

Safeguarding Policy - Child Protection Children's Homes (England only)

Introduction

This policy is written in line with:

- Children's Act 2004
- Care Standards Act 2000
- The Children's Home Regulations 2015.
- The Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (Updated December 2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2023

This policy is only applicable to Children's Homes in England. It was written by the Children's Homes Safeguarding Policy Champion's Group. **Our Children supported with their views to help write this policy, their comments are highlighted in orange throughout the policy.** The policy has also been reviewed and agreed by the proprietor.

This policy also applies to children's homes who are located on a school site. All schools and Residential Special Schools have separate policies which are linked to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2023.

This policy applies to all staff and visitors at a children's home, including agency and volunteers.

Alongside this policy all staff will receive training at induction. There is also online training on Myrus that all staff in children's homes must complete. This training must also be refreshed annually. Additional training and support can be accessed by contacting:

- Learning Request Form (LRF) [NCLD Learning Request Form \(monday.com\)](https://www.monday.com)
- Christina Leath – Group Safeguarding Director on Christina.Leath@caretech-uk.com

All safeguarding concerns raised will be kept confidential and on a 'need to know basis'. At all stages staff who raised concerns are encouraged to ask for updates to their concern, so that they are satisfied the raised concern has been managed appropriately and the right action has been taken.

Aims of Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that staff know:



- the difference between safeguarding and child protection
- the difference between an allegation and disclosure
- how to identify a child protection concern and,
- how to respond to an allegation of abuse
- The Registered Manager is clear on their role and can respond and record concerns without delay
- The Registered Manager is clear on a multiagency approach to child protection.

Definitions in this policy

The terms below are used throughout this document with the following definitions:

- Child: anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means 'children and young people' throughout this policy.
- Looked after child: a child who is looked after by a local authority by reason of a care order, or being accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act 1989.
- Responsible local authority: the local authority that is responsible for a looked after child's care and care planning.
- Host local authority: the local authority in which a looked after child is placed when placed out of the responsible local authority's area.
- Position of Trust – where the child has some dependency on the adult involved, often combined with an element of vulnerability of the child. Existing positions of trust are directed at those who are employed to provide care for a child in a residential care home under the age of 18.
- Abuse: In the context of child protection, is behaviour towards a child which has the deliberate intention of causing harm. More information is found via this link [Types of Child Abuse & How to Prevent Them | NSPCC](#)
- 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.
- Allegation – a claim or assertion that someone has done something illegal or wrong, typically one made without proof.
- Disclosure - the act of making something previously unknown, known.

Child Protection and Safeguarding – What's the difference?

Safeguarding is an overarching, **preventative** action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding means:

- protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to children's health or development
- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- acting to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It is **responsive** and focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.

Abuse or Neglect



If staff believe a child is not their 'usual self' or have reason for concern, they must report this in writing, to the registered manager / deputy.

Abuse

Signs of abuse are:

- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality
- becoming withdrawn
- seeming anxious
- becoming uncharacteristically aggressive
- lacks social skills and has few friends, if any
- poor bond or relationship with a parent or carer?
- Educational neglect - not making sure a child receives an education
- knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age
- running away or going missing
- always choosing to wear clothes which cover their body.

Neglect

Types of neglect are:

- **Physical neglect**
A child's basic needs, such as food, clothing or shelter, are not met or they aren't properly supervised or kept safe.
- **Educational neglect**
A parent or carer doesn't ensure their child is given an education.
- **Emotional neglect**
A child doesn't get the nurture and stimulation they need. This could be through ignoring, humiliating, intimidating or isolating them.
- **Medical neglect**
A child isn't given proper health care. This includes dental care and refusing or ignoring medical recommendations.
- **Neglect in Care**
occurs when a person deliberately withholds, or fails to provide, suitable and adequate care and support needed by the child.

