



# SAFEGUARDING – CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Review Schedule	
<b>Created:</b>	<b>September 2011</b>
<b>Approved by Trustees:</b>	<b>October 2011</b>
<b>Reviewed:</b>	<b>February 2020</b>
<b>Approved by Trustees</b>	<b>February 2020</b>
<b>Reviewed:</b>	<b>January 2021</b>
<b>Approved by Trustees:</b>	<b>January 2021</b>
<b>Reviewed</b>	<b>January 2022</b>
<b>Approved</b>	<b>January 2022</b>
<b>Reviewed</b>	<b>January 2023</b>
<b>Approved by Trustees</b>	<b>February 2023</b>
<b>Next Review Due:</b>	<b>January 2024</b>
<b>Reviewed</b>	<b>January 2024</b>
<b>Approved by Trustees</b>	<b>January 2024</b>
<b>Next Review Due:</b>	<b>January 2025</b>
<b>Reviewed</b>	<b>January 2025</b>
<b>Approved by Trustees</b>	<b>February 2025</b>

# SAFELINE – CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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## 1.0 Policy

Safeline is a specialised charity working to prevent sexual abuse and rape and support those affected.

Safeline acknowledges it has a responsibility for the safety of children. Safeline recognises that good child protection policies and procedures are of benefit to everyone involved with Safeline's work.

Safeline **Child Protection Policy** applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Safeline.

The purpose of this policy:-

- to protect children and young people who receive Safeline's services. This includes the children of adults who use our services and any other child Safeline encounters that this policy may apply to.
- to provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection

Safeline believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

## 2.0 Links with Other Safeline Policies and Procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Safeline documents.

- Adults at Risk Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Suicide Risk Policy
- Staff Handbook/Counsellor Handbook
- Data Protection Policy
- Compliments and Complaints Policy
- ICT Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy

## 3.0 Legal framework

In accordance with the Home Office Revised Code of Practice for Disclosure and Barring Service – Registered Person dated November 2015, Safeline will carry out an enhanced Disclosure & Barring check on all members of staff, volunteers, sessional workers and trustees who will be working with service users on a one-to-one basis. The check will be renewed every three years.

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely (see appendix A):

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017

- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children
- General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (previously Data Protection Act 1998)

### **GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations)**

These Regulations replace the Data Protection Act 1988 as at 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018. This policy should be read in conjunction with Safeline's revised Data Protection Policy which takes account of the changes in legislation.

#### **We recognise that:**

- the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

#### **We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:**

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing concerns, working collaboratively with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.

**We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.**

## **4.0 Definitions**

A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. Throughout this policy, the terms 'child' and 'children' and 'young people' and 'CYP' are used to refer to all those under the age of 18.

### **What is Child 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 an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

### **Types of Abuse**

This is not an exhaustive list, but will include:

#### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It may be the

result of a deliberate act but could also be caused through the omission or failure to act to protect.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making a child feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. It includes rape, oral sex, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, taking sexual photographs, revenge porn, making someone take part in or look at pornography or watch sexual acts, encouraging children to behave in inappropriate ways. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, and by other young people.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

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.

### **Neglect**

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. It may involve failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or failing to ensure that a child gets appropriate medical care or treatment.

### **Trafficking**

People trafficking means the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control of another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation includes the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or removal of organs.

### **Forced Marriage**

In which one or both parties are married against their will or without their consent or where they cannot give consent. Forced Marriage is now recognised as domestic/child abuse.

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Involving procedures that intentionally alter or injure female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The Female Genital Mutilation Act came into effect in 2004 making it illegal to practice FGM in the UK or to take British Nationals or permanent residents of the UK abroad for FGM or to aid, abet counsel or procure this.

## **Modern Slavery**

Modern slavery is a serious crime. It encompasses slavery, servitude, and forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking. Modern slavery victims can often face more than one type of abuse and slavery, for example if they are sold to another trafficker and then forced into another form of exploitation.

