

Safeguarding Children Policy

Our Vision

Building better lives through social care and housing in local communities.

Our Mission

We co-design and deliver services that offer innovative social care solutions and support people to thrive.

Our Values

We are
caring and
compassionate



We are
inclusive
and **trusted**



We focus on
excellence
and
innovation



We work in
partnership
and are
one-team



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 **Look Ahead**
CARE, SUPPORT AND HOUSING

Quick Links

[Immediate procedures](#) to follow if you have concerns about a child

[Flowcharts](#)

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 We are committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of those who use our services, working in partnership with children, their families and other agencies, as appropriate.
- 1.2 As a care, support and housing provider we play an important role in safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. This policy and its supporting [procedure](#) aims to ensure that our staff and those who work with our organisation are able to respond to any child safeguarding concerns in a consistent manner in line with the relevant legislation.
- 1.3 This policy and its supporting [procedure](#) applies to all staff, contractors, volunteers, involved customers, board members and anyone working on our behalf. Safeguarding is [everyone's responsibility](#) and we all have a responsibility to act on concerns of abuse or neglect. It outlines our approach to preventing and responding to concerns of abuse, harm or neglect of children.
- 1.4 This policy applies to safeguarding anyone under the age of 18 years and applies across all tenures and service types. We deliver a range of services across different client and age groups. We recognise that in the course of day-to-day business, our staff and anyone working on our behalf will potentially be in contact with children and young people and may need to take action in response to concerns they identify.
- 1.5 This policy and the accompanying [Safeguarding Adults Policy](#) (for safeguarding anyone aged 18 and over) ensures the protection and well-being of children and adults at risk. All staff must follow these policies and associated procedures.
- 1.6 The policy applies to any new concerns or allegations of abuse and/or neglect, and also any allegations or concerns relating to historic abuse and/or neglect. Both current and past concerns and allegations must be reported and followed up in line with the accompanying procedures.

2. Definitions

2.1 **Safeguarding** means promoting the welfare of children as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- acting to enable all children to have the best outcomes

2.2 There are many different types and patterns of [abuse and neglect](#), including (but not limited to):

- **Intra-familial Harm**, where the abuse is happening within the context of the family home
 - Physical abuse
 - Emotional and psychological abuse
 - Sexual abuse
 - Neglect
 - Domestic abuse
- **Extra-Familial Harm (also known as Contextual Safeguarding)**, where children may be at risk of experiencing abuse and exploitation in context outside of their families in a range of environments including peer groups, schools, community and public spaces
 - Technology Assisted Abuse
 - Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment
 - Child sexual exploitation
 - Child criminal exploitation
 - Female genital mutilation ('FGM')
 - Bullying and cyber bullying
 - Child trafficking
 - Financial or material abuse
 - [Discriminatory Abuse](#)
- **Transitional Safeguarding** is a response required to address the specific developmental, social and contextual needs of adolescents and young adults aged between 15 and 25 years old. Young people entering adulthood can experience difficulties accessing service support, often because of the different thresholds which govern children and adult safeguarding responses and eligibility. We must consider how we develop an

approach which not only protects but also prepares young people for their adulthood.

Transitional safeguarding approaches can also be applied to any significant transitions within a CYP's life, including moving house, moving school, moving to new services, etc.

2.3 The term **child or children** is used to include all young people under the age of 18 years. A child is still legally a child and will be given the same protection and entitlement as any other child if they have reached 16 years of age and is:

- Living independently
- In further education
- A member of the armed forces
- In hospital
- In custody in the secure estate

2.4 The term **unborn child** is used where it is anticipated that there is a potential risk of significant harm with regards to an expected baby (e.g. through domestic abuse, parental substance misuse or mental ill health).

2.5 **Safe Spaces** - All of our services and supported housing projects have safe spaces where children and/or young people impacted by a safeguarding intervention can:

- reflect on the events that led up to the intervention
- give their version of what has happened
- say what they want to happen in future
- feel listened to
- understand what is happening and what will happen next and in the future.

Safe spaces are private, sound proofed and accessible, and are usually furnished in a homely, comfortable style, with age-appropriate visual art and fixtures and fittings.

3. Our Approach to Safeguarding Children

3.1 We play an important part in safeguarding children and promoting their welfare as we have:

- children living within our services who may be at risk of harm or abuse from others, including our own customers
- services with [Looked After Children](#) and other young people who no longer live with their families
- children visiting our services
- customers who have contact with children in a variety of contexts, including as their parents
- customers who are experiencing or have fled from domestic abuse where there is a risk towards children

- customers [transitioning from Children's to Adult services](#)

