



Westfield Housing Association Safeguarding Policy

1.0 Policy Statement

To ensure Westfield Housing Association complies with its regulatory and legal responsibilities relating to Safeguarding. To set out the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults in our Footsteps nursery and our communities and how this will be implemented by Westfield Housing Association. This is a joint policy as there are similarities in many of the actions needed to safeguard children and young people and to safeguard vulnerable adults. However, Westfield Housing Association recognises that there are also some distinct differences between these groups or people, and these are reflected in this document and the relevant supporting policies and guidance.

2.0 Purpose

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all employees who, during their employment have direct or indirect contact with children and / or vulnerable adults, or who have access to information about them, have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

There is a duty on organisations to make appropriate arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. Also, government guidance makes it clear that it is a shared responsibility and depends upon effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise.

3.0 Definitions of abuse

- **Physical;** includes assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, being locked in a room, inappropriate sanctions or force feeding, inappropriate methods of restraint, and unlawfully depriving a person of their liberty.
- **Psychological or emotional;** threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, rejection, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, indifference, harassment, verbal abuse (including shouting or swearing), cyber bullying, isolation or withdrawal from services or support networks.
- **Financial or economic;** theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits. Acquire, use, or maintain money, obtain goods or services.
- **Sexual;** rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, sexual exploitation, assault, or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.
- **Neglect or Acts of Omission;** ignoring medical, emotional, or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, and the withholding of the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition, and heating.

- **Organisational:** neglect or poor professional practice by taking advantage, ill treatment, or overstepping professional boundaries, which can deny, restrict, or curtail the dignity, privacy, choice, independence, or fulfilment of adults.
- **Self-Neglect:** neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. It is also defined as the inability (intentional or unintentional) to maintain a socially and culturally accepted standard of self-care with the potential for serious consequences to the health and wellbeing of the individual and sometimes to their community.
- **Domestic Abuse:** An incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse, by someone who is personally connected. Includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, economic, emotional abuse; so-called 'honour-based' violence; Female Genital Mutilation; forced marriage.
- **Modern Slavery:** slavery, human trafficking, forced and compulsory labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive, and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude, and inhumane treatment.
- **Discriminatory:** discrimination on the grounds of race, faith or religion, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, and political views, along with racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist comments or jokes, or comments and jokes based on a person's disability or any other form of harassment, slur, or similar treatment, which could be viewed as Hate crime.
- **Radicalisation, Terrorism, and extremism:** Westfield Housing has a duty to support the government's strategy 'Prevent' to deter terrorism by reducing the possibility of radicalisation by working in partnership with the police and other specialist agencies, ensure appropriate training is available to frontline colleagues, and sharing information in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Significant Harm

The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as *'the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children'*. It gives local authorities a duty to make enquires to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

Whilst there are no absolute criteria to rely on when judging what constitutes significant harm, consideration should be given to:

- The severity of the ill-treatment, including the degree of harm
- The extent and frequency of abuse and/or neglect
- The impact this is likely to have, or is having, on the child involved.

This may be a single traumatic event, such as a violent assault, suffocation or poisoning, or it can be a combination of events (both acute and long-standing) that impairs the physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development of the child.

Abuse and Neglect

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect an individual by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Both adults and children may be abused within a family, institution or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, a stranger.

Perpetrators of abuse can be an adult, or adults, another child or children.

4.0 Responsibilities

Board

The Board is ultimately responsible for monitoring safeguarding compliance and associated policies. In order to achieve this, the Board will review and approve this policy annually and review monitoring arrangements through the quarterly Safeguarding Report and ensure that any issues of significant risk are actioned appropriately.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) & Executive Leadership Team (ELT)

The CEO and ELT is responsible for the control and implementation of this policy at all levels of the organisation and the provision of adequate resources to meet safeguarding requirements. The CEO and ELT will:

- Provide leadership to encourage colleagues to be aware of safeguarding at all times
- Ensure that responsibility for the implementation of, and compliance with, this policy is properly assigned, understood and acted upon by managers and colleagues across the organisation
- Appoint competent Designated Safeguarding Leads to co-ordinate safeguarding matters within the Association
- Ensure that adequate resources are available to maintain standards including training