## **Criminal exploitation**

Criminal Exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child, young person or an adult into any criminal activity: (a) In exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) For the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator (such as to support serious organised crime and/or terrorism), and/or (c) Through violence or the threat of violence to ensure compliance. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur using technology and/or social media. Because they are more likely to be easily detected, individuals who are exploited are more likely to be arrested and criminalised for criminal behaviour, than those individuals or groups who are exploiting them. Individuals who are being criminally exploited can be involved, linked to or considered to be (by themselves or others) as part of a "gang". It is important when children or adults identify or are identified as being affected or involved with gang-related activity that involves the use of actual or threatened violence and/or drug dealing that professionals also consider that they may be victims of criminal exploitation. Criminal exploitation is broader than but often part of organised crime and county lines.

## **Organised Crime & County lines**

Organised Crime is "serious crime planned, coordinated and conducted by people working together on a continuing basis. Their motivation is often, but not always, financial gain." Organised crime groups are "organised criminals working together for a particular criminal activity or activities." County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". They are likely to exploit children and adults to move, [locally supply] and store the drugs and money. They will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

## **Cuckooing**

This term is "named after the nest stealing practices of wild cuckoos. It describes the situation where a county lines dealer 'takes over' accommodation located in the provincial drugs market, using it as a local dealing base." (Coomber and Moyle: 2017) An individual or group can do this by taking over the homes of local adults and families through an abuse of power or vulnerability by coercion, control and/or force so that they can provide a base for the supply of drugs into the local community. This places the adult and/or families at an increased risk of eviction (if they are in social or privately rented housing) and isolation from their communities due to the anti-social activity it can create. Cuckooing often forms part of wider 'county lines' activity and is also a form of criminal exploitation.

## **Hate Crime**

The term 'hate crime' can be used to describe a range of criminal behaviour where the perpetrator is motivated by hostility or demonstrates hostility towards the victim's disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity.

These aspects of a person's identity are known as 'protected characteristics'. A hate crime can include verbal abuse, intimidation, threats, harassment, assault and bullying, as well as damage to property. The perpetrator can also be a friend, carer or acquaintance who exploits their relationship with the victim for financial gain or some other criminal purpose.

## **Prevent/Extremism**

'Extremism' is defined in the 2011 Prevent Strategy as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

'Violent Extremism' is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) as:

*"The demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views, which:*

- *Encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs;*
- *Seek to provoke others to terrorist acts;*
- *Encourage other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts;*
- *Foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK."*

There are a number of offences that can be considered when dealing with violent extremism. They include offences arising through spoken words, creation of tapes and videos of speeches, internet entries, chanting, banners and written notes and publications. The main offences employed to date have been soliciting murder and inciting racial hatred.

'Radicalisation' refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups. Radicalisation is usually a process not an event.

## **5.0 Signs and Symptoms**

- ***Physical abuse (physical observations)*** – could be bruising on trunk, face, upper arms, shoulders consistent with gripping; finger-tip bruising/finger marks; burns and scalds especially cigarette burns or burning for excessive exposure to heat; human bite marks; fractures especially spiral; swelling and a lack of normal use of limbs; any serious injury with no explanation or conflicting explanations/inconsistent accounts; untreated injuries
- ***Physical abuse (behavioural observations)*** – could be unusually fearful with adults; unnaturally compliant to parents/carers; refusal to discuss injuries/fear of medical help; withdrawal from physical contact; aggression towards others; wears cover up clothing; any behaviours that you would not expect to see in a child, at their age or stage of development; avoidance of situations or of a certain person.
- ***Neglect (physical observations)*** – could be poor personal hygiene, state of clothing or growth pattern; emaciation, pot belly, short stature; poor skin and hair tones; untreated medical problems; non organic failure to thrive
- ***Neglect (behavioural observations)*** – could be constant hunger or tiredness; frequent lateness or non-attendance at school; arrive early/leave late from school; low self-esteem; neurotic behaviour; no social relationships; running away; compulsive stealing or scavenging; destructive tendencies
- ***Sexual abuse (observations specific to sexual exploitation)*** – could be changes in peer group; unexplained wealth/goods; drug habit without any obvious ways of sustaining it; those who return from being missing but looking well cared

for; repeatedly associating with unknown men/women who are outside the family's contact which could be by mobile phone, email or post; dressing in an unexpected manner; mixing with others you suspect are being sexually exploited; reports that children have been seen in places to be used for prostitution; having keys to a property without any plausible explanation

