



WILLOWS RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Incorporating guidance & procedures from the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

May 2021

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Children's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

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1. Introduction

Safeguarding statement

Willows Residents' Association (WRA) acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults. It is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice.

The policy recognises that the welfare and interests of residents are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, everyone has a positive and enjoyable experience of WRA in a safe and family centred environment are protected from abuse whilst participating WRA activities.

WRA acknowledges that some people, including disabled and young people or people from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

This policy applies to all Committee Members, volunteers, students or anyone working on behalf of Willows Residents Association. It shows a commitment to protecting and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults against potential harm or actual harm. It fully accepts and promotes the principle enshrined in the Children Act 1989, that the welfare of the child is paramount.

The policy also demonstrates a commitment to working with statutory bodies, voluntary agencies, and other faith communities to promote the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults and acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child or about the behaviour of an adult. Willows Residents Association will work with the appropriate statutory bodies when a safeguarding investigation is necessary.

We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening and respecting them
- Adopting Child Protection guidelines through procedures and a Code of Conduct for committee members and volunteers
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Sharing our policies about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- Providing effective support for committee members and volunteers through training and support.
- Reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

Willows Residents Association will endeavour to safeguard the children who attend activities we organise, reminding parents and carers that they are responsible for their children's health, safety and welfare at all times during our organised activities and events. However, if a concern is raised about a child's welfare, we will use our procedures to report this to the appropriate authority.

The definition of a child for the purpose of this document is anyone under the age of 18 years.

2. Important Contacts

The Willows Residents Association has an appointed individual who is responsible for dealing with any safeguarding concerns. In their absence, a deputy will always be available for volunteers to consult with.

The named persons for safeguarding & child protection within Willows Residents' Association are:

Designated Safeguarding lead	Muriel Awais-Dean
Mobile number	07956 663717
Email address	mawaisdean@aol.com
Emergency number	07956 663717

Deputy safeguarding lead	Jennifer Percival
Mobile number	07941146911
Email address	jennifer.percival@usa.net
Emergency number	07941146911

2.1 Other key contacts

Hertfordshire Children's Services	0300 123 4043 (including out of hours)
Police (Child Abuse Investigation Unit CAIU)	0845 33 00 222 (or in an emergency 999)
NSPCC	0808 800 5000

3. Responsibilities of individuals in implementing this policy and procedure

All members of Willows Residents' Association are to:

- Understand and apply this policy and procedure in their activities
- Identify opportunities and undertake appropriate training to support them in their role
- Act appropriately at all times and be able to challenge inappropriate behaviour in others
- Be able to recognise harm
- Know how to report any concerns in a timely and appropriate way.

In addition, officers and committee members are to:

- Encourage all members and volunteers to understand this policy and procedure
- Offer opportunities to undertake appropriate safeguarding training and refresher training
- Ensure that the policy and procedure is adhered to and to undertake regular compliance audits
- Ensure that a whistle blowing policy is developed, agreed and communicated with all members and volunteers

The role and responsibilities of the named person and deputy are:

- To ensure that all staff are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they are concerned that a child/young person may be subject to abuse or neglect.
- Ensure that any concerns about a child/young person are acted on, clearly recorded, referred on where necessary and, followed up to ensure the issues are addressed.
- The named person(s) will record any reported incidents in relation to a child/young person or breach of Safeguarding policies and procedures. This will be kept in a secure place and its contents will be confidential.

Link to [Report concerns about a child or request support.](#)

4. Outcomes for children and their families

In developing this policy Willows Residents' Association intends that it will promote the welfare of children and young people attending and taking part in activities.

Children and young people and their parents / carers can be assured that Willows Residents' Association takes their welfare seriously and wants them to enjoy the activities in a safe and secure environment.

Every adult who volunteers with or on behalf of Willows Residents' Association is aware of the contents of this policy and understands what the reporting procedures are, if there are any activities that may be unsafe or may present a risk of harm, or if the child or young person (or their parent(s) / carer(s)) makes a disclosure of abuse or an allegation against an adult volunteering with them. Such disclosures or allegations will be taken very seriously to ensure that the child is protected.

All adults on the committee or volunteering with Willows Residents' Association will have undertaken the basic child protection training and a briefing on this policy.

