



SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Explore Connect Belong Thrive

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Section 1: Policy and Principles

Policy Introduction

EVOLVE takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and children in its care. "The welfare of the child is paramount" (Children Act 1989).

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a statutory responsibility to have policies and procedures in place that safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are enrolled and attend EVOLVE.

Policy Aims

- To ensure safeguarding and child protection concerns are recognised and reported appropriately by members of staff and volunteers
- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their child protection responsibilities
- All children and children, regardless of race, gender, religion, age, sexual identity ability, culture or language all have equal rights to protection
- Children, children, staff and volunteers involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support
- To hold high expectations and ensure consistent good practice through daily briefings and staff/volunteer training so they are equip to recognise and report safeguarding issues
- To ensure all staff, volunteers and delivery partners have completed sufficient che
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child or child is at risk of harm
- Be aware that our safeguarding duties apply to children, children and families attached to children who attend the Hanworth Centre Hub

Legislation and Statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2024), Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2023). We comply with this guidance and the procedures set out by Hounslow Local Safeguarding Children partnership. This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
- Part 3 of the schedule to the Education (Independent Centre Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on independent centres to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at the centre
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015, which places a statutory duty on professionals to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18

- Statutory guidance on FGM, which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM
- Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty, which explains centres' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
- Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (GSWP) (Safer Recruitment Consortium May 2019)
- Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- London Child Protection Procedures (7th Edition)
- The Centre Staffing (England) Regulations 2009, which sets out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least one person on a centre interview/appointment panel to be trained in safer recruitment techniques
- General Data Protection Act (2019) Guide to the General Data Protection Regulation
- Children Missing Education – Statutory guidance for local authorities (DfE September 2016)

Definition

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

- **Child protection** refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm
- **Abuse** is a form of maltreatment of a child, and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Appendix 1 explains the different types of abuse
- **Neglect** is a form of abuse and 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. Appendix 2 defines neglect in more detail
- **Staff** refers to all those working for or on behalf of EVOLVE, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity
- **Child** includes everyone under the age of 18
- **Parent** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents
- **Carer** refers to an adult who has taken in a parenting role, for example, another family member or a foster carer

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a nurturing space where children feel safe, can connect with staff and their peers and feel a sense belonging. Our trauma aware and child-centred approach allows space for children to learn about themselves from a different perspective, explore the world around them through a different lens and will be supported by the network of services around them to ensure each of them thrive. We promote growth and learning through a creative, practical and fun curriculum.

We support the self-esteem and development of each child through a positive attitude to learning, social skills, a healthy lifestyle, self-discipline and a positive self-worth.

This policy is one element to our safeguarding protocol which includes policies, staff conduct, safer recruitment, allegations against staff, complaints, children behaviour and online safety.

This policy is available on the site and stored electronically; all staff and volunteers are required to read all policies and procedures.

Our core safeguarding principles are:

- our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is our highest priority
- safer children are more likely to reach their potential
- policies will be reviewed yearly unless they need to be reviewed in the case of a incident, new legislation or new guidance which would require a review

Child protection statement

We recognise our statutory and moral responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective protection and support.

We will work with schools, Social Care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

[\(Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE, September 2025\)](#)

The document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, September 2025) must be read in conjunction with this policy.

Our Ethos

EVOLVE is committed to keeping children safe and aims to:

- ensure children receive the correct support at the right time to address risks and prevent issues from escalating
- create and maintain an environment where children feel safe and secure, are encouraged to talk
- ensure children are aware they can share their concerns and difficulties with adults working on the EVOLVE programme

- promote tolerance of and respect for people of all faiths (or those of no faith), races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientations
- ensure every effort is made to establish open and honest effective working relationships with parents/carers, schools and referring agencies
- ensure the curriculum includes contents which equip children with the knowledge they need to protect themselves from harm and to develop healthy and safe relationships

Equality Statement

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's' diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face and comply with the Equality Act 2010.

Section 2: Roles and responsibilities

Safeguarding Team

Name	Role	Number
Siobhan Donoghue	Designated Lead for Safeguarding	07563 303648
Danielle Hutchinson	Deputy Safeguarding Lead	07463 795355
Darren Beecroft	Deputy Safeguarding Lead	07923 267678

The Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- is adequately trained to Level 3 and this training is renewed every two years
- ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of policies & procedures and that they are adhered to at all times
- is a source of support and expertise to staff and volunteers, ensuring all staff feel able to raise concerns about suspected abuse or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle blowing procedures
- is aware of the specific needs of all children; those in need of special measures, those on CIN or CP plans, those with special educational needs, those in care
- promotes a trauma aware approach within the staff team and with external partners
- makes staff aware of safeguarding training and the changes to policies – ensuring they are read and adhered to
- encourages a culture of listening to children to ensure their safety
- has knowledge of local authority procedures in regard to making referrals
- keeps detailed written records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely on Lamplight System
- attends professional, case meetings, strategy meetings, child protection conferences to be part of the network to ensure professionals are working together to safeguard children
- ensure staff training log and DBS check logs are kept up to date
- ensure safer recruitment processes are followed
- liaises with the designated local authority officer or team in the local authority where an allegation is made against a member of staff
- ensure that anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk to a child is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service
- keeps up to date with legislation and updates policies accordingly
- ensures parents are aware of our role in safeguarding and that referrals about suspected abuse and neglect may be made

Deputy Safeguarding Lead

- will advise on safeguarding concerns in the absence of the DSL
- carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of children
- In the event of the long term absence of the designated person, the deputy will assume all of the functions above

Staff, Volunteers & Contractors

All staff and volunteers working with children as part of the EVOLVE programme have a responsibility to protect children and provide a safe environment in which they can learn and achieve. Everyone has a duty of care to be vigilant to signs of abuse and share concerns with the DSL as soon as possible.

Directors

The Directors of Perfectly Imperfect who oversee EVOLVE must ensure there is an effective child protection policy in place and that this is updated annually.

Confidentiality

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the children and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the DSL and members of the safeguarding team. That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

However, Keeping Children Safe in Education emphasises that any member of staff can contact children's social care if they are concerned about a child or children.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Information sharing is guided by the following principles.

The information is:

- necessary and proportionate
- relevant
- adequate
- accurate
- timely
- secure

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share. Record of concern forms and other written information will be stored on 'Lamplight System.'

Any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

The DSL will normally obtain consent from the child and/or parents to share sensitive information with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so, the DSL may share information without consent, and will record the reason for not obtaining consent. If any member of staff receives a request from a child or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the data protection officer or DSL.

The GDPR does not prevent staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child or child.

Good practice guidelines for staff code of conduct

We work with children who have often been let down by the adults and/or professionals within their life. We want to create an environment which promotes trusting working relationships with the children we serve. We want the children to be safe and be supported to thrive.

Trauma aware approach / child-centred approach / PACE model

All our work, no matter the project or the age of the people using the service, our approach is always a trauma aware approach, and we lead with the PACE model, keeping the best interest of the child at the forefront of all we do. This approach takes training, modelling by other staff and commitment as well as a level of openness about your challenges. Please do talk to Siobhan or Darren if you need support with our approaches.

Confidentiality

Details about children and information discussed should be kept amongst the staff/volunteers. Safeguarding issues and concerns should only be shared with the safeguarding leads and with staff who need to be aware.

Data Protection - GDPR

We have a duty as an organisation to protect the data of children and families. If you hold any data or help children complete forms, please ensure these forms are not left out or computers are unlocked.

Time keeping, sickness and absence

In order for services to run smoothly, we require staff and volunteers to arrive on time. We understand there could be an occasional time that you might be late due to circumstances beyond your control, please do let us know if you are running late by calling Siobhan or Darren. If you are unwell or unable to attend, please do call Siobhan or Darren as soon as possible.

Engagement

Our children need staff and volunteers who engage with them, support and encourage them. We want you to be comfortable with the level of engagement so everyone will approach this engage differently, we do however need everyone to be fully present and engaged in sessions. We ask you do not use your phones during sessions unless it's something urgent then feel free to take calls in the staff office. Children are not allowed to leave the building or smoke/vape during sessions so we feel its only fair staff and volunteers refrain from smoking until the session has ended.

Boundaries

We need to have boundaries in place to ensure children know we are not their friends; we are people in their lives they can trust and come to for support. We ask that you do not share personal details about yourself or exchange personal details; phone numbers, email address, home address or social media information. If a participant, past or present, contacts you on social media please let the safeguarding team know. Many of our staff and volunteers live within the local community so you might already be linked to children/families via social media. We would encourage all those in this situation to be mindful of what they post and share; is it respectful and in line with what we promote as part of our work.

Boundaries between staff – see policy for further details

Whilst staff and volunteers have personal lives which are separate from work, we discourage romantic relationships between staff members or contractors who deliver services for the company. We are a very small team and issues which could arise would be difficult to manage and could result in a negative impact on the young people. If a romantic relationship was to develop, we would ask you declare to your line manager due to conflict of interest.

Boundaries between staff and services users – see policy for further details

Staff must not engage in personal relationships with service users whom they meet as a result of their employment.

Drug and Alcohol – see policy for further details

Staff must not be under the influence of drug or alcohol whilst onsite. If we suspect staff are using illegal substances, this could lead to disciplinary hearing.

Staff who are taking prescription drugs should ensure that they are aware of any side effects and advise your manager immediately of any side effects of prescription drugs, which may affect work performance or the health and safety of yourself or others.