- **Sexual abuse (behavioural observations)** – could be sexual knowledge inappropriate for age; sexualised behaviour in young children; sexually provocative behaviour/promiscuity; hinting at sexual activity and about secrets they cannot tell; inexplicable falling off in school performance; sudden changes in personality; lack of concentration, restlessness or aimlessness; socially withdrawn; overly compliant; acting out, aggressive behaviour; poor trust in significant adults; regressive behaviour, onset of wetting by day or night; onset of insecure clinging behaviour; arriving early at school or leaving late, erratic school attendance; running away; substance or alcohol misuse; suicide attempts, self-mutilation or self-disgust; eating disorders, hysteria attacks in adolescents; severe sleep disturbance; low self-esteem or self-image; avoidance of situations or a certain person.
- **Emotional abuse (causes)** – could be abuse from community; individual from carers; witnessing domestic or other violence; racism; bullying; being subjected to one of the other three forms of abuse, being subject to patterns of controlling or coercive behaviour (Coercive Control)
- **Emotional abuse (indicators)** – could be inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations; neurotic behaviour e.g. hair twisting, thumb sucking, rocking; fear of new situations; self-mutilation; fear of parents being contacted; extremes of passivity or aggression; drug/solvent abuse; running away; being the scapegoat in the family; coldness/hostility.

## 6.0 Safer Recruitment

Appropriate recruitment and selection procedures for staff and volunteers in the context of child protection have been adopted by Safeline and include the following.

- A clear definition of any role so that the most suitable appointee can be identified.
- The appointee must be interviewed in person by the recruitment staff prior to appointment.
- Identification of key selection criteria.
- A wide circulation of vacancies to ensure equal opportunities.
- Confirmation of the identity of the applicant including personal details obtained either through using an application form where appropriate, or through other means.
- Requirement of a declaration of previous convictions and submission to formal check, together with the issue of the Child Protection Policy for those candidates whose work will bring them into contact with children or who will have a management responsibility in relation to those whose work does bring them into such contact.
- A clear guarantee that disclosed information will be treated in confidence and not used against applicants unfairly, including adherence to the Disclosure and Barring Service code of practice.
- Documentary evidence of qualifications.
- Use of several selection techniques to maximise the chance of safe recruitment, e.g. interview, references, checks.
- At least one representative from the Charity meeting personally with every applicant, and an exploration of their attitudes towards working with children.



- **Interview-** where the post involves direct work with children two Safeline representatives will be involved and the child protection policy will be discussed with the candidate. There must be an 'in-person' interview with any candidate recruited who will be working with children.
- **References-** request two written references from at least two people who are not family members.
- **DBS-** a post offer will only be made subject to a satisfactory advanced DBS check being obtained.

## 7.0 Code of Practice

Safeline expects that all staff, which for these purposes includes anybody in paid or unpaid work on its behalf, will be aware of this Code of Practice and adhere to its principles in their approach to all children.

- The counselling process should be as open as possible, and it is important that no more time should be spent alone with children than is necessary to conduct the session.
- It is important not to have physical contact with children and this should be avoided.
- It is not good practice to take children alone in a car on journeys, however short.
- Do not make suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child, even in fun, as this could be misinterpreted.
- All children must have the opportunity to have their session in private without the presence of a parent or guardian in order to allow them to speak in complete privacy.
- It is important not to deter children from making a 'disclosure' of abuse through fear of not being believed, and to listen to what they have to say. If this gives rise to a child protection concern it is important to follow Safeline's procedure for reporting such concerns, and not to attempt to investigate the concern yourself.
- Remember that those who abuse children can be of any age (even other children), gender, ethnic background or class, and it is important not to allow personal preconceptions about people to prevent appropriate action taking place.
- Good practice includes valuing and respecting children as individuals and the adult modelling of appropriate conduct - which will always exclude bullying, shouting, racism, sectarianism or sexism.

## 8.0 Code of Behaviour - Child Protection

Safeline believes and seeks to adhere to the principle that children should be given every opportunity to learn that no one has the right to do anything to them that makes them feel uncomfortable. They have the right to not accept any behaviour from adult and children within the organisation that makes them feel threatened.