Signs of neglect are:

- Being frequently absent from school
- Inappropriate clothing (e.g. shoes too small, clothes are ill-fitted or unsuitable for the weather conditions)
- Clothes are consistently dirty or smelly
- Being hungry
- Hands are cold, red and swollen
- Unkempt appearance and poor hygiene; hair quality is poor or is messy, teeth are dirty, skin dirty
- Lacking necessary medical or dental care, including immunisations or glasses
- Missing medical appointments
- Health problems, including anaemia, body issues, poor muscle tone or prominent joints, regular illness of infections, repeated accidental injuries (often cause by lack of supervision), skin issues (e.g. sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies, ringworm), thin or swollen tummy, weight or growth issues, untreated injuries
- Developmental problems, including poor language or social skills
- Frequent and untreated nappy rash in infants



- Being constantly underweight or considerably losing weight
- The parent or carer has failed to keep the child protected from physical harm or danger
- Begging or stealing things like money or food
- Living in an unsuitable environment (e.g. no heating, messy)
- Being left home alone for long periods of time
- Taking on the role of a carer for other family members
- Changes in behaviour, such as becoming clingy, aggressive, withdrawn, depressed or anxious, displaying obsessive behaviour
- Changes in eating habits
- Using drugs or alcohol
- Self-harm or attempts at suicide

Mind of My Own

Mind of My Own is available to support all children and young people across CareTech Children's Services. This is used via an app or computer log in and enables a child's views, wishes and feelings to be shared digitally as well as, or, instead of verbally. To access Mind of My Own, young people can set up their own account and this can be supported by the use of staff 'Practitioner Accounts'.

Mind of my own is not an emergency service and should a concern arise staff need to follow the reporting in this policy and should not rely on the app to perform this role.

Regarding child protection, within both products, young people have opportunity to raise concerns if they wish. More specifically the One App has a function called 'Safety Link' which is triggered if a young person mentions or chooses the words 'unsafe', 'scared' or 'unhappy'. Portal admins are instantly notified of such statements, which then provides opportunity to discuss directly with the young person when they next meet. As already mentioned above if young people raise any safeguarding concerns, this information needs to be treated exactly the same as any other form of safeguarding concern and reported as per the procedures within this policy.

Mind of My Own enhances our ability to hear and listen to a child's voice and does not replace any existing methods that are already working for our young people. All we know is that sometimes even when we have a good positive relationship with a young person they can find it difficult to share their true thoughts, feelings and emotions. By sending a statement via Mind of My Own young people have the opportunity to share those thoughts, feelings and emotions without the need for face to face interaction and when they feel ready not when we are asking.

Our children felt able to tell adults via Mind of My Own of their concerns if they did not feel comfortable talking to adult's face to face.

Children's homes who are attached to schools

Children's homes who are linked to schools should be aware of the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2023. Staff working in these children's homes must follow **this policy** when a safeguarding concern arises and not the school policy. Communication will need to be strong between the Registered/Homes Manager and the Responsible Individual for the home. This, in most cases will be the School Principal.



KCSiE, also requires staff in these children's homes to consider the following areas -

- be alert to the extra vulnerabilities of SEND children
- inappropriate pupil or student relationships and the potential for child-on-child abuse, particularly in schools and colleges where there are significantly more girls than boys or vice versa.

More information regarding the SEND vulnerabilities of your children can be sourced from the Headteacher and must be clear throughout children's plans.

The group policy for anti-bullying and the school child on child abuse policy will give more information regarding the risks children face in a larger setting. Staff must follow these policies.

Staff management of allegations/disclosures

'Report it. Investigate it. Stop it from happening again'.

It is important that staff understand the definitions of each to ensure they are clear with how to respond.

- Allegation – a claim or assertion that someone has done something illegal or wrong, typically one made without proof.
- Disclosure - the act of making something previously unknown, known.

When there is a suspicion a child has been harmed by a person working with them, or a child discloses abuse, staff must ensure this is passed to the right person. This policy will guide staff in how to record and pass information quickly to prevent the child from risk of further harm.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 is clear that:

'Organisations and agencies working with children and families should have clear policies for dealing with allegations against people who work with children. Such policies should make a clear distinction between an allegation, a concern about the quality of care or practice, or a complaint'.

An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children'

The person who an allegation or concern is first reported to, should treat the matter seriously and keep an open mind.

'Help them, support them by listening and talking'.