Personal Development

If you would like to learn or develop your knowledge or abilities during your time supporting our services, please do let us know. We would be happy to support you to developing facilitation skills, 1-1 support sessions or leading on physical activities.

Passing information

As difficult as it can sometimes feel to pass on information a participant has shared with you in confidence, we all have a duty of care to protect children so require all staff and volunteers to pass on information to the safeguarding team.

Whistleblowing – see policy for further details

If a member of the team, even members of the safeguarding or leadership team, are acting in a way which you deem as inappropriate or unprofessional, you are required to bring this to the attention of the Safeguarding Lead – Siobhan. If the concern is about Siobhan, the concern should be passed to Danielle or Darren.

Role Model

We need to be mindful of what we say and do in front of the children as they will build positive relationships with you and look up to you.

We ask that you:

- Do not smoke in front of children, even when you are not working
- Dress appropriately for the activity; sportswear is often most comfortable for all our sessions. We ask all staff and volunteers to dress in a manner which is appropriate for working with children
- Only share experiences and stories which match up to the lives we want them to live – we want them to have positive outlooks on life and strive for the best in their life. We can share stories of our past to act as teachable moments; sharing the negative actions we have made, the consequences we may have faced and how we have now changed.
- Do not take items/gifts from children; money, cigarettes or presents (unless declared to the leadership team)
- Please stay off your phones – be present and support children to engage
- We can't tell you how to live your life outside of work, but we hope and encourage all staff and volunteer live a life and behave in a way which is in line with how we encourage the children to live and to ask for help if pressures of personal life is having a negative impact. Depending on the circumstances, criminal activity outside of work could lead to an instant dismissal.
- Be respectful to all members of the team, follow instructions and act professionally in front of children and families. If you disagree with management decisions, you can challenge this appropriately during the debrief session or privately with the Programme Lead
- Keep conversation between staff members private; do not discuss personal or confidential things in front of any children.

Section 3: Procedures

Recognising abuse and taking action

Staff, volunteers and Directors must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding issue.

If a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or in immediate danger, a referral to children's social care and/or the police must be made immediately if you believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger.

A concern can be taken to a DSL/DDSLs however it must be remembered that anyone can make a referral. Tell the DSL as soon as possible if you make a referral directly.

Assess the home location of child and contact the relevant local authority.

Managing a disclosure

If a child discloses a safeguarding concern to you, you should:

- Reassure them and take them seriously
- Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions
- Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset
- Tell the child they have done the right thing in telling you
- Do not tell them they should have told you sooner or that they have created a problem by telling you
- Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on
- Do not promise to keep it a secret
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible in the child's own words
- Stick to the facts, and do not put your own judgement on it
- Use Lamplight System to record the incident and notify the safeguarding team
- If unable to use Lamplight System, email or sign and date the write-up and pass it on to the DSL. Alternatively, if appropriate, make a referral to children's social care and/or the police directly, and tell the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so

Bear in mind that some children may:

- Not feel ready, or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected
- Not recognise their experiences as harmful
- Feel embarrassed, humiliated or threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation and/or language barriers
- None of this should stop you from having a 'professional curiosity' and speaking to the DSL if you have concerns about a child

If you have concerns about a child (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger)

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to one of Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

and/or take advice from local authority children's social care. You can also seek advice at any time from local and national sources of advice as detailed in Appendix 1.

- Share details of any actions you take with the DSL as soon as practically possible.
- Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate.
- Share any action taken with the DSL as soon as possible.
- You can also contact the charity NSPCC if you need advice on the appropriate action. You can call 0808 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday to Friday) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Notifying parents /carers

We will always contact DSL from the referring school or agency to get guidance on contacting a parent/carer as will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a child with their parents/carers. We handle this sensitively and will only make contact with the parent/carer in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure after consultations. However, if we believe that notifying parents/carers could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from social care.

Enquiry to Social Care

The DSL will make an enquiry to Social Care if it is believed that a child is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The children (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that an enquiry is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

Any member of staff may make a direct enquiry to children's social care if they genuinely believe independent action is necessary to protect a child.

Our confidentiality and information-sharing policy is available to parents and children on request.

Reporting directly to child protection agencies

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, police or the NSPCC if:

- the situation is an emergency and the Designated Safeguarding Lead, their deputy, are all unavailable
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the children's safety
- for any other reason they make a judgement that direct referral is in the best interests of the child

Early help

If early help is appropriate, the DSL will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an interagency assessment as appropriate.

Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. The DSL will keep the case under constant review and will consider a referral to local authority children's social care if the situation does not seem to be improving.

Timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed.

Referral

If it is appropriate to refer the case to local authority children's social care or the police, the DSL/DDSL will make the referral or support you to do so. If you make a referral directly, you must tell the DSL as soon as possible.