Safeline recognises that it is not practical to provide definitive instructions that would apply to all situations at all times whereby staff and volunteers come into contact with CYP and to guarantee the protection of CYP and Safeline's staff and volunteers.

However, below are the standards of behaviour required of staff or volunteers who work in an unpaid capacity on behalf of Safeline in order to fulfil their roles. These standards should assist in the protection of both CYP and members of staff and volunteers

- Always put the care needs welfare and safety of a child first.
- Respect a child's right to be involved in making choices and decisions which directly affect them.

- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy
- Ensure that when you are working with children, there is another adult in the building.
- Never engage in sexually provocative games or discussion with a child
- Never allow yourself or others to touch a child in a sexually provocative manner
- Never make sexually suggestive comments to a child even in jest.
- Do not engage in rough, physical games including horseplay with child.
- Never form inappropriate emotional or physical relationships with a child.
- Never do things of a personal nature for a child that they can do for themselves
- Never physically restrain a service user unless the restraint is to prevent physical injury of the person or anybody else. **In all circumstances physical restraint must be appropriate and reasonable, otherwise the action can be defined as assault**
- Never harass or intimidate a child because of their age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, socio economic class or disability.
- Never spend time alone with a child on his/her own, outside of the normal working relationship, i.e. a counselling sessions or private meeting
- Never invite a child to your home or offer a lift in a car
- Never invite a child on their own and into your own vehicle, unless this is as a part of the ISVA role. Also, it is essential that there is adequate insurance for the vehicle to cover transporting clients as part of the business of your work. In extreme emergencies (for medical purposes) where it is required to transport a client on their own, it is essential that a line manager is notified immediately
- Never engage in a personal relationship with a child, beyond that appropriate for your professional role/relationship.
- Never let allegations, made by anyone, go unacknowledged, unresolved or be failed to be acted upon.

Staff/workers should be aware of the potential for misunderstandings when touching children. If it is an accepted part of an activity touching should be appropriate to the situation and follow accepted guidelines where they exist. Consoling a child who is distressed, administering first aid or supporting an individual in an activity is acceptable and necessary behaviour.

**Staff/volunteers should endeavour to minimise any possible misunderstandings of their actions.**

#### **Implications for staff and volunteers**

Staff who breach any of the above may be subject to the disciplinary procedure or, if volunteers, the complaints procedure. If an allegation against a member of staff has occurred then an investigation will be carried out in accordance with the Complaints Procedure

### **9.0 Role and responsibilities of Designated Safeguarding Leads:**

1. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is the first point of contact for all staff and volunteers to go to for advice if they are concerned about a child. (This may also need to be out of hours so staff and volunteers should always know how to contact them).
2. The Designated Safeguarding Lead has a higher level of training and knowledge than the other staff and will have completed Warwickshire County Council's Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People training or equivalent.
3. They are responsible for ensuring that the organisation's Safeguarding Policy is kept up to date.

4. They will ensure that the organisation complies with safer recruitment procedures for new staff members and their induction.
5. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will assess information from staff regarding concerns about children and make decisions about whether staff concerns are sufficient enough to contact Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board (now called 'Family Connect'). See full details of how to make a referral or enquiry here: [Worried about a Child \(safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk\)](http://safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk)
6. The Designated Safeguarding Lead or member of staff will make formal referrals to the duty and advice team at the Warwickshire Family Connect.
7. They will ensure that all concerns are logged and stored securely.
8. They have a joint responsibility with the CEO or the Trustees to ensure that the organisation's Safeguarding Policy and related policies and procedures are followed and regularly updated.
9. They are responsible for promoting a safe environment for children and young people involved with Safeline.
10. They will know the contact details of the relevant statutory agencies. e.g. Warwickshire Family Connect, Police, local Safeguarding Children Board and the Local Authorised Designated Officer (LADO)

It is not the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to decide whether a child has been abused or not, that is the responsibility of the investigative statutory agencies such as Children Services or the Police. Keeping children safe is everybody's responsibility and all staff and volunteers should know who to go to and how to report any concerns they may have about a child being harmed or at risk of being harmed.