5. Policy statement

In implementing this Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy Willows Residents' Association will:

- Ensure that all committee members understand their legal and moral responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation by including training on child protection in their induction and in subsequent training that is undertaken.
- Ensure that all members understand their responsibility to comply with the standards detailed in the organisation's Child Protection Procedures and to ensure high standards of practice are maintained at all times.
- Ensure that all members are aware of the HSCP Procedures and are confident in how to work within these guidelines by ensuring their attendance at training and at subsequent refresher training organised by the HSCP (as required).
- Ensure that all members understand their duty to report concerns that arise about a child or young person, or a member's conduct towards a child/young person, to the organisation's named person for child protection.

- Ensure that a named person responsible for child protection is appointed and that they understand their responsibility to refer any child protection concerns to the statutory child protection agencies (i.e. police and/or Children's Services).
- Ensure that any procedures relating to the conduct of members are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner.
- Provide opportunities for all members to develop their skills and knowledge, particularly in relation to the welfare and protection of children and young people.
- Ensure that children and young people are enabled to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues and will have access to the organisation's complaints procedure.
- Ensure that the wider membership is encouraged to be involved in the work of the organisation and, when requested, have access to all guidelines and procedures.
- Endeavour to keep up to date with national developments relating to the welfare and protection of children and young people.
- Ensure that parents/carers are aware of their responsibility for the safety and welfare of their children at all Willows Residents' Association activities and events.
- Ensure that all volunteers supporting Willows Residents' Association events and activities have at least a basic understanding of child protection and as part of their training have at the very least undertaken an online, certificated child protection course.

6. Legal framework

The Children Act 1989 sets out that the child's welfare is paramount and safeguarding and promoting it is the priority.

The Children Act 2004 set out a duty on local authorities to work closely with those providing services to children and young people.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 sets out how organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. It is important that all practitioners working to safeguard children and young people understand fully their responsibilities and duties as set out in primary legislation and associated regulations and guidance.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out key principles which are enshrined within these acts and the statutory guidance. From 15 January 1992, when the treaty came into force, every child in the UK has been entitled to over 54 specific rights, some of which are:

- The right to life, survival, identity and development
- Freedom of thought, belief and religion
- Protection from violence, abuse and neglect
- The right to have their views respected, and to have their best interests considered at all times
- The right to a name and nationality, freedom of expression, and access to information concerning them
- The right to live in a family environment or alternative care, and to have contact with both parents wherever possible
- Health and welfare rights, including rights for disabled children, the right to health and health care, and social security
- The right to education, leisure, culture and the arts
- Special protection for refugee children, children in the juvenile justice system, children deprived of their liberty and children suffering economic, sexual or other forms of exploitation.

The rights included in the convention apply to all children and young people, with no exceptions. UNCRC [website](#)

7. Recognising abuse and neglect

7.1 Definition of abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, by a stranger or via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

An abused child is any boy or girl, under 18 years of age, who has experienced, or is believed likely to be at risk of, significant risk of neglect, and / or physical, emotional or sexual abuse.

7.1.1. Physical abuse

(including when masqueraded as discipline and chastisement)

The following definition is taken from Working Together (Working Together 2018)

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Physical abuse often arises from a wish to chastise. Smacking is illegal in England but has a legal defence of “reasonable chastisement” under Section 58 of the Children Act 2004 but only in a charge of common assault. Whether a 'smack' amounts to reasonable chastisement will depend on the circumstances of each case, taking into consideration factors e.g. age of the child and the nature of the smack.

The introduction of section 54 of the Children Act 2004 changed the law, to remove the reasonable chastisement defence for actual bodily harm. Actual bodily harm includes minor visible injuries such as a graze, a scratch, an abrasion or bruising around the eye. Common assault implies a transient trifling injury such as reddening of the skin or no injury at all. The use of an implement to hit a child though not specifically prohibited is more likely to leave a mark. Thus, the law allows a parent to smack a child where doing so leaves no mark upon the skin, so only light smacks are permitted. “Over chastisement” which implies at least actual bodily harm would be against the law and the reasonable chastisement defence would not apply. This means, for example, that a parent can no longer justify beating a child on the grounds that the child is difficult to raise.

Although the reasonable chastisement defence only applies to the criminal law the concept influences decisions taken in the family courts. The defence applies only to parents and adults acting in loco parentis (teacher or other adult responsible for the children) with the parent’s permission. Physical chastisement, i.e. corporal punishment, of any form has been prohibited in state schools since 1986, private since 1998 and by child minders since 2003.