3.2 Child Safeguarding is supported by the following governance structure:

- The Executive Director of Group Operations and Customer Experience is the Designated Safeguarding Lead for children and young people. They are responsible for making sure all concerns raised are well managed and reported to the statutory teams in the Local Authority responsible for Safeguarding children, including the LADO. Their role is to ensure that staff and customers recognise safeguarding concerns and know how to report them.
- The Director of Practice Development, Safeguarding and Quality is the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead who reports to the Quality and Safety Committee of the Board and Chairs the Safeguarding Panel.
- The Safeguarding Manager is the Designated Safeguarding Officer who will oversee and coordinate any investigations relating to child protection and chairs the Safeguarding Forum.
- The Safeguarding Panel meets monthly bringing together the Directors of Operations and Heads of Service to review serious incidents and investigations, current trends and concerns.
- The Safeguarding Forum meets quarterly bringing together operational frontline colleagues, managers and central services to share practice and bring about service improvements.
- All staff must complete internal recording systems within the procedural timelines.
- The Safeguarding and Quality Team monitor and review all reports and incidents and produce organisational reports to support the mitigation and reduction of potential harm.
- The Customer Incident Panel meet three times a year and offers customers the opportunity to review anonymised safeguarding incidents and identify any learning that should be taken on board by the organisation. The Customer Co-Chair presents findings and areas for improvement to the Safeguarding Panel.

3.3 We are committed to working in partnership with the relevant local authority ensuring all concerns are immediately referred and discussed with their Child Protection Team and, where necessary, their Designated Officer or LADO. We will also notify Ofsted and CQC (where required) as soon as possible following any safeguarding concerns in regulated services in line with the requirements on the notification of serious incidents.

3.4 Where a child has been placed by a different local authority to where the placement is located, we will always ensure that both the placing and accommodating local authority are fully informed of the safeguarding concern or allegation.

3.5 We are a member of the **National Working Group** of the [Contextual Safeguarding Network](#) and remain committed to ensuring that staff understand where young people in their services are spending their time and which of these contexts may pose a risk of harm to the young person, recognising that early identification of potential risks is the key to disrupting exploitation before concerns escalate into

formal safeguarding alerts.. Staff will understand the locality of the service, develop relationships with key local stakeholders and agencies, and understand any specific local concerns which may be the source of harm to young people,

- 3.6 Our Safer Recruitment Policy ensures that we adhere to rigorous procedures, including the right to work, criminal records checks and references to ensure that only suitable staff are selected for positions within our organisation.
- 3.7 All new staff must complete mandatory child protection and safeguarding training relevant to their role as part of their induction and all staff must complete e-learning refresher training annually and receive ongoing safeguarding updates when required. Our staff are open to the possibility that 'it could happen here'.
- 3.8 We create positive environments in our services where children feel safe and listened to and staff aspire to improve their outcomes, including those in health and education. [Local protocols](#) are in place to allow flexibility for different services.
- 3.9 We ensure that information is captured on each child or young person living in our services, including when they are a Child in Need, on a Child Protection Plan or subject to any court action. We promote trust with our staff and customers so that all will share concerns of possible harm, no matter how small and we will develop partnerships (internally and externally) and work collaboratively to mitigate risk.
- 3.10 Each service must ensure that it has [appropriate measures](#) in place to minimise the likelihood of safeguarding incidents occurring, whilst also being ready to respond appropriately and effectively when they do. All staff are clear about their [role and responsibilities](#) in this regard.
- 3.11 [Prevention measures](#) are divided into four areas:
- i. Staff who understand safeguarding
 - ii. Customers who understand safeguarding
 - iii. Local safeguarding protocols in services and partnerships
 - iv. [See Think Act](#) implemented
- 3.12 All staff are aware of and have access to [detailed procedures](#) setting out how to report and manage any safeguarding concerns they may have and are trained to [recognise signs](#) of abuse.

People in Positions of Trust

- 3.13 Any concerns regarding the conduct of a staff member towards a child or young person must always be reported to the Safeguarding Manager and the relevant Head of Service.
- 3.14 An allegation that warrants an inter-agency response is where a person has:
- behaved in a way that has harmed 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 that 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;
- behaves in a manner that discriminates against a child on the basis of one or more of their protected characteristics

3.15 Allegations can be made in relation to physical chastisement and restraint but can also relate to inappropriate relationships between members of staff and children or young people, for example:

- Having a sexual relationship with a child under 18 if in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if consensual. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 has extended the definition within the Sexual Offences Act 2003 section 22A to include anyone who coaches, teaches, trains, supervises or instructs a child under 18, on a regular basis, in a sport or a religion;
- 'Grooming', ie meeting a child under 16 with intent to commit a relevant offence (see s15 Sexual Offences Act 2003);
- Other 'grooming' behaviour giving rise to concerns of a broader child protection nature eg inappropriate text/e-mail messages or images, gifts, socialising etc;
- Possession of indecent photographs/pseudo-photographs of children.

3.16 In addition, these procedures must be applied when there is an allegation that any person who works with children:

- has behaved in a way in their personal life that raises safeguarding concerns. These concerns do not have to directly relate to a child but could, for example, include arrest for possession of a weapon;
- as a parent or carer, has become subject to child protection procedures;
- Is closely associated with someone in their personal lives (eg partner, member of the family or other household member) who may present a risk of harm to child/ren for whom the member of staff is responsible in their employment/volunteering.

