &/or sensory issues. We will conclude with all the advice and support that is available for an individual suffering with repetitive behaviours &/or sensory issues.

32. Supporting children with; loneliness &/or social difficulties



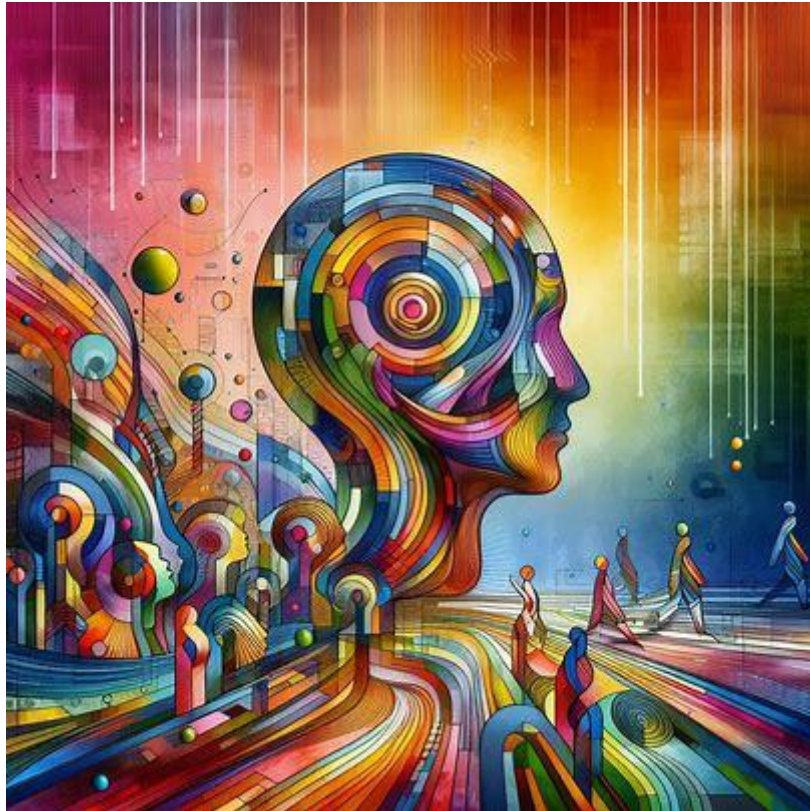
During this training the trainee will gain a greater awareness of what loneliness really feels like, what causes someone to feel so alone and techniques that we can use to help an individual to cope with these feelings. We will focus on how a person might feel who has social difficulties, techniques that we can use to enable them to learn appropriate skills that they need for social interaction and to encourage them to interact with others. Particular attention will be placed on the appropriate skills that are needed for social interaction and the importance of noticing the signs when loneliness may become a more serious mental health condition. We will conclude with all the advice and support that is available for an individual suffering with loneliness &/or social difficulties.

33. The differences and similarities between attachment disorder and other neuro-diverse conditions (Autism/ADHD)



This training course is designed to deepen participants' understanding of the neurological profiles of children with attachment disorder, Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC), and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Trainees will explore the unique and overlapping features of these conditions, with a focus on how they influence a child's behaviour, emotional responses, and capacity to learn. Through comparative analysis, participants will identify key similarities and differences across the three neurodevelopmental conditions. The course will also provide practical, positive strategies for managing challenging behaviours that often arise due to neurological differences. Additionally, we will examine issues surrounding diagnosis and misdiagnosis, the potential benefits or drawbacks of diagnostic 'labels', and discuss whether and how a child's neurological functioning can be positively influenced through targeted interventions and support strategies.

34. Using cognitive behaviour therapy techniques to encourage positive thinking



This training will focus on how you think. Identify and reframing dysfunctional thinking patterns into positive thoughts through CBT techniques that you can use to help you to positively manage day-to-day stressors.