It is important that all professionals treat injuries caused to children by their parents as an assault and do not condone or excuse this because their intention was to discipline the child. Professionals should be cautious about referring to such assaults as “over-chastisement” as this can have the effect of minimising the impact on the child of the injuries or implying the child’s behaviour was a contributory cause.

There is evidence that even smacking allowed within the law is harmful to children. For example, minor forms of regular smacking of pre-school children is associated with an increased risk of antisocial behaviour after 2-3 years even when allowing for other parenting risk factors and the presence of such behaviour at study entry 6, 7 Maternal depression and violence between adult partners are associated with a greater risk of smacking children than either factor present alone regardless of child

behaviour.⁸ Parents who experience physical punishment in their childhood are more likely to smack their own children.

Signs

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been physically abused, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The possibility of physical abuse should be investigated if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any of them to a marked degree:

- Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
- Wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather
- Refusal to undress for gym
- Bald patches
- Multiple missing episodes
- Fear of medical help or examination
- Self-harming tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Fear of physical contact - shrinking back if touched
- Admitting that they are punished, but the punishment is excessive (such as a child being beaten every night to 'make him study')
- Fear of suspected abuser being contacted

7.1.2. Emotional Abuse

The following definition is taken from Working Together (Working Together 2018)

*Emotional abuse is a form of **Significant Harm** which involves the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.*

It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying) causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Signs

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been emotionally abused, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The possibility of emotional abuse should be investigated if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any of them to a marked degree:

- Physical, mental and emotional development delay
- Sudden speech disorders
- Continual self-depreciation ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless, etc')
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this')
- Neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Inability to cope with praise
- An unwillingness or inability to play

7.1.3. Sexual Abuse

The following definition is taken from Working Together (Working Together 2018)

*Sexual abuse is a form of **Significant Harm** which involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the Internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.*

Signs

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been sexually abused, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The possibility of sexual abuse should be investigated if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any of them to a marked degree:

- Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age
- Medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals, venereal diseases
- Other extreme reactions, such as depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia
- Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clinging

- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Being isolated or withdrawn
- Inability to concentrate
- Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a babysitter or child minder
- Starting to wet again, day or night/nightmares
- Become worried about clothing being removed
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism

7.1.4. Neglect

The following definition is taken from Working Together (Working Together 2018)

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- *provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)*
- *protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger*
- *ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregiver)*
- *ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.*

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has experienced neglect, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The possibility of neglect should be investigated if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any of them to a marked degree:

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing/lacks sufficient clothing for the weather
- Emaciation
- Untreated medical problems
- No social relationships
- Compulsive scavenging
- Destructive tendencies

- Learning disabilities due to poor brain development

Note: A child may be subjected to a combination of different kinds of abuse. It is also possible that a child may show no outward signs and hide what is happening from everyone.

7.1.5. Child Sexual Exploitation

The following definition is taken from DfE: Child Sexual Exploitation, February 2017

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

The definition of child sexual exploitation is as follows:

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Child sexual exploitation is never the victim's fault, even if there is some form of exchange: all children and young people under the age of 18 have a right to be safe and should be protected from harm.

Sexual exploitation can have links to other types of crime. These include:

- Child trafficking
- Domestic abuse
- Sexual violence in intimate relationships
- Grooming (including online grooming)
- Abusive images of children and their distribution
- Drugs-related offences
- Gang-related activity
- Immigration-related offences
- Domestic servitude

The following vulnerabilities are examples of the types of things children can experience that might make them more susceptible to child sexual exploitation:

- Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse
- Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic abuse or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example)
- Recent bereavement or loss
- Social isolation or social difficulties
- Absence of a safe environment to explore sexuality
- Economic vulnerability
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status
- Connections with other children and young people who are being sexually exploited
- Family members or other connections involved in adult sex work
- Having a physical or learning disability
- Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories)
- Sexual identity

Children rarely self-report child sexual exploitation so it is important that practitioners are aware of potential indicators of risk, including:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc. without plausible explanation;
- Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks;
- Exclusion or unexplained absences from school, college or work;
- Leaving home/care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late;
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls;
- Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol;
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections;
- Evidence of/suspicious of physical or sexual assault;
- Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups;
- Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers);
- Frequenting areas known for sex work;
- Concerning use of internet or other social media;
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours; and
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

Children can be perpetrators as well as victims

Children can be both experiencing child sexual exploitation and perpetrating it at the same time. Examples might include a child who is forced to take part in the exploitation of another child under duress, or a child who is forced to introduce other children to their abuser under threats to their family's safety. These situations require a nuanced approach that recognises and engages with the young person's perpetration within the context of their own victimisation.

