



SAFEGUARDING – CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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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
- Data Protection 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
- Children Act 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017

- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Education Act 2002 (section 175 duties if relevant)
- Childcare Act 2006 (where relevant)
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (for DBS provisions)

Statutory Guidance (essential)

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

Optional Principle / Values Reference

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) for rights-based context

GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations)

These Regulations replace the Data Protection Act 1988 as at 25th May 2018. This policy should be read in conjunction with Safeline's 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:

1. Physical Abuse

Physical harm caused by hitting, shaking, burning, drowning, suffocating, or other deliberate acts. It may also result from failing to protect a child from harm.

2. Emotional Abuse

Persistent emotional ill-treatment that causes severe adverse effects on a child's emotional development. This includes humiliation, threats, controlling behavior, or making a child feel worthless, unloved, or inadequate.

3. Sexual Abuse

Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activity, whether or not the child is aware or consents. This includes sexual assault, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, encouraging inappropriate sexual behaviour, and producing or sharing sexual images.

4. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

A form of sexual abuse where a child is manipulated or coerced into sexual activity in exchange for something the child needs or for the financial or other gain of another. CSE can occur online or in person and does not always involve physical contact.

5. Neglect

Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, medical care, or supervision, likely to result in serious harm to health or development.

6. Trafficking / Modern Slavery

Recruiting, transporting, or exploiting children through force, coercion, deception, or abuse of vulnerability, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, or servitude.

7. Forced Marriage

A marriage conducted without the full, free consent of one or both parties. This includes cases where children are coerced or taken abroad to marry.

8. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Procedures that intentionally alter or injure female genital organs for non-medical reasons. FGM is illegal in the UK, including assisting or taking a child abroad for FGM.

9. Criminal Exploitation / County Lines

Children may be coerced or manipulated into criminal activity, such as drug trafficking, theft, or other offences, often as part of gang-related or county lines activity. This can include the use of threats, intimidation, or social media.

10. Hate Crime / Discrimination

Abuse motivated by hostility or prejudice against a child's disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity. This can include verbal abuse, bullying, harassment, or physical assault.

11. Prevent / Extremism

Children may be exposed to extremist ideologies or radicalisation. Extremism includes vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, promotion of terrorist activity, or behaviour that fosters hatred likely to lead to harm.

'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 represented by specific interview questions.

- **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 enhanced DBS check being obtained.

7.0 Code of Practice

Safeline expects that all staff, who 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.

- Interventions with children and young people (CYP) 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.
- 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 CYP 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 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 (DSLs):

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 will ensure that the organisation complies with safer recruitment procedures for new staff members and their induction.
4. 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 \(safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk\)](https://www.safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk)

5. The Designated Safeguarding Lead or member of staff will make formal referrals to the duty and advice team at the Warwickshire Family Connect.
6. They will ensure that all concerns are logged and stored securely.
7. 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.
8. They are responsible for promoting a safe environment for children and young people involved with Safeline.
9. 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

- 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 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 Child Safeguarding 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead at Safeline. The DSL will assess the risk and refer concerns to Warwickshire Family Connect (Front Door) on 01926 414144 or alternative agency for individuals residing outside of Warwickshire. DSLs meet weekly to discuss new and ongoing cases to ensure all cases are monitored appropriately.

Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Partnership further information including opening hours can be found here:

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

Where children make disclosures within schools or similar settings, it is the responsibility of Safeline staff to share this information immediately with the school Designated Safeguarding Lead and ensure they refer on these concerns to Family Connect. Where there is not a school DSL it is Safeline's responsibility to refer concerns to Family Connect as set out in the preceding paragraph.

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, 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 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:

1. Children Act 1989 – Primary statute establishing statutory duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Local authorities must make enquiries where a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>

2. Children Act 2004 – Strengthens multi-agency cooperation and underpins local safeguarding arrangements now delivered by Safeguarding Partnerships.

 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>

3. Children and Social Work Act 2017 – Defines duties relating to looked-after children, social work regulation, and responsibilities of safeguarding partners.

 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/contents>

4. Sexual Offences Act 2003 – Contains key criminal offences related to child sexual abuse and exploitation.

 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/contents>

5. Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 – Supports the DBS and safer recruitment processes to prevent unsuitable people working with children.

 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/contents>

6. Education Act 2002 (section 175) – Requires educational settings to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under their care.

 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents>

7. Childcare Act 2006 – Safeguarding duties for childcare providers, including safe recruitment, staffing and training requirements.

 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/21/contents>

8. Domestic Abuse Act 2021 – Recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children and families and supports multi-agency responses.

 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/contents>

9. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Act 2003 (as amended) – Makes FGM a criminal offence and includes extra-territorial provision.

 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/31/contents>

10. Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 – Includes measures affecting criminal record checks relevant to child-related work and DBS provisions.

 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/9/contents>

11. Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR – Governs personal data processing, including sharing information to safeguard children appropriately.

 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents>

Statutory Guidance (England)

12. *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)* – Statutory multi-agency guidance on identifying, responding to and reporting child protection concerns. Applies to all organisations working with children in England.

 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children>

13. *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)* – Statutory guidance for schools and education providers on safeguarding duties, safer recruitment and child protection procedures.

 [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education–](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education)
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Principle / Human Rights Reference

14. *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1991* – International treaty setting out children's rights, which informs a rights-based safeguarding approach. *(Not directly enforceable in UK law but valuable in policy context.)*

 <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention>

Notes for Staff:

- This appendix supports the organisation's legal and procedural duties in safeguarding children.
- Always refer to the latest versions of the legislation and guidance linked above.
- Local safeguarding arrangements implemented by Safeguarding Partnerships should also be followed where applicable.

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**.

Before making a referral

Please take a look at the [Spectrum of Support document](https://www.safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk/images/downloads/ESS-PB/Spectrum_Of_Support_2021.pdf) 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

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

For Safeguarding concerns outside of Warwickshire, contact the Local Authority in that area for contact numbers and procedures.

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