Executive Leadership Team (ELT)

The ELT chaired by the Chief Executive will:

- Bring this policy to the attention of colleagues under their management and ensure an understanding of its contents
- Ensure that colleagues within their departments are suitably trained, competent and fully understand their safeguarding obligations
- Monitor the activities of their departments in relation to safeguarding to ensure compliance with relevant legislation, good practice, policies and procedures
- Ensure that all new colleagues are properly inducted into the organisation, including an awareness of safeguarding as applicable to their role
- Ensure that any safeguarding responsibilities delegated to employees are clearly understood
- Provide employees with names of the Designated Safeguarding Leads within the organisation who will support employees in the reporting of abuse and with any subsequent participation in investigations, strategy meetings or assessment processes
- Promote and embrace partnership working
- Ensure contractors (and sub-contractors) / third parties appointed to carry out works on behalf of the Association and / or using WHA Premises are made aware of safeguarding policies and procedures
- Regularly review and develop WHA's safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure ongoing relevance and adherence to legislation and good practice

Colleagues

In addition to the duties outlined in the Safeguarding Policy Statement, colleagues at all levels of the organisation will:

- Familiarise themselves with safeguarding policies and procedures relevant to their role both internally and in respect of the Local Authority and other regulatory bodies
- Attend mandatory safeguarding training as and when necessary
- Report all safeguarding incidents in accordance with the Safeguarding Reporting Procedure
- Have an obligation to prevent abuse. If something is happening in WHA or within Footsteps Nursery which gives cause for concern and could lead to abuse in the future, procedures within WHA's separate Whistleblowing Policy should be followed.

Designated Safeguarding Leads

It is essential that all employees, contractors, students and volunteers understand not only their own role and responsibilities around the reporting of concerns surrounding a person or child/children. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that they are aware of their role in identifying an individual in need of protection and how to act upon their concerns.

If a member of employees or contractor suspects abuse or has received a report of abuse, they will report it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and the applicable Local Authority's / Statutory Authority (including the police) and Regulator's reporting procedure(s) including Ofsted will be followed as appropriate. The up to date procedures/ contact information can be found on the Local Authority website (Cumberland Council).

Westfield Housing Association	
Susan Duxbury (Housing Services Officer)	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Julie Armstrong (Housing Services Officer)	Deputy Safeguarding Lead
Footsteps Nursery	
Linda Street (Nursery Manager)	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Rebecca O'Loughlin (Deputy Manager)	Deputy Safeguarding Lead

In the absence of the DSL, reports can be made to the Deputy Safeguarding Lead and / or members of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is a complex area which must be dealt with by the appropriate agencies and channels.

5.0 Reporting & Risk

Our employees respect confidentiality at all times and will not share any information given in confidence unless justified by the assessed risk to the vulnerable person or required by law.

Guidance and information sharing advice can be found [here](#).

Confidentiality will be discussed with the customer where there are safeguarding concerns or alerts and an explanation will be given that this information may need to be shared with other people in order for the situation to be resolved.

Information in relation to child protection concerns should be shared on a "need to know" basis. However, the sharing of information is vital to child protection and, therefore, the issue of confidentiality is secondary only to a child's need for protection.

All records are kept electronically in a password protected folder which can only be accessed by the Designated Safeguarding Officers, Deputy Safeguarding Leads and Chief Executive Officer. We adhere to

strict procedures for recording safeguarding information that ensures our confidentiality and Data Protection responsibilities are met.

Whistleblowing

We will take seriously any matters raised in good faith by employees. The Whistleblowing Policy will support and protect any employee who has volunteered information from reprisals or victimisation.

Lone Working

We have a Lone Worker Policy that all employees must adhere to ensure not only their own safety but the safety of their colleagues.

Allegations against our employees

If a professional receives an allegation or has a concern about the behaviour of a member of employees our process for allegation management must be followed and concerns reported to the employee's line manager, member of the Executive, HR or CEO.