Children who perpetrate child sexual exploitation require a different response to adult perpetrators. Responses may involve criminal justice pathways at times, however every child who displays harmful sexual behaviour should also have their safeguarding and welfare needs actively considered in line with *Working Together*.

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility.

All practitioners should assume that in the course of their work with children they will encounter children at risk of sexual exploitation. All practitioners working with children and families need to **know where to get help**: Local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements will set out the process for referring concerns about the welfare of children to local authority children's social care. Anyone can make a referral and ask for advice. If a child is considered to be in immediate danger the police should be contacted

7.1.6. Child Criminal Exploitation

The following definition is taken from the Government website: [Guidance exploitation and vulnerable adults: county lines, February 2020](#)

What is child criminal exploitation?

Child criminal exploitation is increasingly used to describe this type of exploitation where children are involved, and is defined as:

“Child criminal exploitation is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.”

Criminal exploitation of children is broader than just county lines and includes for instance children forced to work on cannabis farms or to commit theft.

Dangers of criminal exploitation (as define on NSPCC website)

It's important to be aware of the risks of criminal exploitation or being involved with a criminal gang. They can use different tactics to recruit and exploit children and young people, including bribing them with rewards, befriending them, and threatening them, or coercing them.

Dangers of criminal exploitation include:

- being subject to threats, blackmail and violence
- being exploited and forced to commit crimes
- being arrested, including for crimes committed by the gang that they have not directly committed under the law of joint enterprise
- not being able to leave or cut off ties with the gang
- having their safety or the safety of friends and family threatened
- risk of physical harm, rape and sexual abuse
- risk of emotional abuse
- risk of severe injury or being killed
- abusing drugs, alcohol and other substances
- long term impact on education and employment options.

Exploiting a child into committing crimes is abusive. Children who are targeted can also be groomed, physically abused, emotionally abused, sexually exploited or trafficked. However, as children involved in gangs often commit crimes themselves, sometimes they are not seen as victims by adults and professionals, despite the harm they have experienced. It's important to spot the signs and act quickly if you think a child is being groomed or is becoming involved with a gang.

Please visit the [NSPCC website](#) for further guidance on Child Criminal Exploitation

7.1.7. Effects of Domestic Abuse

Please see the [NSPCC website](#) for guidance on advice for professionals on how to support children exposed to domestic abuse.

Effects of domestic abuse (NSPCC website)

Living in a home where domestic abuse happens can have a serious impact on a child or young person's mental and physical wellbeing, as well as their behaviour. And this can last into adulthood.

What's important is to make sure the abuse stops and that children have a safe and stable environment to grow up in.

Our [services](#) can support children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse to help them move on and receive the care they need.

7.1.8. Extremism

The following definition is taken from Working Together (Working Together 2018)

Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.

Extremism is defined in the Counter

Extremism Strategy 2015 as the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist.

7.1.9. Bullying and Cyber bullying

Bullying affects everyone at some point in their lives. It may be at school, at college, in an activity group or club, in the workplace or even at home.

Parents, carers, teachers and others working with children have a duty to take action if they suspect or discover that child(ren) are being bullied.

Bullying includes:

- People calling you names
- Making things up to get another person into trouble
- Hitting, pinching, biting, pushing and shoving
- Taking things away from someone
- Damaging another person's belongings
- Stealing someone's money
- Taking friends away from them
- ['Cyberbullying'](#)
- Spreading rumours
- Upskirting - this is a criminal offence and must be reported to the Police.
- Threats and intimidation
- Making silent or abusive phone calls
- Bullies can also frighten the victim so that they don't want to go to school or take part in other activities.
- The victim may pretend to be ill to avoid the bully

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying in the real world, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming and mobile phone. Types of cyberbullying can include:

- Sending threatening or abusive text messages
- Creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- Trolling – the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- Excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
- Shaming someone online
- Setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- Encouraging young people to self-harm
- Voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- Creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name
- Sending explicit messages, also known as sexting
- Pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations.