**If a member of staff or volunteers is unhappy with the decision made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead following discussions, they should seek another DSL with whom to discuss the case and then the CEO.**

Staff, parents and children should talk to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they have any concerns regarding a child/young person's safety.

## **10.0 Responding Appropriately to a Child Making an Allegation of Abuse**

### **Do's and Don'ts**

- Stay calm.
- allow them to speak without interruption
- Listen carefully to what is said.
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets.
- Tell the child that the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it.
- Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace.
- never trivialize or exaggerate the issue
- never make suggestions
- never coach or lead them in any way

- do not show your emotions. If you show anger, disgust or disbelief, they may stop talking. This may be because they feel they are upsetting you or they may feel your 'negative' feelings are directed towards them
- let them know that you are taking the matter very seriously
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- spare them having to repeat themselves over and over
- be honest. Let them know that you cannot keep this a secret, you will need to tell someone else
- Tell them what you will do next, and with whom the information will be shared.
- make them feel secure and safe without causing them any further anxiety.
- Record in writing what was said, using the child's own words as soon as possible – note the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.
- Check out how they are really feeling and do not avoid the subjects of self-harm and/or suicidal thoughts. Explore any feelings to ensure there is no serious and immediate intent.
- It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies, following a referral from the designated child protection person in the organisation.

### **Significant Harm**

The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of Significant Harm as the threshold which justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children.

Harm is defined as the ill treatment or impairment of health and development; and now includes impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.

Ill treatment includes sexual abuse and non-physical ill treatment.

Health includes both physical and mental health.

Development includes physical, intellectual, emotional, social and behavioural development.

There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes 'significant harm'. Considerations of severity of ill treatment may include:

- Degree and extent
- Duration and frequency
- Pre-meditation
- Threat and coercion
- Sadism
- Bizarre or unusual elements

## **11.0 Procedures for Reporting Concerns**

### **How to respond**

If any member of staff has concerns about child abuse or a child being at risk of significant harm they should act without delay and share their concerns immediately with the Dedicated Safeguarding Lead at Safeline. If a child is deemed to be at immediate risk Safeline will act without delay and share their concerns with Warwickshire Safeguarding Children and Families Team (Family Connect) for

information, advice and guidance on 01926 414144 (if in Warwickshire) Refer to their website for full details including out of hours contact, here:

[Worried about a Child \(safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk\)](http://safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk)

The parent/carer/representative of the child will be informed provided they are not involved in the abuse allegation. Safeline staff/volunteers should not attempt to investigate any allegations on their own.

A flowchart summarises the Safeline Child Protection guidelines (See Appendix C).

Designated Safeguarding Leads for Safeline are:

Colin Walker (Head of Safeguarding)  
Liz Welsh (Head of Clinical Services)  
Liz Harrison (Helpline and Online Services Manager)  
Emma Dolman (Head of Prevention and Early Intervention)  
Anne Brooks (Deputy DSL) (Helpline and Online Supervisor)  
Dan Woodley (Deputy DSL) (Helpline and Online Supervisor)

In their absence refer to Neil Henderson, Chief Executive Officer or the designated safeguarding Trustee in his absence.

Sara Shoreman (Designated Safeguarding Trustee)

All Safeguarding leads can be reached by the office on 01926 402498 or on [office@safeline.org.uk](mailto:office@safeline.org.uk), or refer to the DSL rota for their mobile numbers.

Queries can also be made directly with the Warwickshire Children and Families Family Connect Team on 01926 414144 if the case is urgent.

### **Education and Prevention Services Referral Pathways**

Prior to the commencement of a Safeline course or one to one mentoring the School concerned will identify a trained Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to act as a single point of contact regarding safeguarding issues. If a concern has already been identified by the DSL at the school and additional information is obtained during the Safeline session this additional information will be passed to the DSL at the school for appropriate action.

If a new disclosure is made to Safeline staff which is different in nature to the issues identified by the school and this disclosure is a safeguarding issue the member of staff receiving the disclosure will immediately report it to a Safeline Designated Safeguarding Lead.

A list of Safeline DSL's is detailed above.

If after consultation with the Safeline DSL it is agreed that the disclosure may reach the threshold test for a child suffering significant harm or is likely to suffer significant harm or any form of mistreatment or abuse the Safeline member of staff receiving the disclosure will report it to the Triage Hub on 01926 414144, (out of office hours 01926 886922) if urgent and necessary. The school DSL will be informed of the disclosure at the time of reporting.