35. Using your senses for mindfulness and relaxation



This training will focus on your sensory system, any differences or difficulties that you may have and how these may influence day-to-day anxiety/stress levels. We will then discuss how you can use your senses for relaxation and to improve your overall wellbeing.

36. Understanding Separation & Loss in Fostered Children – A Neurodevelopmental Lens



This training session will explore the complex emotional, behavioural, and neurological effects of separation and loss on foster children. Participants will gain insight into how these experiences shape a child's development, with particular focus on how age, developmental stage, and neurodiversity influence the way loss is processed and expressed. The course will help professionals identify key signs of unresolved trauma and loss, and equip them with trauma-informed, empathy-based strategies to support healing and strengthen secure attachments. In addition, the training will address the emotional needs of carers and birth children when children move on from their care and provide guidance on supporting foster children through transitions and the challenges of separation.

37. Teen Life Skills



This four-session teen life skills course is designed to empower young people with the emotional, social, practical, and financial tools they need to thrive as they move towards adulthood. Each session runs for two hours and combines fun, interactive activities with real-world learning to ensure teens stay engaged and feel confident using their new skills in everyday life.

The course is divided into four core sections:

Session 1: Emotional & Self-Management Skills - Teens will learn to identify and express their feelings, develop strategies for calming down when stressed, ask for help when needed, set personal goals, manage anger or frustration, and build confidence in themselves.

Session 2: Social & Communication Skills - This session focuses on helping teens connect with others by practising how to introduce themselves, make conversation, read body language, handle disagreements respectfully, and understand what it means to be a supportive, trustworthy friend.

Session 3: Independent Living Skills - Practical and hands-on, this session helps teens develop essential life skills such as cooking a basic meal, doing laundry, cleaning their room, planning their day effectively, and navigating public transport safely and confidently.

Session 4: Money & Responsibility Skills - Teens will explore how to budget their money, earn income through small jobs or opportunities, and understand how to open and manage a bank account—laying the groundwork for responsible financial habits.

Every participant will receive their own Teen Life Skills Journal, a personalised and easy-to-use workbook that includes session summaries, reflective activities, goal-setting prompts, and space to record progress. This journal not only supports learning during the course but also serves as a lifelong resource teens can return to as they grow.

38. Compassion fatigue: understanding the cost of caring & protecting your wellbeing



This course is for those working in fostering, social care and helping professions often dedicate themselves to supporting others through some of the most difficult experiences of their lives. While this work can be incredibly rewarding, the emotional impact of continually caring for vulnerable children, young people and families can take a significant toll on our own wellbeing.

This engaging and thought-provoking training explores the concept of Compassion Fatigue - sometimes referred to as the "cost of caring." Participants will gain a deeper understanding of what compassion fatigue is, why it develops, how it differs from stress and burnout, and the impact that repeated exposure to trauma, distress and adversity can have on the brain, nervous system and emotional wellbeing.

The course will help participants recognise the early warning signs of compassion fatigue in themselves and others, understand the effects of secondary trauma and vicarious trauma, and explore why highly caring, empathic individuals can be particularly vulnerable. Through interactive discussions, reflective exercises,

Neuro Diverse Training 2026-2027

Dr Heather Pickard-Hengstenberg

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practical activities and real-life examples, participants will learn effective strategies for protecting their own wellbeing without losing the compassion that makes them effective carers and professionals. The course focuses on developing healthy boundaries, recognising personal triggers, strengthening resilience, building supportive networks and creating sustainable self-care practices that can be applied both professionally and personally.

Participants will leave with a greater understanding of how to maintain their emotional wellbeing, support colleagues who may be struggling, and continue to provide high-quality care whilst protecting themselves from the long-term effects of emotional exhaustion.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this training participants will:

- Understand what compassion fatigue is and why it occurs
- Recognise the signs and symptoms of compassion fatigue
- Understand the difference between stress, burnout and compassion fatigue
- Explore the impact of trauma exposure and secondary trauma
- Identify personal risk factors and early warning signs
- Learn practical strategies to protect emotional wellbeing and resilience
- Understand how to support colleagues experiencing compassion fatigue
- Develop a personalised Compassion Protection Plan

This course is suitable for foster carers, social workers, supervising social workers, residential care staff, family support workers and anyone working in caring or helping professions.