Service Expectations

- To ensure that employees and volunteers are aware of/and understand the Safeguarding Policy.
- To ensure that all employees complete Safeguarding and Child & Adult Protection Level 1 (e-learning) and refresh every three years.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead have completed Level 2 and Level 3 Safeguarding Responsibilities and Further Awareness of Safeguarding Environment and Understanding Levels of Need and will refresh every three years.
- To identify all appropriate front line employees and ensure relevant DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks are in place and renewed as appropriate and clearances are obtained for new employees members before employees commence work with the organisation.
- To ensure that managers know when they should alert the Police if they think a serious crime has been committed.
- To notify the Local Authority Safeguarding Team if abuse is identified or suspected in line with LA procedures and report internally within WHA ensuring records are maintained and retained in accordance with this policy and data protection / GDPR requirements.
- To support, and where possible, safeguard customers and employees by ensuring that all referrals to services have full information in relation to identified risk and vulnerability.
- To ensure that employees and customers have access to information through in house publications and other media, and awareness raising initiatives.
- To conduct regular reviews of the Safeguarding Policy.

Reviewing and Monitoring

The policy and all supporting procedures will be reviewed annually. The review process will ensure continuing suitability, adequacy, and effectiveness of the policy and may be prompted by the introduction of new legislation or regulations. ELT and Board will receive quarterly monitoring reports in respect of safeguarding activity across the organisation in line with GDPR and Governance requirements.

The policy and procedural review will seek to identify and address any disincentives that may exist to reporting concerns.

6.0 Legal Framework/References

- The Care Act 2014
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- The Children Act 2004
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulations 2018
- Allegation Management Framework 2016
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2019
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Equality Act 2010
- CSCP Cumbria Guidance Threshold
- Understanding the level of need and the practice procedure
- Regulator of Social Housing -Neighbourhood and Community Standard

7.0 Linked Documents

- Data Protection Policy (GDPR)
- Recruitment and Selection Procedure
- Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Induction Programme
- Confidentiality Policy and Procedure
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Training Policy and Plan
- Dealing to Domestic Violence procedure
- Lone Working Policy
- Safeguarding Reporting Procedure

To be completed by Corporate Services Officer**Document Control**

Business Owner (name & job title)	Debbie Fox, Chief Executive Officer
Policy Author (name & job title)	Debbie Fox, Chief Executive Officer
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Document History

Date	Version Number	Author	Description of Update
November 2025	1.4	D Fox	Minor update to training for Safeguarding Leads, reference to 'staff' changed to 'employees',
August 2024	1.3	D Fox	Combined policy to cover both WHA & Footsteps Nursery.
27 July 23	1.2	D Fox	Minor updates following local Government re-organisation around process/forms.
25 Apr 23	1.1	H Wilson	Updating links/email addresses following Cumbria local government re-organisation
8 Sept 22	1.0	D Fox	Minor updates – CSCP guidance.

Appendix 1

The six principles of adult safeguarding

This information is taken from the Care and Support statutory guidance 2014 (updated October 2018) issued under the Care Act 2014. It sets out the six principles that underpin all adult safeguarding work. The principles apply to all sectors and settings including housing. The principles should inform the ways in which professionals and other employees work with adults.

Principle	Outcome	Customer Experience
Empowerment	People being supported and encouraged to make their own decision and informed consent	'I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process, and these directly inform what happens'
Prevention	It's better to take action before harm occurs	'I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help'
Proportionality	The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented	'I am sure that the professionals will work in my interest, as I see them, and they will only get involved as much as needed'
Protection	Support and representation for those in greatest need	'I get help and support to report abuse and neglect, I get help so that I am able to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want'
Partnership	Local solution through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse	'I know that employees treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together and with me to get the best result for me'
Accountability	Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding	'I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they'

Appendix 2

Main Categories & Indicators of Child Abuse

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents or employees
- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries
- Significant changes to behaviour patterns.

Softer signs of abuse as defined by National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) include:

Emotional states: Fearful, withdrawn, low self-esteem.

Behaviour: Aggressive, habitual body rocking.