They should:



- protect the confidentiality of the process
- Follow up your concerns after raising.
- Ask safety questions (TED – Tell, Explain, Describe) – use open questions
- Make a written record of the information (using where possible, the child's / adult's own words), including the time, date and place where the alleged incident took place, what was said and anyone else present
- Sign and date the written record
- Immediately report the matter to the Registered Manager, or deputy in their absence
- Where the Registered Manager is the subject of the allegation, the information should be reported to Responsible Individual / Service Manager.
- For children's homes attached to schools, staff, must ensure the concern is logged on to Behaviourwatch

They should not:

- Investigate or ask leading questions
- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations
- Promise confidentiality - the person/persons should be advised that the concern will be shared on a 'need to know' basis
- Share this outside of the reporting process

'Ask "how" – don't push too hard if we don't want to tell you'

'We talk to you in confidence, unless it's a health risk, please don't write it down in front of us as it makes us feel like we can't talk to you and will keep it to ourselves.'

Allegations against the Registered Manager / Senior Manager

On an occasion where a child alleges that a registered manager or senior leader has harmed them. Staff must contact the on-call regional manager or a senior manager to inform them, they must not be involved with the allegation. If the on-call manager is reported to be involved in the allegation then the regional director or an alternative manager (who is senior to the on-call manager) must be contacted.

All calls must be followed up with an e-mail that clearly sets out the details of the allegation.

Staff must follow the advice from the senior leader, which should include a referral to LADO. If staff have been given different advice and still believe a referral is needed, then this must be escalated further and staff should consult with the group Whistleblowing policy.

The role of Registered Manager/On Call Manager

The registered manager must ensure they update the following people without delay -

- children's social worker
- the host local authority
- their regional manager
- if appropriate, the child's parents or carers.

E-mails should be sent and copies kept to show that actions have been taken. If escalation is necessary then the registered manager must copy in senior managers.



If a social worker initiates a child protection enquiry (section 47) then staff and the manager must co-operate fully with the social worker and partner agencies in their investigation.

A Regulation 40 notification must be sent to Ofsted [Tell Ofsted about an incident: children's social care notification - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

- To inform them of an allegation against somebody working in the home.
- to inform them of the start of a Section 47 investigation.
- Ofsted must also be notified via Regulation 40 once the Section 47 investigation has concluded.

Records of the allegation of abuse or neglect must be kept and staff must ensure that any actions that have been taken are recorded in these records via safeguarding tracker packs / confidential safeguarding logs.

Any agreed actions or measures that have been put in place must be added to the young person's risk assessment and supporting plans.

Staff will ensure the young person is supported via 1-1 sessions – where appropriate.

Staff and the manager will look at any other mitigation which may be required.

Police to be called if a crime is suspected.

The manager must also inform their Regional Manager (RM) and for the RM to escalate to the Managing Director as well as informing the Compliance and Quality Team if required.

The LADO will inform the manager of next steps and whether an investigation is required. If an internal investigation is required the manager must consult with the Regional Manager and HR.

If an allegation does not meet LADO threshold or they do not recommend an internal process the registered manager must consult with HR as company policies may have been breached. Managers must consult with HR regardless of LADO advice to ensure a consistent approach to allegations.

Ofsted must be notified under Regulation 40 [Tell Ofsted about an incident: children's social care notification - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

The registered manager should where possible, feedback to those who have raised the concern and let them know the progress of the concern and outcome.

Once a child protection concern is concluded, the registered manager must reflect on the concern, the outcome and all available information and consider the lessons learned. Where best practice has been seen, this should be shared with the Regional Manager to ensure that this can be disseminated.

Timescales for reporting a concern regarding someone in a position of trust

Immediately



- staff should raise with the registered manager/on call manager
- Staff ensure that the young person is kept safe from immediate danger and risk.
- Police to be called if a crime has been alleged.

At the earliest opportunity/end of the working day

- LADO informed if allegation is against position of trust
- Responsible Individual/Regional Manager informed
- HR informed

Within 24 hours

- Communication with LADO regarding safeguards required to keep young person safe.
- Regulation 40 notification to Ofsted
- Ensure identified actions to keep the child safe have been implemented.

Within 48 hours

- Feedback from LADO regarding whether incident is investigated internally or whether a S47 is required.

Within 5 days

- Management Investigation to be underway (if appropriate and no S47)
- Chase all agencies if a S47 investigation is required for dates of meetings and coordinate visitors to the home.
- Update Ofsted via Regulation 40 notification of outcome of allegation.
- E-mail to Head of Policy of any gaps in staff practice which will lead to a revision of policy.