Health & Safety

Policy

11/06/26

Version: 1.0

Date Issued: 11th June 2026

Review Date: June 2027

Policy Owner: Heather Pickard-Hengstenberg

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Statement of Intent

Heather Pickard-Hengstenberg Neurodiversity Consultancy, Trainer & Wellness Practitioner is committed to maintaining safe systems of work when delivering virtual services. As a sole practitioner, responsibility for health and safety rests with Heather Hengstenberg.

Arrangements

Safe Working Environment

Services are delivered from:

- Secure home office environment
- Appropriate workstation
- Suitable equipment

Display Screen Equipment

Reasonable steps are taken to:

- Maintain ergonomic working practices
- Reduce visual strain
- Manage fatigue

Lone Working

Measures include:

- Diary management
- Secure communication systems
- Emergency contact procedures

Online Safety

Sessions are conducted using secure platforms.

Meeting links are protected and not publicly shared.

Incident Reporting

Any accident, safeguarding incident or significant concern will be recorded and reviewed.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required due to:

- Changes in legislation
- Changes in health & safety guidance
- Changes in service delivery
- Learning from incidents or complaints



Signed:

Heather Pickard-Hengstenberg

Date: Thursday 11th June 2026

Complaint

Procedural Policy

11/06/26

Version: 1.0

Date Issued: 11th June 2026

Review Date: June 2027

Policy Owner: Heather Pickard-Hengstenberg

COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS POLICY

Purpose

Heather Pickard-Hengstenberg Neurodiversity Consultancy, Trainer and Wellness Practitioner is committed to providing high-quality services and welcomes feedback.

Compliments

Compliments may be submitted by:

- Foster carers
- Children
- Young people
- Social workers
- Commissioning organisations

These will be recorded for quality improvement purposes.

Suggestions

Suggestions are welcomed and reviewed regularly.

Complaints Procedure

- **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

Concerns should be raised directly within: 20 working days.

Response: Within 5 working days.

- **Stage 2 – Formal Complaint**

If unresolved: A formal written complaint may be submitted.

Response: Within 20 working days.

Investigation

The complaint will be:

- Acknowledged
- Investigated fairly
- Recorded

- Responded to in writing

Escalation

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may:

- Contact TACT
- Contact the commissioning authority
- Seek independent advice

Learning from Complaints

All complaints are reviewed to identify:

- Service improvements
- Learning opportunities
- Risk reduction measures

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required due to:

- Changes in legislation
- Changes in complaints guidance
- Changes in service delivery
- Learning from incidents or complaints

Signed:



Heather Pickard-Hengstenberg

Date: Thursday 11th June 2026

Safeguarding, Confidentiality & Information Sharing Policy

11/06/26

Version: 1.0

Date Issued: 11th June 2026

Review Date: June 2027

Policy Owner: Heather Pickard-Hengstenberg

SAFEGUARDING, CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING POLICY

Heather Pickard-Hengstenberg Neurodiversity Consultancy, Trainer and Wellness Practitioner

1. Policy Statement

Heather Pickard-Hengstenberg Neurodiversity Consultant, Trainer and Wellness Practitioner is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The welfare of the child is paramount.

All services are delivered in a manner that promotes safety, wellbeing, dignity, inclusion, respect and equality. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all concerns regarding the welfare or safety of a child, young person or vulnerable adult will be taken seriously and acted upon appropriately.

This policy applies to all services provided by Heather Pickard-Hengstenberg, including:

- Neurodiversity training
- Consultancy services
- One-to-one neurodiversity wellbeing sessions
- Virtual meetings and consultations
- Online and telephone communication
- Written reports and recommendations

As a sole practitioner, Heather Pickard-Hengstenberg acts as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the business and is responsible for ensuring safeguarding concerns are appropriately identified, recorded and reported.