Developing a 'Code of Conduct' with children and young people can assist with minimising the opportunity for bullying and encourage their participation in the activities of the group.

8. Steps to follow if you are worried about a child or if a child confides in you

Willows Residents' Association recognises that it has a duty to act on reports or suspicions of abuse and believes that the safety of the child should override any doubts, hesitations, or other considerations (such as the potential to have a negative impact on relationships with a family). When worrying changes are observed in a child's or young person's behaviour, physical condition or appearance, staff will follow the steps set out below.

If a child confides in you:

- Stay calm, approachable and open to what they have to say
- Listen to them carefully without interrupting
- Make it clear that you are taking what they are telling you seriously
- Acknowledge that you understand how difficult this might be for them to say what they are saying
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling someone
- Let them know that you will do everything you can to help them
- Do not show any shock or disgust
- Do not probe further
- Do not ask leading questions that might suggest the answer
- Do not make assumptions
- Do not make any comments about the alleged abuser
- Do not make promises you cannot keep, particularly about keeping the information 'secret', but explain that you may need to share it with an appropriate person
- Do not discuss with colleagues apart from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or their deputy); and

Follow the steps set out below

Step 1

- Initially talk to a child/young person about what you are observing. It is okay to ask questions, for example: "I've noticed that you don't appear yourself today, is everything okay? But never use leading questions
- Listen carefully to what the young person has to say and take it seriously
- Never investigate or take sole responsibility for a situation where a child/young person talks about matters that may be indicative of abuse
- Always explain to children and young people that any information they have given will have to be shared with others, if this indicates they and or other children are at risk of harm

- Notify the organisation's Named Person for Child Protection / Safeguarding
- Record what was said as soon as possible after any disclosure on the form attached at Appendix 1 and send to the Named Person for Child Protection / Safeguarding
- Respect confidentiality and file documents securely

Step 2

- The Named person(s) will take immediate action if there is a suspicion that a child has been abused or likely to be abused. In this situation the Named Person will contact the Police and/or Children Services. If a referral is made direct to Children's Services, this must be followed up in writing within 24 hrs.

NB Parents / carers will need to be informed about any referral to Children, Schools and Families unless to do so would place the child at an increased risk of harm.

- The named person can also seek advice and clarity about a situation that is beginning to raise concern through **Children's Services 0300 123 4043** or from the **NSPCC 0808 800 5000**, [website](#).

Professionals, employees, managers, helpers, carers and volunteers in all agencies must make contact Children's Services:

- If it is believed or suspected that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer **Significant Harm**, or
- Where a professional has identified unmet need in relation to a **Child in Need**

A referral must be made as soon as possible when any concern of significant harm becomes known - the greater the level of perceived risk, the more urgent the action should be.

IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT A CHILD YOU HAVE A DUTY TO REFER

The belief or suspicion about significant harm may be based on information which comes from different sources. It may come from a member of the public, the child concerned, another child, a family member or other professional staff. It may relate to a single incident or an accumulation of lower level concerns.

The information may also relate to harm caused by another child, in which case both children, i.e. the suspected perpetrator and victim, must be referred.

The suspicion or allegation may relate to a parent or professional or volunteer caring for or working with the child – see Section 15 below Managing Allegations against an Adult who works with children or young people.

A referral must be made even if it is known that Children’s Services Social Care are already involved with the child/family.

Advice and consultation may be sought about the appropriateness of the referral by contacting the local Children’s Services or, if the case is open, from the allocated social worker. Alternatively, advice may be sought from the Police or the Named Person for Safeguarding.

9. Managing allegations against an adult who volunteers with children or young people

In Hertfordshire, allegations against a member of staff or a volunteer organisation working with children and young people must be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Whenever it is alleged a person who works or volunteers with children has in any activity connected with her/his employment or voluntary activity:

- Behaved in a way that has, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against / related to a child
- Behaved toward a child in a way which indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

The procedures apply to situations when:

- There are suspicions or allegations of abuse by a person who works with children in either a paid or unpaid capacity - as a permanent, temporary or agency staff member, contract worker, consultant, volunteer, approved foster carer, child minder or approved adopter
- It is discovered that an individual known to have been involved previously in child abuse, is or has been working with children

If concerns arise about the person's behaviour to her/his own children, Police and/or Children’s Services must consider informing her/his employer in order to assess whether there may be implications for children with whom the person has

contact at work. A decision as to whether the person's employer should be approached, either for further information and/or whether it is appropriate to invite the employer to a future Strategy Meeting when decisions are to be made about managing the possible risk, should be made at the initial Strategy Meeting when all agencies can contribute. The risk that someone presents needs to be properly considered and a decision made whether the risk outweighs the employee's right to confidentiality before an employer is approached.