### **Counselling, ISVA, Online Services and other Safeline Referral Pathway**

Any disclosure of a child or young person (CYP) suffering significant harm or likely to suffer significant harm or any other form of mistreatment or abuse will be immediately

reported to a Safeline Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) by the member of staff receiving the disclosure.

If after consultation with the Safeline DSL it is agreed that the disclosure may reach the threshold test for a CYP suffering significant harm or is likely to suffer significant harm or any form of mistreatment or abuse and sufficient identifiable information is obtained, the Safeline member of staff who received the disclosure will report to Warwickshire Safeguarding (Family Connect) by telephone if necessary.

In cases where insufficient identifiable information is obtained, but the threshold for significant harm is reached the member of staff who has received the disclosure will phone 999 and inform the Police.

***NB. Any report made to the Police for children and young people must also be reported to Warwickshire Safeguarding (Family Connect).***

## **12.0 Confidentiality Policy**

Confidentiality and trust should be maintained as far as possible, but staff and volunteers must act on the basis that the safety of the CYP is the overriding concern. The degree of confidentiality will be governed by the need to protect the CYP who should be informed as soon as possible after the disclosure that the information will be passed on. All conversations regarding a CYP should always be held in private.

Safeline complies with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations 2018, which protects CYP's rights but allows for disclosure of personal data where this is necessary to protect the vital interests of CYP.

Whatever happens, always be open and honest with the CYP of your intention to take the case further.

The sharing of ANY information with additional agencies should only be undertaken following consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Leads and in conjunction with the CEO if necessary.

You must not discuss the case with anyone other than those involved in the case. If you have any concerns about the progress of the case or have any other concerns these must be discussed with the DSL/CEO/Trustee acting.

## **13.0 Not Child Protection but still concerned**

If a member of staff or volunteer is concerned about the welfare of a Child but it is not a Child Protection Issue, the member of staff/worker should contact a DSL immediately (all workers are issued with a duty rota which they should refer to) and a course of action will be agreed upon. A cause for concern should be registered by completing a Safeguarding Incident Form and retained in the Safeguarding File. The Designating Safeguarding Leads will be responsible for reviewing these cases on a regular weekly basis.

## **14.0 Procedure for dealing with allegations of abuse or inappropriate conduct by a member of staff**

The primary concern of Safeline is to ensure the safety of the CYP. It is essential in all cases of suspected abuse by a member of staff that action is taken quickly and professionally whatever the validity.

Allegations of abuse or inappropriate behaviour by any member of staff, other worker or volunteer must be reported in the first instance to a DSL or in their absence to Neil Henderson, Chief Executive without delay. If the allegation concerns any of these members of staff it should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Trustee who will follow the complaints procedure.

The member of staff will be advised to:

- contact their union representative if they have one or a legal adviser
- keep records of all conversations, meetings attended, letters received and telephone calls relating to the allegation.

If a decision is made to pursue an allegation of abuse against a member of staff, this will be dealt with under Safeline's disciplinary procedures related to child abuse allegations.

**Action to be taken if you receive an allegation about yourself.**

Keep calm. Do not get involved in an argument which is likely to make the situation worse.

Immediately inform your line manager. The quicker that action is taken to investigate the allegations, the sooner the situation will be resolved.

Record the facts as you understand them.

Ensure that no-one is placed in a position which could cause further compromise. Do not contact another agency involved with the service user or the person concerned.

Await further contact from your line manager.

**Action to be taken if you suspect an abuse of trust has occurred**

Discuss your suspicions with your line manager.

Record the facts which support your suspicions

Once your suspicions have been passed on to the appropriate person, you should have no further involvement.

Whatever the nature of the complaint, it must be kept confidential. You must not discuss the disclosure with any individual or party other than those identified in the above procedure.

## **15.0 Whistle-Blowing Policy**

Safeline is committed to achieving high standards of integrity and accountability and expects the same commitment from staff, volunteers and all persons working on behalf of Safeline.

Safeline aims to provide an open environment so that employees and those working for Safeline can raise issues they believe to be in the public interest, with the confidence that they will be acted upon appropriately.