Interpersonal behaviours:

- Indiscriminate contact or affection seeking
- Over-friendliness to strangers including healthcare professionals
- Excessive clinginess, persistently resorting to gaining attention
- Demonstrating excessively 'good' behaviour to prevent parent disapproval
- Failing to seek or accept appropriate comfort or affection from an appropriate person when significantly distressed
- Coercive controlling behaviour towards parents
- Lack of ability to understand and recognise emotions
- Very young children showing excessive comforting behaviours when witnessing parental or carer distress.

Child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse is also known as peer-on-peer abuse; children are included as potential abusers in our policies. Child-on-child abuse may take the form of bullying, physically hurting another child, emotional abuse or sexual abuse. Reporting procedures in these instances remain the same although additional support from relevant agencies may be required to support both the victim and the perpetrator. Children who develop harmful behaviours are also likely to be victims of abuse or neglect.

Physical abuse

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Fabricated or induced illness (FII)

This abuse is when a parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. The parent may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation. They may exaggerate a real illness and symptoms, or deliberately induce an illness through poisoning with medication or other substances, or they may interfere with medical treatments. This may also be presented through false allegations of abuse or encouraging the child to appear disabled or ill to obtain unnecessary treatment or specialist support.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

FGM is a procedure where the female genital organs are injured or changed with no medical reason. The procedure may be carried out shortly after birth, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during a woman's first pregnancy, according to the community.

It is frequently a very traumatic and violent act for the victim and can cause harm in many ways. The practice can cause severe pain and there may be immediate and/or long-term health consequences, including mental health problems, difficulties in childbirth, causing danger to the child and mother, and/or death (definition taken from the *Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation*). Other consequences include shock, bleeding, infections (tetanus, HIV and hepatitis B and C) and organ damage.

Breast ironing or breast flattening

Breast ironing, also known as breast flattening, is a process where young girls' breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded down through the use of hard or heated objects in order for the breasts to disappear or to delay the development of the breasts entirely. It is believed that by carrying out this act, young girls will be protected from harassment, rape, abduction and early forced marriage. These actions can cause serious health issues such as abscesses, cysts, itching, tissue damage, infection, discharge of milk, dissymmetry of the breasts, severe fever.

Emotional abuse

Working together to safeguard children defines emotional abuse as 'the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.' Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur separately.

Examples of emotional abuse include:

- Conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- Not giving a child opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed, such as interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction
- Serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children
- A child seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

A child may also experience emotional abuse through witnessing domestic abuse or alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them. In England, The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) recognises in law that children are victims of emotional abuse if they see, hear or otherwise experience the effects of domestic abuse.

Signs and indicators may include delay in physical, mental and/or emotional development, sudden speech disorders, overreaction to mistakes, extreme fear of any new situation, neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation), extremes of passivity or aggression, appearing to lack confidence or self-assurance.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing, or enticing, a child to take part in sexual activities. Sexual abuse does not necessarily involve a high level of violence and includes whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

Sexual abuse can take place online and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Adult males are not the sole perpetrators of sexual abuse; women also commit acts of sexual abuse, as do other children.

Action must be taken if employees witness symptoms of sexual abuse including a child indicating sexual activity through words, play or drawing, having an excessive preoccupation with sexual matters or having an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or language, for their developmental age. This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls or toys or in the role-play area with their peers, drawing pictures that are inappropriate for a child, talking about sexual activities or using sexual language or words.

Additional signs of emotional and physical symptoms are shown below.

Emotional signs	Physical signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age or stage of development• Personality changes, such as becoming insecure or clingy• Regressing to younger behaviour patterns, such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys• Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating• Being isolated or withdrawn• Inability to concentrate• Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a carer• Becoming worried about clothing being removed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bruises• Bleeding, discharge, pains or soreness in their genital or anal area• Sexually transmitted infections• Pregnancy.

Neglect

Working together to safeguard children defines neglect as 'the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.'

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve adults involved in the care of the child failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect them from physical harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)

- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- Respond to their basic emotional needs.