The local authority will make a decision within 1 working day of a referral about what course of action to take and will let the person who made the referral know the outcome. The DSL or person who made the referral must follow up with the local authority if this information is not made available, and ensure outcomes are properly recorded.

If the child's situation does not seem to be improving after the referral, the DSL or person who made the referral must follow local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and that the child's situation improves.

Under these circumstances a re-referral to the same safeguarding hub would be carried out.

When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join EVOLVE they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place. They are given a copy of the Safeguarding Child Protection policy, told who our Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputies) is/are and are informed how to share concerns with them.

All staff are kept informed about child protection responsibilities and procedures through induction, briefings and regular awareness training.

Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor to EVOLVE who receives a disclosure or allegation of abuse, or suspects that abuse may have occurred must report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or, in their absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead). In the absence of either of the above, the matter should be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Deputy will immediately refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to referring school and local authority in accordance with their referral procedures.

EVOLVE will always undertake to share an intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care with the parents or carers, unless doing so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation.

If a member of staff continues to have concerns about a child and feels the situation is not being addressed or does not appear to be improving, the staff member concerned should press for reconsideration.

Safeguarding contact details are displayed in EVOLVE to ensure that all staff have access to safeguarding support

Records & Monitoring

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. EVOLVE is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within EVOLVE, the status of such records and when these records should be passed over to other agencies.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, will make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen (if appropriate using a body map to record), putting the event in context, and giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken. This is then presented to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) who will decide on appropriate action.

Any file notes are kept in a confidential child protection file (which is separate to the children file) in chronological order. All child protection records are stored securely and confidentially and will be retained for 7 years after the last entry.

Attendance at Meetings

It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that EVOLVE is represented at and that a report is submitted to any child protection conference called for children on EVOLVE roll or previously known to them. Where appropriate, any report will be shared in advance with the parent(s) / carer. Whoever attends will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns EVOLVE has and be prepared to contribute to the discussions at the conference.

If a child is made subject to a Child Protection or a Child in Need plan, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure the child is monitored regarding their attendance, progress, welfare and presentation. If EVOLVE are part of the core group, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure EVOLVE is represented, provides appropriate information and contributes to the plan at these meetings. Any concerns about the Child Protection plan and / or the child's welfare will be discussed and recorded at the core group meeting, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of significant harm. In this case the Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform the child's key worker immediately and then record that they have done so and the actions agreed.

Section 4: Specific Safeguarding Concerns

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. It may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include noncontact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.

CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence, and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

In addition to the CCE indicators listed above, indicators of CSE can include a child:

- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant

If a member of staff suspects CSE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

Child criminal exploitation (CCE)

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence, or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. As children involved in criminal exploitation

often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

Indicators of CCE can include a child:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other children involved in exploitation
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or education
- Not taking part in education

If a member of staff suspects CCE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

Serious Violence

All staff will be made aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime.

These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation

All staff will be made aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

If a member of staff suspects involvement in serious violence they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

Children with sexually harmful behaviour

Children may be harmed by other children or children. In particular, research suggests that up to 30 per cent of child sexual abuse is committed by someone under the age of 18.

The management of children and children with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and the EVOLVE team will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the children who access our programme. Children who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator. Staff, who become concerned about a children's sexual behaviour, including any known online sexual behaviour, should speak to the DSL as soon as possible.



A continuum of children and children's sexual behaviours (Hackett 2010)

Mental Health

Mental health difficulties can, in some cases, can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Diagnosis of mental health problems should only be made by appropriately trained professionals such as our Educational Psychologists or colleagues in the health sector.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect or other potentially traumatic experiences in childhood, there can be a longstanding legacy that impacts adversely on their mental health and well-being, their behaviour and their education.

The Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary educational establishment staff to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience

among children including its guidance Promoting children and children's emotional health and wellbeing:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1020249/Promoting_children_and_young_people_s_mental_health_and_wellbeing.pdf

Self-Injury/Harming

Self-harm is when somebody hurts themselves on purpose. People usually do it because something else feels wrong. It seems like the only way to let those feelings out. It is a very common behaviour in children and affects around one in 12 people with 10% of 15-16-year-olds self-harming.

If people self-harm it is usually as a result of another problem. It can happen if they are feeling anxious, depressed, stressed or bullied and feel they don't have any other way of dealing with these issues. Often self-harming brings only temporary relief.