Employees and all staff will be protected from detrimental treatment, victimisation or dismissal if they raise concerns.

The procedure complies with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013.

Whistle-blowing is a formal raising of concerns that are in the public interest (referred to as public interest disclosure). Please refer to the Staff Handbook for further information about Whistle Blowing.

**Examples of concerns include:**

- Criminal offences
- Failure to comply with legal obligations
- Actions which endanger the health and safety of an individual
- Actions which cause damage to the environment
- Actions intended to conceal the above

Safeline encourages staff to raise concerns with their line managers or the CEO.

A written record will be created detailing:

- what is alleged by the employee
- the action to be taken
- a whistle-blowing investigation log commenced
- incident reported to CEO/Trustees as appropriate
- referral to the Police or other independent body

If the employee believes that they are unable to raise the matter with Safeline management or that the organisation has failed to take appropriate actions they may refer the matter to the Board of Trustees, via the Chair of Trustees, Sue Noyes.

**Concerns raised in confidence:**

Where a concern is raised in confidence Safeline will protect the identity of the whistle-blower. However, there will be circumstances where this is not possible for example where the whistle-blower is an essential witness and Safeline would be unable to investigate the situation further without revealing the whistle-blower's identity. Anonymous concerns will be considered but may prove difficult or impossible to investigate.

## **16.0 e-Safety Policy**

This policy and the procedures that it underpins apply to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students and anyone working on behalf of Safeline.

- to protect children and young people who receive Safeline's services and who make use of information technology (such as mobile phones, games consoles and the Internet) as part of their involvement with us
- to provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to e-safety
- to ensure that, as an organisation, we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use information technology

**We recognise that:**



- the welfare of the children/young people who come into contact with our services is paramount and should govern our approach to the use and management of electronic communications technologies
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare and in helping young people to be responsible in their approach to e-safety
- the use of information technology is an essential part of all our lives; it is involved in how we as an organisation gather and store information, as well as how we communicate with each other. It is also an intrinsic part of the experience of our children and young people and is greatly beneficial to all. However, it can present challenges in terms of how we use it responsibly and, if misused either by an adult or a young person, can be actually or potentially harmful to them

**We will seek to promote e-safety by:**

- appointing e-safety coordinators (note: this may or may not be the same person as your named person for child protection);
- developing a range of procedures that provide clear and specific directions to staff and volunteers on the appropriate use of ICT;
- supporting and encouraging the young people using our service to use the opportunities offered by mobile phone technology and the internet in a way that keeps themselves safe and shows respect for others;
- supporting and encouraging parents and carers to do what they can to keep their children safe online and when using their mobile phones and game consoles;
- incorporating statements about safe and appropriate ICT use into the codes of conduct both for staff and volunteers and for children and young people;
- developing an e-safety agreement for use with young people and their carers (see toolbox resource);
- use our procedures to deal firmly, fairly and decisively with any examples of inappropriate ICT use, complaints or allegations, whether by an adult or a child/young person (these may include breaches of filtering, illegal use, cyberbullying, or use of ICT to groom a child or to perpetrate abuse);
- informing parents and carers of incidents of concern as appropriate;
- reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly;
- providing adequate physical security for ICT equipment;
- ensuring that user names, logins and passwords are used effectively;
- using only official email accounts provided via the organisation, and monitoring these as necessary;

- ensuring that the personal information of staff, volunteers and service users (including service users' names) are not published on our website;
- ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after their written permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given;
- any social media tools used in the course of our work with children, young people and families must be risk assessed in advance by the member of staff wishing to use them;
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers on ICT issues, through supervision, support and training;
- examining and risk assessing any emerging new technologies before they are used within the organisation.

The name of our e-safety coordinators are Colin Walker, Liz Harrison and Liz Welsh. they can be contacted on 01926 402498. We are committed to reviewing our policy, procedures and good practice annually.

## APPENDIX A - LEGISLATION

There is a considerable body of legislation designed to ensure that children are protected and it is important to understand that everyone is responsible for the safety of children. The main Acts include:

### **The Children's Act 1989 (England and Wales)**

Legislation to ensure the welfare and developmental needs of children are met, including their need to be protected from harm.