If an allegation relating to a child is made about a person undertaking paid or unpaid care of vulnerable adults, consideration must also be given to the need to alert those who manage her/him in that role.

9.1. Procedure

The person to whom an allegation is first reported should take the matter seriously and keep an open mind. S/he should not investigate or ask leading questions if seeking clarification, it is important not to make assumptions. Confidentiality should not be promised, and the person should be advised that the concern will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only.

Actions to be taken include making a written record of the allegation using the informant's words - including time, date and place where the alleged incident took place, what was said and anyone else present. This record should be signed and dated and immediately passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.

The recipient of an allegation must **not** unilaterally determine its validity, and failure to report it in accordance with procedures is a potential disciplinary matter.

If there is an immediate or imminent risk of significant harm to a child or young person, you should contact Children's Services or the Police and then speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead to inform them of the actions you have taken and follow this up in writing on the form attached at Appendix 1.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead must take steps to ensure that the person against whom the allegation is removed from the situation immediately. This may be done by either agreement or suspension from the organisation until the matter has been fully investigated.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will follow the HSCP Procedures Managing Allegations against Adults who work with Children and Young People by referring the issue to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). [Link](#)

Any member of staff who believes that allegations or suspicions, which have been reported to the appropriate manager, are not being investigated properly has a responsibility to report it to a higher level in her/his agency or directly to the LADO.

The LADO must be told, within one working day, of all allegations that come to the employer's attention and appear to meet the criteria so that s/he can consult or refer to the Police and Children's Services, as appropriate.

If, for any reason, there are difficulties with following the above procedure, the Whistle Blowing Procedure should be considered, or a referral made directly to Children's Services and/or the Police.

The need for consultation must not delay a referral, which should be in accordance with the referral procedure.

The organisation should keep the subject of allegations informed of progress in the case and arrange to provide appropriate support.

10. Confidentiality

Information about a referral about a child or an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer must be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to:

- Protect children
- Facilitate enquiries
- Avoid victimisation
- Safeguard the rights of the person about whom the allegation has been made and others who might be affected
- Manage disciplinary / complaints aspects

The Named Person for Safeguarding may ask you for further information in order to make any referrals. You should not discuss or share this information with anyone else within the organisation. Any paperwork you have generated should be stored in a locked filing cabinet or stored on a computer securely.

11. Managing activities involving children and young people

When managing an activity involving children and young people, it is important to consider a risk assessment, both in terms of the health and safety of the participants, but also of the potential child protection issues.

Each activity should have a risk assessment undertaken to consider what level and impact of risk there may be to the children, adults, committee members and volunteers.

11.1. Record keeping

Whilst record keeping may seem overly bureaucratic from time to time, it is important to keep good and clear records of the work of your organisation. It is particularly important to keep a register of attendance and a fire register and emergency contact details for all children and adults attending activities.

Any details must be kept securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. You should also store copies of your risk assessments for activities (see the next section).

Good record keeping promotes confidence in the organisation and in the safety of children who are participating in the activities.

11.2 Taking photographs or videos of children

Please see link to The Children's Society Guidance on Social Media and Photo Consent ([link](#))

Please see link to the NSPCC Guidance, outlining risk of sharing images online, a model photography policy statement, sharing images, storing images and CCTV & surveillance cameras ([link](#))

Appendices

Appendix 1: Sample Reporting a Concern Form

Strictly Confidential

Please print clearly

Full name of the Child:				DOB	
Address:					
Name(s) of parent(s) / carer(s)					
About the Incident					
Time	Date	Location	People involved	What role did they play (affected person/participate/witness)	
Describe the incident as fully as you can in your own words. If a child made a disclosure or allegation to you record in their words where possible. Attach additional sheets where necessary					
About the person filling out this form:					
Name			Role		
Addresses			Contact No:		
If you referred this directly to Children School and Families or the Police please state why, include the name of the worker / officer you spoke to and the date / time					
Date you sent this form to your Named person for Safeguarding					

Appendix 2 – Sample Code of Conduct for all Committee Members and Volunteers

Always remember that while you are caring for other people's children you are in a position of trust and your responsibilities to them and the organisation must be uppermost in your mind always.