Self-injury/harm describes a wide range of things children do to themselves in a deliberate and usually hidden way. In the vast majority of cases self-injury remains a secretive behaviour that can go on for a long time without being discovered. Self-injury/harming can be a coping method for some children. It can involve:

- Cutting, often to the arms, using razor blades, broken glass, scissors or a pair of compasses (can include scratching, picking, biting or scraping)
- Burning using cigarettes or caustic agent
- Punching and bruising
- Inserting or swallowing sharp objects or harmful substances
- Head banging (hitting themselves against objects)
- Pulling out hair, including eyelashes and/or eyebrows
- Restrictive or binge eating
- Overdosing
- Self-neglect
- Alcohol abuse
- Taking undue personal risks
- Sleep deprivation

Peer on Peer / Child on Child Abuse

All staff will be made aware of the nature of peer on peer / child on child Abuse, the indicators and how to respond to reports.

We recognise that abuse can happen both inside and outside of EVOLVE and that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not taking place. A view of "it could happen here" will be maintained.

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up". We

also recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse. However, all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Most cases of children hurting other children will be dealt with under our behaviour policy, but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put children in the centre at risk
- Is violent
- Involves children being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including the sharing of nudes and seminudes)

If a child makes an allegation of abuse against another child:

You must record the allegation using Lamplight System and/or pass the information to DSL/DDSLs.

If a referral is required the DSL/DDSLs will contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence

Where necessary the DSL/DDSLs will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed.

The DSL/DDSLs will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate.

If the incident is a criminal offence and there are delays in the criminal process, the DSL will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required) while protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator. We will ask the police if we have any questions about the investigation.

Furthermore, staff will be vigilant to the fact that children may not report abuse and that overheard conversations, warning signs and changes in behaviour may be the indicators of abuse. This too should be recorded and passed to DSL/DDSLs .

Minimising the risk of child-on-child abuse

We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, and of creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents.

To achieve this, we will:

- Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending sexual images

- Be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female children, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- Ensure our curriculum helps to educate children about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensure children are able to easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems
- Ensuring children know they can talk to staff confidentially by having a list of relevant safeguarding and pastoral staff clearly displayed, by informing and reminding children of the ability to talk at continuing points throughout the year, including but not; limited to assemblies, topics in learning for life and after content delivered by external providers. Also by providing confidential spaces for children to talk to staff and by training staff to be open and aware of the nature of child on child abuse.
- Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously
- Ensuring staff are trained to understand that a children harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy
- Be alert to reports of sexual violence and/or harassment that may point to environmental or systemic problems that could be addressed by updating policies, processes and the curriculum, or could reflect wider issues in the local area that should be shared with safeguarding partners
- Support children who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape or assault by penetration. We will do all we can to make sure the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses are not bullied or harassed
- Consider intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment
- Ensure staff are trained to understand:
 - How to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports
 - That even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse at the centre, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”
 - That if they have any concerns about a child’s welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example:
- Children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to
- A friend may make a report
- A member of staff may overhear a conversation
- A child’s behaviour might indicate that something is wrong
 - That certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation

- That a children harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy
- The important role they have to play in preventing child-on-child abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from i
- That they should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns
- That social media is likely to play a role in the fall-out from any incident or alleged incident, including for potential contact between the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and friends from either side

Disciplinary action can be taken while other investigations are going on, e.g. by the police. The fact that another body is investigating or has investigated an incident doesn't (in itself) prevent us from coming to its own conclusion about what happened and imposing a penalty accordingly. We will consider these matters on a case-by-case basis, taking into account whether:

- Taking action would prejudice an investigation and/or subsequent prosecution – we will liaise with the police and/or LA children's social care to determine this
- There are circumstances that make it unreasonable or irrational for us to reach our own view about what happened while an independent investigation is ongoing

Upskirting

Staff and children are made aware that 'upskirting' is now a criminal offence. The definition describes upskirting as, "taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm". Children are made aware of the seriousness of this offence and cases will be reported to the police.

Youth Produced Sexual Imagery

Youth produced sexual imagery involves the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams, by children under the age of 18. DSL/DDSLs and SLT will follow the guidance from the UK Council for Internet Safety ([Indecent Images of children: guidance for young people](#)) when dealing with any incidents that fall under this category.

It is important that staff know the basic guidelines for dealing with an incident.

Your responsibilities when responding to an incident

If you are made aware of any youth produced sexual imagery, you must report it to the DSL immediately.