### **The Children and Social Work Act 2017**

Legislation intended to improve support for looked after children and care leavers, promote the welfare and safeguarding of children and make provisions about the regulation of social workers.

### **The Children's Act 2004**

Legislation that puts into practice the proposals as set out in the Green Paper - Every Child Matters (2003). It creates clear accountability to ensure that all agencies and organisations work together more effectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

### **The Protection of Children Act 1999**

This creates a framework operating across the different sectors that work with children to identify those considered unsuitable to work with children. It includes listing their names on PoCA list and the former education list 99.

### **The Children (Protection from Offenders) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulation 1997**

These regulations are mainly concerned with preventing the approval of people as foster carers or adoptive parents where either they or any other members of their household over the age of 18 are known to have been convicted of or cautioned for relevant offences. These regulations also apply to childminding, private fostering and residential care.

### **Criminal Justice Court Services Act 2000**

This provides a comprehensive definition of working with children. Refers to the responsibility of public bodies to prevent unsuitable people from working with children and provides criminal sanctions for those who breach the disqualification.

### **General Data Protection Regulations 2018**

This relates to the recording and storage of information, including information about children. It outlines information about consent, that information should be clear and must be obtained fairly and processed lawfully, shared only in certain circumstances and kept securely.

### **Sexual Offences Act 2003**

This contains a package of measures to give children the greatest possible protection from sexual abuse.

### **Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003**

This requires regulated health professionals and teachers to report disclosures or evidence of FGM by a child.

## **APPENDIX B – Guidance for Reporting Concerns to Warwickshire Safeguarding Children and Families (Family Connect)**

### **How do I make a safeguarding referral?**

#### **For urgent concerns**

If you have an urgent child protection concern and need to get in touch, call the Family Connect on **01926 414144**. Lines are open:

- Monday to Thursday: 8.30am – 5:30pm / Friday: 8.30am – 5:00pm

#### **Out of hours**

If you need to get in touch of the usual office hours, please contact the Emergency Duty Team immediately on **01926 886922**.

#### **Emergencies**

If you think that a child is at immediate risk, contact the police immediately on **999**.

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#### **Before making a referral**

Please take a look at the [Spectrum of Support document](#) to decide whether your concerns require a referral to Children's Social Care (this has replaced the Threshold for Services Document):

[https://www.safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk/images/downloads/ESS-PB/Spectrum\\_Of\\_Support\\_2021.pdf](https://www.safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk/images/downloads/ESS-PB/Spectrum_Of_Support_2021.pdf)

## **Do I need to inform parents or carers that I have concerns and I am making a referral?**

Usually yes. Professionals should seek to discuss any concerns they have with the people who have parental responsibility for the child and inform them that they are making a referral. This should not be done where such discussions will place a child at increased risk of significant harm or cause any delay.

## **What happens after the safeguarding referral is made?**

Warwickshire Safeguarding Children will review the referral to determine whether it is a known case or a concern. This will include checking if the case is currently open to Children's Social Care or to Early Help.

## **If the case is currently open**

If a concern has already been raised or has been closed within the last twelve weeks, the referral will be forwarded directly to the Children's Team to follow up. This will usually be via the Duty Social Worker within that team and the Operations Manager.

This will be followed up by a telephone call and recorded on the case recording system.

If the child was stepped down to Early Help within the last twelve weeks, in which case depending on the concerns raised the information will be shared and discussed with the lead practitioner, where possible to decide if the concerns are such that Early Help can address the concerns or whether there are new or additional concerns which need a different response.

## **Can I get further advice about a situation I am concerned about?**

Yes. Each agency will have its own safeguarding procedures which will detail how to identify and assess safeguarding concerns. However, your own agency Safeguarding lead will have further advice about thresholds and when to make a referral.

## **Consultation and Advice**

If you are not sure whether you need to make a referral, use the Thresholds for Services and discuss your concerns with your agency's safeguarding lead. If you are still not sure after taking these steps, professionals can contact the Family Connect using the consultation service. Call Family Connect on **01926 414144** and select **option 3. Consultation** and Advice

**Appendix C - Flowchart regarding Child Protection and Adults at Risk Procedure**