DO NOT:

- Use any kind of physical punishment or chastisement such as smacking or hitting
- Smoke in front of any child
- Use non-prescribed drugs or be under the influence of alcohol.
- Behave in a way that frightens or demeans any child.
- Use any racist, sexist, homophobic, discriminatory or offensive language
- Invite a child to your home or arrange to see them outside the set activity times
- Engage in any sexual activity (this would include using sexualised language) with a child you meet through your duties or start a personal relationship with them, this would be an abuse of trust.

- Engage in rough or physical games, including horseplay
- Let allegations a child makes go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Rely upon good nature to protect you or believe 'it could never happen to me'
- Give children presents or personal items *

*Exceptions to this could be a custom such as: buying children a small birthday token or leaving present, help to a family in need such as equipment to enable them to participate in an activity. Both types of gift should come from the organisation and from a professional capacity and be agreed with the named person for safeguarding children and the child's parent/carer. Similarly, do not accept gifts yourself other than small tokens for appropriate celebrations, which you should mention to the activity leader.

DO:

- Exercise caution about being alone with a child. In situations where this is unavoidable, ensure another worker or volunteer knows what you are doing and where you are.
- Ensure that any physical contact is open and initiated by the child's needs, e.g. for a hug when upset. Always prompt children to carry out personal care themselves and if they cannot manage ask if they would like help.
- Talk explicitly to children about their right to be kept safe from harm
- Listen to children and take every opportunity to raise their self-esteem.
- Work as a team with your co-workers/volunteers. Agree with them what behaviour you expect from children and be consistent in enforcing it
- Remember if you have to speak to a child about their behaviour you are challenging 'what they did', not 'who they are'.
- Make sure you have read the Safeguarding Children Procedure and policy statement and that you feel confident that you know how to recognise when a child may be suffering harm, how to handle any disclosure and how to report any concerns.
- Seek advice and support from your colleagues and your designated champion for safeguarding children
- Be clear with anyone disclosing any matter that could concern the safety and wellbeing of a child that you cannot guarantee to keep this information to yourself.
- Seek opportunities for training
- Where possible encourage parents to take responsibility for their own children.
- Make sure you are familiar with your organisation's Confidentiality Policy.

Advice for professionals who work with children, when using any form of ICT, including the Internet

For your own protection it is advised that you follow this advice:

- Ensure all electronic communication with children, parents, carers, staff and others is compatible with your professional role and in line with the policies of the organisation.
- Do not talk about your professional role in any capacity when using social media such as Facebook and YouTube.
- Do not put online any text, image, sound or video that could upset or offend anyone connected to your setting, member of the community or be incompatible with your professional role.
- Use your organisation's or setting's ICT systems and resources for all official business. This includes your business email address, business mobile phone or photography equipment.

- Do not give out your own personal details, such as mobile phone number, personal e-mail address or social network details to children, parents, carers and others.
- Do not disclose any passwords and ensure that personal data is kept secure and used appropriately.
- Only take images of children and/or staff for professional purposes, in accordance with business policy. Ensure that the parent/carer of any child under 18 has given written consent. See Appendix 3
- Ensure that any images are represented only in a positive context and are removed from your websites when they expire.
- Do not browse, download, upload or distribute any material that could be considered offensive, illegal or discriminatory.
- Ensure that your online activity, both in work and outside, will not bring your organisation or professional role into disrepute.
- You have a duty to report any e-Safety incident which may impact on you, your professionalism or your organisation.

USING THE INTERNET RESPONSIBLY

For Online Safety guidance please visit the NSPCC [website](#)

Appendix 3 – Sample Image consent form for use by staff and volunteers

We sometimes take photographs or video footage for publicity purposes. These images may appear in our printed publications and publicity materials, on our website, or both.

We may also send the images to the news media, who may use them in printed publications and on their website and store them in their archive. They may also syndicate the photos to other media for possible use, either in printed publications, or on websites, or both. When we submit photographs and information to the media, we have no control on when, where, if or how they will be used.