You must not:

- View, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery yourself, or ask a children to share or download it (if you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL)
- Delete the imagery or ask the children to delete it

- Ask the children(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility)
- Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the children(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers
- Say or do anything to blame or shame any children involved
- You should explain that you need to report the incident, and reassure the children(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

Initial review meeting

Following a report of an incident, the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate staff – this may include the staff member who reported the incident and the safeguarding or leadership team that deals with safeguarding concerns. This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to children(s)
- If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or children's social care
- If it is necessary to view the image(s) in order to safeguard the children (in most cases, images or videos should not be viewed)
- What further information is required to decide on the best response
- Whether the image(s) has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms (this may be unknown)
- Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images or videos from devices or online services
- Any relevant facts about the children involved which would influence risk assessment
- If there is a need to contact another setting, school, college, setting or individual
- Whether to contact parents or carers of the children involved (in most cases parents/carers should be involved)

The DSL will make an immediate referral to police and/or children's social care if:

- The incident involves an adult
- There is reason to believe that a child has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example owing to special educational needs)
- What the DSL knows about the images or videos suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the child's developmental stage, or are violent
- The imagery involves sexual acts and any children in the images or videos is under 13
- The DSL has reason to believe a children is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (for example, the child is presenting as suicidal or self-harming)

If none of the above apply then the DSL and other members of staff as appropriate, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care. The decision will be made and recorded in line with the procedures set out in this policy.

Further review by the DSL

If at the initial review stage a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children's social care, the DSL will conduct a further review to establish the facts and assess the risks.

They will hold interviews with the children involved (if appropriate).

If at any point in the process there is a concern that a children has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

Informing parents

The DSL will inform parents at an early stage and keep them involved in the process, unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put the children at risk of harm.

Referring to the police

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through contact non-emergency contacts such as 101.

Recording incidents

All youth produced sexual imagery incidents and the decisions made in responding to them will be recorded. The record-keeping arrangements set out in this policy also apply to recording incidents of sexting.

Curriculum coverage

Children are taught about the issues surrounding youth produced sexual imagery as part of our curriculum. The details of the coverage can be seen in the Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

The Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM comprises "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs".

FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as 'female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'.

Any member of staff who discovers (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a child under 18 must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a statutory duty, and members of staff will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it. Unless they have been

specifically told not to disclose, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve children's social care as appropriate.

Any other member of staff who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a children under 18 must speak to the DSL and follow local safeguarding procedures. Any member of staff who suspects a children is at risk of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out should speak to the DSL and following normal safeguarding procedures.

Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation – The 'Prevent Duty'

The purpose of Prevent is at its heart to safeguard and support vulnerable people to stop them from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Our Prevent work also extends to supporting the rehabilitation and disengagement of those already involved in terrorism. Prevent works in a similar way to programmes designed to safeguard people from gangs, drug abuse, and physical and sexual abuse.

Success means an enhanced response to tackle the causes of radicalisation, in communities and online; continued effective support to those who are vulnerable to radicalisation; and disengagement from terrorist activities by those already engaged in or supporters of terrorism.

Protecting children from the risk of extremism and radicalisation should be seen as part of EVOLVE's wider safeguarding duties. It is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse. During the process of radicalisation it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being radicalised.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism or other forms of extremism. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability which are often combined with influences such as family or friends. For some with needs relating to 'belonging' and 'identification', an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet and the use of social media, in particular, has become a major factor in the radicalisation of children.

It is easy to assume that the risk of radicalisation is only associated with certain communities and belief systems. We should avoid those assumptions and remember that extremism happens at both ends of the political spectrum and involvement in activities such as, for example, extreme and violent animal rights campaigns, extreme left/right wing politically activity can equally lead to a child being at risk of radicalisation.

There are a number of behaviours which may indicate a child is at risk of being radicalised or exposed to extreme views. These can include:

- Spending an increasing amount of time in the company of other suspected extremists
- Changing style of dress or personal appearance to accord with the group.
- Day-to-day behaviour becoming more centred on extremist ideology, group or cause

- Loss of interest in other friends and activities not associated with the extremist ideology, group or cause
- Possession of materials or symbols associated with an extremist cause
- Attempts to recruit others to the group or cause
- Communications with others which suggests identification with a group, cause or ideology, including the use of 'scripted language'
- Using insulting or derogatory names for another group
- An increase in prejudice-related incidents committed by that person. These may include:
 - Physical or verbal assault
 - Provocative behaviour
 - Damage to property
 - Derogatory name calling
 Possession of prejudice-related materials
 Prejudice related ridicule or name calling
 Inappropriate forms of address
 Refusal to co-operate with reasonable rules of compliance
 Attempts to recruit others to prejudice-related organisations
 Condoning or supporting violence towards others.

Definition: 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

Radicalisation: The process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate. Inform the DSL or deputy as soon as practically possible after the referral. Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include Channel, the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, or the local authority children's social care team.

The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which staff can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a children. You can also email:

counter.extremism@education.gov.uk

Note that this is not for use in emergency situations.

In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 if you:

- Think someone is in immediate danger
- Think someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group
- See or hear something that may be terrorist-related

'Contextual Safeguarding' and extra-familial harms

This recognises that children, especially as they move into adolescence, are involved in wider social contexts beyond home, school and our centre. This can include public places where children and their peers 'hang out', in parks, on public transport etc, but which may present increased risk of child sexual exploitation, peer on peer abuse, teenage relationship abuse, radicalisation, involvement in gangs or other forms of abuse.