An NSPCC briefing (July 2021) found neglect to be the most common form of abuse, with one in ten children in the UK having been neglected. Concerns around neglect have been identified for half of children who are the subject of a child protection plan or on a child protection register in the UK. Younger children are more likely than older children to be the subject of a child protection plan in England because of neglect, although research suggests that the neglect of older children is more likely to go overlooked.

Signs of neglect include a child persistently arriving at nursery unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child's growth or hurt them), arriving at nursery in the same nappy they went home in, or a child having an illness or identified special educational need or disability that is not being addressed. A child may be persistently hungry if a caregiver is withholding, or not providing enough, food. A child who is not receiving the attention they need at home may crave it from other adults, such as at nursery or school.

Domestic abuse

The definition of domestic abuse from the Domestic Abuse Act, 2021 is:

Behaviour of a person (A) towards another person (B) is 'domestic abuse' if:

- *A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other*
- *The behaviour is abusive.*

Behaviour is 'abusive' if it consists of any of the following:

- *Physical or sexual abuse*
- *Violent or threatening behaviour*
- *Controlling or coercive behaviour*
- *Economic abuse (any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B's ability to acquire, use or maintain money or other property and/or obtain goods or services)*
- *Psychological, emotional or other abuse.*

It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone regardless of gender, age, social background, religion, sexuality or ethnicity and domestic abuse can happen at any stage in a relationship.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children.

Where incidents of domestic abuse are shared by our own employees, contractors, students or volunteers we will respect confidentiality at all times and not share information without their permission. However, we will share this information, without permission, in cases of child protection or where we believe there is an immediate risk of serious harm to the person involved.

Contextual safeguarding

As young people grow and develop, they may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their family. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online.

As part of our safeguarding procedures we will work in partnership with parents and other agencies to work together to safeguard children and provide the support around contextual safeguarding concerns.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) and Child criminal exploitation (CCE)

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation (*Keeping children safe in education*).

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

CSE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into **sexual** activity. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. CSE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology and may be without the child's immediate knowledge such as through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media.

Signs and symptoms include:

- Physical injuries such as bruising or bleeding
- Having money or gifts they are unable to explain
- Sudden changes in their appearance
- Becoming involved in drugs or alcohol, particularly if it is suspected they are being supplied by older men or women
- Becoming emotionally volatile (mood swings are common in all young people, but more severe changes could indicate that something is wrong)
- Using sexual language beyond that expected for their age or stage of development
- Engaging less with their usual friends
- Appearing controlled by their phone
- Switching to a new screen when you come near the computer
- Nightmares or sleeping problems
- Running away, staying out overnight, missing school
- Changes in eating habits
- Talk of a new, older friend, boyfriend or girlfriend
- Losing contact with family and friends or becoming secretive
- Contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any **criminal** activity. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Other examples include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people. Signs and symptoms of CCE are similar to those for CSE.

County Lines

The National Crime Agency (NCA) defines county lines as gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs from big cities into smaller towns, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line.' Customers live in a different area to the dealers, so drug runners are needed to transport the drugs and collect payment.

Perpetrators often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. A victim is targeted and recruited into county lines through schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children's homes and care homes.

Signs and symptoms include:

- Changes in dress style
- Unexplained, unaffordable new things (for example, clothes, jewellery, cars etc.)
- Missing from home or school and/or significant decline in performance
- New friends with those who don't share any mutual friendships with the victim, gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- Increase in anti-social behaviour in the community including weapons
- Receiving more texts or calls than usual
- Unexplained injuries
- Significant changes in emotional well-being
- Being seen in different cars or taxis driven by unknown adults
- A child being unfamiliar with where they are.

Cuckooing

Cuckooing is a form of county lines crime. In this instance, the drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to criminally exploit them by using their home as a base for drug dealing, often in multi-occupancy or social housing properties.

Signs and symptoms include:

- An increase in people, particularly unknown people, entering or leaving a home or taking up residence
- An increase in cars or bikes outside a home
- A neighbour who hasn't been seen for an extended period
- Windows covered or curtains closed for a long period
- Change in resident's mood and/or demeanour (for example, secretive, withdrawn, aggressive or emotional)
- Substance misuse and/or drug paraphernalia
- Increased anti-social behaviour.