The images we take will be of activities that show the children / organisation in a positive light. The images will not be associated with negative, distressing or sensitive issues to do with an individual's welfare or that may cause offence or embarrassment. It is the responsibility of the senior staff to ensure that consent is obtained from parents/guardians/social workers, and that children who are at risk or cannot have their photograph taken for legal or social reasons, are not in the photograph.

Please note that websites can be viewed throughout the world, not just in the United Kingdom where UK law applies. In giving your consent, you understand that the photos may be used in both printed and electronic form.

Sample Image Consent Form:

We will take all reasonable measures to ensure the images are used solely for the purposes for which they are intended. However, we cannot guarantee this and take no responsibility for the way images are used by other websites or publishers, or for any consequences arising from publication.

Sample Image Consent Form			
To give your consent, please answer the questions below, then sign and date the form where shown and fill in any relevant information			
May we use your image(s), or those of your child(ren) if under 18, in our publicity material, including printed publications, video recordings and on our website (delete if this does not apply)? <i>Please tick</i>	Yes		No
We sometimes send publicity material about our services, including photographs where appropriate, to the news media and partner organisations, who may use the image in printed and/ or electronic form and then store it in their archive. Can we use your photograph, or your child's, in this way? <i>Please tick</i>	Yes		No
Signed		Job Title <i>If applicable</i>	
Print name		Date	
Please print your child/ren's names:			
1			
2			
3			
FOR EXTERNAL USE			
Event & Location			
Photographer's name			
Contact details for person photographed (<i>if needed</i>)			

Appendix 4 – Useful Contacts/Support Organisations

If you have concern that a child is being harmed as a result of abuse or neglect, you must not keep these concerns to yourself. Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. You need to ensure that you speak to the appropriate organisations who can listen to and record your concern, and then take appropriate action. In Hertfordshire, these are the numbers that you can ring for advice and to make a referral:

Children's Services (including out of hours): 0300 123 4043

The Joint Child Protection Team (JCPIT): 0845 33 00 222. This is a specialist team that is a department within the police with countywide responsibility for undertaking child protection investigations.

The Police: 999 (in an emergency)

Families First

Families First is a whole system, countywide multi-agency response to supporting family outcomes at a local level. It brings together organisations that provide early help services under one umbrella of consistent practice and clear processes.

Where a case is already open to Children Services, contact should be made with the allocated social worker. If you have information that suggests an urgent child protection matter, please speak to the allocated social worker or their Team Manager without delay.

[Website](#)

Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Help Line

A confidential, free, support and signposting service for anyone affected by Domestic Abuse. Our aim is to improve the lives of those affected by domestic abuse including those seeking help to change their behaviour.

[Website](#)

Herts Sunflower

Free and confidential support for anyone affected by domestic abuse.

[Website](#)

Other useful contact information

To contact the **Forced Marriage Unit** and be directed to agencies in your area that can help you NOW call Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or email: fmf@fco.gov.uk

The Forced Marriage Unit was set up in 2005 and provides support to victims as well as expert training and guidance to professionals. It is jointly run by the Home Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office. In 2011 they dealt with over 1400 calls in relation to forced marriages. [Link](#)

If the situation is urgent always call 999

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline

The NSPCC Child Protection Helpline is a free 24-hour service that provides counselling, information and advice to anyone concerned about a child at risk of abuse. Telephone: 0808 800 5000 - [website](#)

Online Safety

NSPCC [Online Safety](#)

It can be hard to know how to talk to your child about online safety. From setting up parental controls to advice on sexting, online games and video apps, we can help you to understand the risks and keep your child safe.

[UK Safer Internet Centre](#) provides online safety tips, advice and resource to help children and young people stay safe online.

Bullying and Cyberbullying

[NSPCC website](#) gives guidance and advice on the signs of bullying and cyberbullying, the effects and prevention.

Additional resources

[NSPCC Learning Voluntary and Community Groups](#)

We all have a responsibility to help keep children safe. Organisations working with children and young people must have safeguarding policies and procedures in place and be able to respond to child protection concerns. But we understand that it's not always easy to know exactly what you need to do.

That's why we've produced a range of resources for voluntary and community groups.

WHEN IN DOUBT, CONCERNS MUST BE SHARED APPROPRIATELY.