Contextual safeguarding acknowledges that safeguarding incidents that present during EVOLVE may well be related to risks outside both the setting and even the home/family environment. Such risks include (but are not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and serious youth violence, sometimes in combination.

It's important that we have an awareness of and assess the risks beyond the home and seek to ensure that interventions help to protect children in whatever contexts they find themselves.

Contextual safeguarding is not simply about the child, however. It is about ensuring the context (the park, the shopping centre, public transport etc) is subject to a child protection assessment and intervention.

For more information on this and the specific partnership role of centre-based staff, see: <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/about/what-is-contextual-safeguarding>

Domestic violence and abuse

In recent years there has been a greater recognition of the serious and negative impact of domestic abuse on children and children, even if they are not the direct victims of Page 16 violence/other forms of coercive and controlling behaviours.

Children witnessing domestic abuse can cause them significant harm in the long term. Children may blame themselves for the domestic abuse or may have had to leave the family because of such abuse.

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone. Domestic abuse happens across all socio-economic environments. It is defined as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

If children disclose incidents of domestic violence and abuse it is important that this is treated as a safeguarding issue.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduces the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse.

The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members.

The definition captures a range of different abusive behaviours, including physical, emotional and economic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour. Both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be “personally connected”.

Types of domestic abuse include:

- intimate partner violence
- abuse by family members
- teenage relationship abuse
- child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse

Homelessness

Being homeless or at risk of homelessness presents real risks to children’s welfare. It’s important that the DSL/DDSL knows how to make referrals to the relevant local housing authorities. Referring to the local housing authority does not replace the need for a specific safeguarding referral to children’s social care if a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

Whilst most instances of homelessness will relate to a child’s family it is possible that 16/17-yearolds are living independently of their parents/carers. Where there is a risk of homelessness, children’s services will be the lead agency. If children below the age of 16 are living independently, this is clearly a safeguarding issue.

Cybercrime (e.g ‘hacking’, spreading of malware)

Cybercrime broadly refers to criminality performed using computer and digital technology. The crime may happen offline but be enabled by the use of technology or may occur online. Where children and children are involved in this kind of activity there are the same safeguarding concerns that would exist in relation to involvement in any other form of criminality. Annex B of KCSIE (2021) details the typical forms that cybercrime can take and potential signposting that can be made to support children and families.

Children may become caught up in cybercrime inadvertently through, for example, forums that exist around gaming but which use the attraction of a game to lure children in and groom them.

Child abduction and community safety incidents

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a child from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by:

- parents or other family members
- by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances) by strangers.

Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of the centre can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation. As children get older and are granted more independence it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. Lessons should focus on building children's confidence and awareness rather than simply warning them about 'strangers'.

Forced Marriage

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical, and/or emotional and/or psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they do not have the capacity to give informed consent (e.g. they have a learning disability that specifically impact on their capacity).

Some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage. We have a duty to report cases of Forced Marriage to the police (as it is a crime) and to the Forced Marriage Unit in the Foreign and Commonwealth/Home Office. EVOLVE should not attempt to facilitate any kind of 'family counselling' or conferencing in relation to alleged forced marriage issues.

Further information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage>

So-called 'honour based' Abuse and Violence

So-called 'honour based' abuse and violence encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community. It may include Female Genital Mutilation, forced marriage and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of honour based violence are abuse (regardless of motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. If any member of staff has any concerns at all regarding honour based abuse they must speak to the DSL/DDSL. Professionals in all agencies and individuals and groups in communities need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of, or having already suffered honour based abuse. **By the time that a disclosure is made it may be necessary to act very quickly to protect a child.**

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Modern Slavery is the term used within the UK and is defined within the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The Act categorises offences of Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour and Human Trafficking.

These crimes include holding a person in a position of slavery, servitude forced or compulsory labour, or facilitating their travel with the intention of exploiting them soon after. Although human trafficking often involves an international cross-border element, it is also possible to be a victim of modern slavery within your own country.

It is possible to be a victim even if consent has been given to be transported. Children cannot give consent to being exploited therefore the element of coercion or deception does not need to be present to prove an offence.

There are several broad categories of exploitation linked to human trafficking, including:

- Sexual exploitation
- Forced labour – this is often seen in ‘cash only’ settings such as car washing, agriculture, mobile catering
- Domestic servitude
- Human organ ‘harvesting’
- Child related crimes such as child sexual exploitation, forced begging, illegal drug cultivation, organised theft, related benefit frauds etc
- Forced marriage and illegal adoption

In some cases, modern slavery is only discovered by children disclosing their parents’ situations to professional. Where there is suspected modern slavery, advice should be sought immediately from the police by the DSL/DDSL or via the Modern Slavery Helpline: 08000 121 700.