3.17 When concerns of this nature are raised the Designated Officer at the local authority (or LADO) will always be consulted within 24 hours. The child or children will be informed that the allegations will be investigated robustly and transparently and they must not have contact with the member of staff or volunteer whilst the allegations are reviewed.

3.18 Ofsted must be notified of any allegations related to a staff member working in a registered service, in line with the requirements on the notification of serious incidents.

3.19 If a crime is alleged to have been committed by someone in a position of trust, then the police will be immediately informed in line with our Managing Allegations Policy and procedure.

Customers Who are Alleged to Have Caused Harm

- 3.20 If the person causing harm is another customer, action could be taken to remove them from contact with the particular customer and this will be included in their risk management plan. In this situation, arrangements will be put in place to ensure that the needs of the person alleged to have caused harm are also met.
- 3.21 If a customers must be re-located, the person who was alleged to have been abused will be consulted but it will usually be the person who is the source of the alleged abuse that is moved.

4. CCTV

- 4.1 CCTV is installed in some services and supported housing projects covering communal areas and entrances/exits, in order to:
- help protect staff, residents, clients, customers and members of the public
 - assist in the prevention of crime on the premises
 - (where applicable) reduce breaches of tenancy/licence.
- 4.2 The use and management of CCTV equipment and images to ensure that we comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Human Rights Act 1998 is set out in the organisation's CCTV Policy.

5. Use of Phones

- 5,1 Most staff are issued with work mobile phones and may use them to call or text customers; phone use is set out in the IT Security policy. This includes text messaging: staff may text customers provided their phone is only accessed by them. Sensitive and/or personal information will not be provided via text message.
- 5.2 Staff are prohibited from using their personal phones for contact with customers. If a staff member is found to have provided their personal phone number to a customer it will be subject to disciplinary action.

6. Support for Staff

- 6.1 We understand that dealing with safeguarding and risk management is complex and can feel overwhelming for staff. For some staff it will trigger memories for example or adverse childhood experiences and/or affect current personal relationships.
- 6.2 We have clear support systems in place, including regular supervision, professional development and counselling services to support staff when they are adversely affected by a situation or concern, including allocating a single point of contact for any queries that they may have.

Record Keeping and Confidentiality

We will comply with our Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy which can be found by clicking [Here](#) or visiting our website at www.lookahead.org.uk

Inclusion and Diversity

Services provided should be appropriate to the child and not discriminate for any reason, including - but not limited to - disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, culture or lifestyle. We will strive to ensure action taken is sensitive to and takes account of the child's gender, age, stage of development, religion, culture and race.

Policy Sign Off and Ownership	
Document Name	016.00_Safeguarding-Children
Version	9.4
Equality Impact Assessment	See above
Who was consulted?	39 Essex Chambers (legal advice)
Approved By/Date	7 January 2026 under Chair's Action
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Author	Safeguarding Manager
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Compliance Measures	See above
Related Policies/Procedures	Incident Management Feedback and Complaints Safeguarding Adults Support and Risk Management Planning Policy Mental Capacity Whistleblowing Domestic Abuse Deprivation of Liberty Code of Conduct Radicalism & Extremism Data Protection and Confidentiality Lone Working Disciplinary Policy On Call Policy Complaints and Comments Policy Missing Customers Managing Allegations Against Staff
Relevant Legislation and Regulatory Requirements	Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004 Children and Social Work Act 2017 The Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations 2023 Statutory Framework for Working Together 2018 Human Rights Act 1998

	Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2014 (Care Act 2014) Social Care Institute for Excellence SCIE Report 2011 Making Safeguarding Personal 2014 Children and Families Act 2014 Local Authority Child Protection procedures, including London Child Protection Procedures and Practice Guidance 2025
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Version History			
Version	Date	Description of Changes	Author
8.1	July 2022	Reformat and annual review Added reference to Contextual Safeguarding Added links to London Child Protection Procedures Practice Guidance	
8.2	March 2023	Update wording on police involvement following legal advice	
8.3	August 2023	Updated to include reference to Ofsted and change the job title of the Safeguarding lead and Head of Operations. Added information on self-harm, suicidal behaviour and online safety.	
8.4	October 2024	Updated safeguarding definitions. Split definitions to include intra and extra familial safeguarding. Added unborn child. Changed job titles to include Director of Practice Development, Safeguarding Quality and Safeguarding Manager. Added reference to CQC. Updated PoPT section, further categories of abuse.	
9.0	November 2024	3.5 - amended to clarify mandatory training requirements	
9.1	September 2025	Added reference to safe spaces and guidance on CCTV and the use of mobile phones. Added transitional safeguarding definition Expanded definition of a child	Julia Harrison
9.2	December 2025	Updated to reflect Ofsted requirements under Regulation 20	
9.3	January 2026	Added requirements to how we manage historic allegations, and need to report to both host and	

		current Local Authority where customers have been placed out of Borough	
9.4	Jan 2026	Updated to reflect Ofsted requirements, specifically: • How we manage historic allegations of abuse and neglect • How we must report to both host and current local authority • Updated References to: • Working to Safeguard Children 2023 • Supported Housing Regs 2023	