Child trafficking and modern slavery

Child trafficking and modern slavery is when children are recruited, moved, transported and then exploited, forced to work or are sold.

For a child to have been a victim of trafficking there must have been:

- *Action*: recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation
- *Purpose*: sexual exploitation, forced labour or domestic servitude, slavery, financial exploitation, illegal adoption, removal of organs.

Modern slavery includes slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour and child trafficking. Victims of modern slavery are also likely to be subjected to other types of abuse such as physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Signs and symptoms for children include:

- Being under control and reluctant to interact with others
- Having few personal belongings, wearing the same clothes every day or wearing unsuitable clothes
- Being unable to move around freely
- Appearing frightened, withdrawn, or showing signs of physical or emotional abuse.

Forced marriage

A forced marriage is defined as ‘a marriage in which one, or both spouses, do not consent to the marriage but are coerced into it. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.’

Where incidents of forced marriage are shared by our own employees, students or volunteers, we will respect confidentiality at all times and not share information without their permission. However, we will share this information without permission in cases of child protection, or where we believe there is an immediate risk of serious harm to the person involved.

Honour based abuse (HBA)

HBA is described as ‘incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.’ (*Keeping children safe in education*, 2022). Such abuse can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their ‘honour’ code. It is a violation of human rights and may be domestic, emotional and/or sexual abuse such as being held against their will, threats of violence or actual assault. It often involves wider family networks or community pressure and so can include multiple perpetrators.

Signs and symptoms of HBA include:

- Changes in how the child dresses or acts, such as not ‘western’ clothing or make-up
- Visible injuries, or repeated injury, with unlikely explanations
- Signs of depression, anxiety or self-harm
- Frequent absences

- Restrictions on friends or attending events.

Where incidents of HBA are shared by our own employees, students or volunteers, we will respect confidentiality at all times and not share information without their permission. However, we will share this information without permission in cases of child protection, or where we believe there is an immediate risk of serious harm to the person involved.

Child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB)

Child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB) can happen in families when there is a concept of belief in:

- Witchcraft and spirit possession, demons or the devil acting through children or leading them astray (traditionally seen in some Christian beliefs)
- The evil eye or djinns (traditionally known in some Islamic faith contexts) and dakini (in the Hindu context)
- Ritual or multi-murders where the killing of children is believed to bring supernatural benefits, or the use of their body parts is believed to produce potent magical remedies
- Use of belief in magic or witchcraft to create fear in children to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation
- Children's actions are believed to have brought bad fortune to the family or community.

Extremism and radicalisation

Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, there is a duty to safeguard vulnerable and at risk children by preventing them from being drawn into terrorism. This is known as the Prevent Duty.

Children can be exposed to different views and receive information from various sources and some of these views may be considered radical or extreme. Radicalisation is the way a person comes to support or be involved in extremism and terrorism; usually it's a gradual process so those who are affected may not realise what's happening. Radicalisation is a form of harm. The process may involve:

- Being groomed online or in person
- Exploitation, including sexual exploitation
- Psychological manipulation
- Exposure to violent material and other inappropriate information
- The risk of physical harm or death through extremist acts.

For further information visit [The Prevent Duty website](#).

Online safety

While the growth of internet and mobile device use brings many advantages, the use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues such as child sexual exploitation and radicalisation.

There are four main areas of risk associated with online safety:

- Content - being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material such as pornography, fake news, racist or radical and extremist views
- Contact - being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users such as commercial advertising or adults posing as children or young adults

- Conduct - personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images and online bullying
- Commerce - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

Report **online safety concerns** to the DSL and to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP): <https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>

Inappropriate content received via email must be reported to the DSL and to the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF): <https://www.iwf.org.uk/>

Up skirting/down blousing

Up skirting and down blousing are criminal offences. They involve taking pictures of someone's genitals, buttocks or other intimate images under their clothing without them knowing, either for sexual gratification or in order to humiliate, or distress, the individual.