2. Legislative Framework

This policy is informed by the following legislation and guidance:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (Current Version)
- Care Act 2014
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010

- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

3. Scope of Services

Training Services

Delivery of neurodiversity training to:

- Foster carers
- Social workers
- Supervising social workers
- Residential support staff
- Educational professionals
- Other professionals supporting children and families

Training may include topics such as:

- Autism, ADHD and related neurological conditions
- Trauma and attachment
- Emotional regulation
- Behaviour support
- Sensory processing
- Neurodevelopmental differences and needs
- Mental health and wellbeing

Consultancy Services

Providing advice, guidance and recommendations regarding:

- Autism, ADHD and related neurodevelopmental conditions
- Trauma and the impact on the developing brain
- Emotional regulation
- Sensory processing
- Academic support
- Behaviour support
- Family and placement support
- Neurodevelopmental needs

Consultancy may involve reviewing information provided by commissioning organisations and making recommendations to improve outcomes for children and young people.

One-to-One Neurodiversity Wellbeing Sessions

Providing support to children, young people and, where appropriate, carers through:

- Psychoeducation

- Emotional wellbeing support
- Neurodiversity coaching
- Self-understanding and identity development
- Confidence building
- Emotional regulation strategies
- Problem-solving and resilience-building

These services are educational and supportive in nature and are not intended to replace:

- Clinical mental health services
- Counselling
- Psychotherapy
- Crisis intervention services
- Formal assessment or diagnosis

4. Safeguarding Responsibilities

As the sole practitioner and Designated Safeguarding Lead, Heather Pickard-Hengstenberg is responsible for:

- Maintaining up-to-date safeguarding knowledge and training
- Recognising signs and indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Identifying safeguarding concerns
- Maintaining appropriate professional boundaries
- Recording concerns accurately and objectively
- Reporting concerns promptly and appropriately
- Cooperating with statutory agencies and commissioning organisations
- Following local safeguarding procedures
- Ensuring information sharing is lawful, proportionate and necessary
- Maintaining secure records

All safeguarding concerns will be treated seriously regardless of how minor they may initially appear.

5. Recognising Safeguarding Concerns

Safeguarding concerns may include, but are not limited to:

Abuse

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

Family and Environmental Factors

- Domestic abuse
- Parental substance misuse
- Parental mental ill health
- Family conflict

Child Exploitation

- Child sexual exploitation
- Child criminal exploitation
- County lines involvement

Emotional and Mental Health Concerns

- Self-harm
- Suicidal ideation
- Significant emotional distress
- Severe anxiety impacting safety

Online and Peer Risks

- Online abuse
- Cyberbullying
- Peer-on-peer abuse
- Harmful sexual behaviour

Other Safeguarding Concerns

- Radicalisation
- Modern slavery
- Forced marriage
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Missing children
- Vulnerable adult abuse

6. Risk Assessment and Reporting Procedures

A risk-based approach will be used when responding to concerns.

Category 1 – No Known Risk

Inclusion Criteria

- No known evidence of risk
- No current safeguarding concerns identified

Action

- Continue support as planned
- Monitor wellbeing appropriately
- Maintain professional records

Category 2 – Some Risk

Inclusion Criteria

Evidence of one or more of the following:

- Suicidal thoughts without a specific plan
- Threat or actual self-harm that is being safely managed
- Thoughts of harm towards others without intent or plan
- Potential harm through self-neglect
- Emerging safeguarding concerns

Action

- Complete a safety plan where appropriate
- Discuss concerns openly with the individual where safe to do so
- Inform the individual that their emergency contact may be notified
- Record concerns factually
- Consider consultation with relevant professionals

Category 3 – High Risk

Inclusion Criteria

Evidence of one or more of the following:

- Suicidal ideation with a plan
- Actual self-harm that is not being safely managed
- Threats of serious harm to others with intent or planning
- Significant self-neglect creating immediate risk
- Immediate safeguarding concerns

Action

- Complete safety planning where appropriate
- Inform emergency contact
- Inform allocated social worker
- Inform supervising social worker or commissioning organisation
- Inform GP where appropriate
- Contact emergency services if immediate risk is identified
- Record all actions taken

Immediate Risk

Where a child, young person or vulnerable adult is believed to be at immediate risk of significant harm:

- Emergency services will be contacted via 999
- Relevant safeguarding agencies will be notified
- The commissioning organisation will be informed as soon as practicable

Safeguarding concerns will never be kept confidential where doing so would place an individual at risk.

7. Confidentiality

Policy Statement

Heather Pickard-Hengstenberg Neurodiversity Consultant, Trainer and Wellness Practitioner recognises the importance of confidentiality and privacy.

Information shared during training, consultancy and one-to-one wellbeing sessions will be treated sensitively, respectfully and professionally.

Individuals accessing services will be informed of the limits of confidentiality before support begins.

Confidential Information

Confidential information may include:

- Personal details
- Contact information
- Health information
- Neurodevelopmental information
- Family circumstances
- Foster placement information
- Session discussions
- Reports and recommendations
- Professional correspondence
- Safeguarding information

8. Limits of Confidentiality

Information will remain confidential unless:

- A child or young person is at risk of harm
- A vulnerable adult is at risk of harm

- There is a risk of serious harm to self
- There is a risk of serious harm to others
- Disclosure is required by law
- Disclosure is required by a court order
- Disclosure is necessary to fulfil safeguarding responsibilities

Where appropriate and safe to do so, individuals will be informed before information is shared.

9. Information Sharing

Information will only be shared where it is:

- Necessary
- Proportionate
- Relevant
- Lawful

Information may be shared:

- With informed consent
- For safeguarding purposes
- Where required by law
- With commissioning organisations where necessary for service delivery
- With social workers and relevant professionals involved in the child's care

Information sharing decisions will be guided by:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- UK GDPR
- Data Protection Act 2018

Only information necessary for the stated purpose will be shared.

10. Record Keeping and Storage

Accurate records support safe and effective practice.

All records will:

- Be factual
- Be objective
- Be contemporaneous
- Be securely stored
- Be retained in accordance with legal and contractual requirements

Any personal information held will be stored in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 on password-protected devices and password-protected electronic files accessible only to Heather Pickard-Hengstenberg.

Notes taken during one-to-one sessions will:

- Be dated
- Be securely stored
- Be anonymised or coded where appropriate
- Be accessible only to Heather Pickard-Hengstenberg unless disclosure is required by law or safeguarding obligations

Records will normally be retained for seven years following the end of service provision unless a longer retention period is required by law, safeguarding considerations or commissioning arrangements.

11. Virtual Working and Online Safety

Services are delivered primarily through:

- Microsoft Teams
- Telephone
- WhatsApp (where agreed and appropriate)

Reasonable steps are taken to ensure:

- Privacy
- Secure communication
- Confidentiality
- Professional boundaries
- Safe online practice

Meeting links will not be publicly shared, and reasonable precautions will be taken to verify participants' identities where appropriate.

Children and young people will be encouraged to access sessions from a safe and appropriate environment whenever possible.

12. Professional Boundaries

Professional boundaries are maintained at all times.

The following are not provided through this service:

- Out-of-hours support
- Emergency intervention
- Crisis services
- Clinical mental health treatment

- Therapeutic counselling
- Formal diagnosis
- Social media contact with children and young people

Where additional or specialist support is required, individuals will be signposted to appropriate services.

13. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required due to:

- Changes in legislation
- Changes in safeguarding guidance
- Changes in service delivery
- Learning from incidents or complaints

Signed: 

Heather Pickard-Hengstenberg

Date: Thursday 11th June 2026