If a S47 remains ongoing

- Chase agencies every 3-5 days for updates.
- Inform Regional Manager and Regional Director of any significant updates.

If there is no outcome after 30 days

- Managers to raise their concerns with the child's IRO and social work team manager.
- Regional Manager and Regional Director to be informed

Upon conclusion of S47

- Ensure that Regional Manager, Regional Director updated with outcomes and lessons learned.
- Staff to update the child's plans including care plan and risk assessments of children involved.
- Notification to Ofsted to confirm end of S47 and lessons learned.
- E-mail to Head of Policy of any gaps in staff practice which will lead to a revision of policy.

Timescales for reporting a concern regarding someone NOT in a position of trust

Immediately

- staff should raise with the registered manager/on call manager
- Staff ensure that the young person is kept safe from immediate danger and risk.
- Police to be called if a crime has been alleged.

At the earliest opportunity/end of the working day

- The child's social worker to be informed, and or the Local Authority



- MASH or Early Help informed via local reporting protocol - [Report child abuse to a local council - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/mash)
- Responsible Individual/Regional Manager informed

Within 24 hours

- Communication with Social Work team regarding safeguards required to keep young person safe.
- Consider whether a Regulation 40 notification to Ofsted is required, is the allegation/disclosure significant in your view?
- Ensure identified actions to keep the child safe have been implemented.

Within 48 hours

- Feedback from Social Work team whether a S47 is required.
- A S47 would mean that a Regulation 40 notification is required.

Within 5 days

- Chase all agencies if a S47 investigation is required for dates of meetings and coordinate visitors to the home.
- Update Ofsted via Regulation 40 notification of outcome of allegation.
- E-mail to Head of Policy of any gaps in staff practice which will lead to a revision of policy.

If a S47 remains ongoing

- Chase agencies every 3-5 days for updates.
- Inform Regional Manager and Regional Director of any significant updates.

If there is no outcome after 30 days

- Managers to raise their concerns with the child's IRO and social work team manager.
- Regional Manager and Regional Director to be informed

Upon conclusion of S47

- Ensure that Regional Manager, Regional Director updated with outcomes and lessons learned.
- Staff to update the child's plans including care plan and risk assessments of children involved.
- Notification to Ofsted to confirm end of S47 and lessons learned.
- E-mail to Head of Policy of any gaps in staff practice which will lead to a revision of policy.

External handling of allegations

When the Registered Manager is informed of an allegation they must report without delay to the LADO [Report child abuse to a local council - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/lado).

Written by:

- Matt Nicholls – Head of Policy (Children)
- John Reidy – Regional Manager (NE)
- Samantha Kingston – General Manager (Merida and Meeko)
- Shelley Simpson - Registered Manager (Yorkshire)
- Nicola Deaton – Assistant Regional Manager (North East)
- James Whincup – Compliance and Quality Manager
- Christine Seecharan – Compliance and Quality Manager



- Kate Jones – Director of Service (Branas Isaf)
- Carol Statham - Registered Manager (Lancashire)
- Jonathan Lewis – Deputy Manager (Inspire)
- Pam Thompson – Team Leader (ROC North West)

This policy was also supported by the children at one of children's homes 'Merida' who shared their views.

Review

This Policy was written on 02 February 2024. A review will be annually as a minimum. However, subject to a significant safeguarding concern this policy and all other attached policies will be reviewed and monitored as part of a lessons learned review.

This policy has been reviewed by:

- Christina Leath – Group Safeguarding Director
- Lee Jones – Managing Director (Central)
- Lorna Fearon – Managing Director (East)
- Mike Ore – Managing Director (West)
- Graham Norris - Operations Director Care (SEN)
- Patrick Sullivan - Head of Compliance, Children Services & Deputy Director Compliance & Quality
- Shilleen Freeth - Group Head of Human Resources
- Sheri-Ann Fudge - Senior HR Business Partner
- Tom Burford - Group Director of Performance Improvement
- Amanda Sherlock - Compliance & Regulation Director

This policy has been signed and agreed by the proprietor:



Jeremy Wiles
**Group Executive Director-
Children's Services**
Date: February 2024

This policy sits alongside the following Children's Home policies:

- Anti-Bullying Policy



- Missing from Care Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Exploitation Policy (CSE/CCE)
- PREVENT / Radicalisation Policy
- Self-Harm Policy