There is a National Referral Mechanism for victims (or potential victims) of modern slavery and a duty on specified public authorities to notify cases. Only specified organisations such as, for example, the police, NSPCC, local authorities can refer and may, therefore, need information from us.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities

We recognise that children with special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges, and are 3 times more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child’s condition without further exploration
- Children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children
- The potential for children with SEN, disabilities or certain health conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs

- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges

We will monitor children and work closely with the DSL/DDSLs in providing information and support.

Bullying

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level bullying can have a disastrous effect on a child's wellbeing and, in very rare cases, has been a feature in suicide. EVOLVE's Anti-Bullying Policy should be referred to in all instances where bullying is suspected and action taken to ensure that bullying is prevented and responded to effectively. Cyber-bullying can be particularly harmful to victims as there is often no refuge from the platforms that enable this to be perpetrated. It is important that children and children learn about the need to use technology responsibly and understand the seriousness of online abuse. Prejudiced-based and discriminatory bullying need to be specifically referenced and with a description of both preventative measures and reactive procedures.

'County Lines', serious violent crime and criminal exploitation

Criminal exploitation is sometimes referred to as 'county lines' and is when gangs and organised crime networks exploit children to sell drugs or engage in other forms of criminal activity. Often these children are made to travel across counties, and they use dedicated mobile phone 'lines' to supply drugs. No one really knows how many children across the country are being forced to take part, but The Children's Commissioner estimates there are at least 46,000 children in England who are involved in gang activity. Gang activity may involve children of different genders although their activities may be different.

Often, these children are seen as criminals. Criminal gangs deliberately target vulnerable children – those who are homeless, living in care homes or trapped in poverty. These children are unsafe, unloved, or unable to cope, and the gangs take advantage of this.

The gangs groom, threaten or trick children into trafficking their drugs for them or carrying out other crimes. They might threaten a child physically, or they might threaten the child's family members. The gangs might also offer something in return for the child's cooperation – it could be money, food, alcohol, clothes and jewellery, or improved status – but the giving of these gifts will usually be manipulated so that the child feels they are in debt to their exploiter.

Any suspicion that children are involved in these activities must be reported via the normal safeguarding routes. Even though children may have committed criminal acts themselves they need to be treated as victims of abuse.

Typical signs of potential involvement in criminal exploitation are:

- Returning home late, staying out all night or going missing

- Being found in areas away from home
- Increasing drug use, or being found to have large amounts of drugs on them
- Being secretive about who they are talking to and where they are going
- Unexplained absences from EVOLVE, school, college, training or work and decline in performance
- Unexplained money, phone(s), clothes or jewellery
- Increasingly disruptive or aggressive behaviour
- Using sexual, drug-related or violent language you wouldn't expect them to know
- Coming home with injuries or looking particularly dishevelled
- Having hotel cards or keys to unknown places or unknown people appearing to 'take over' the child's home ('cuckooing') especially if the child is living independently
- Vehicle crime and threatening/committing serious violence
- Children carrying weapons for protection

Safeguarding children from groups who may experience increased vulnerability

Children Looked After (CLA), children who need a social worker, those on the edge of care and care leavers

The most common reason for children to become 'looked after' is as a result of abuse or neglect. EVOLVE will ensure all staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep Looked After children safe. Appropriate staff will have access to information about a child's Looked After status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the local authority caring for the child. The DSL/DDSL will have details of the child's school, social worker and the name and contact details of the local authority's virtual head for children in care.

Once children come into the care system, they are afforded special status and protection. This is not the case for children on the edge of care. EVOLVE needs to be aware of those children and children who are known to social care but who are not formally in the care system. The safeguarding of this group of people also needs careful planning.

We will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked-after children and previously looked-after children safe. In particular, we will ensure that:

- Appropriate staff have relevant information about children's looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangement
- The DSL has details of children's social workers and schools
- The designated member of staff is appropriately trained and has the relevant qualifications and experience to perform the role

As part of their role, the DSL will:

- Work closely with the team to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
- Work with schools and virtual centre heads to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including discussing how children premium plus funding can be best used to support looked-after children and meet the needs identified in their personal education plans.

Those who leave care, perhaps by being adopted, have the advantage of achieving a long term family context. Even so, their safeguarding needs and issues will need to be considered and planned for.

Children with a social worker

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. We recognise that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm as well as potentially creating barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

The DSL and all members of staff will work with and support social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

Where we are aware that a children has a social worker, the DSL will always consider this fact to ensure any decisions are made in the best interests of the children's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. For example, it will inform decisions about:

- Responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks
- The provision of pastoral and/or academic support

The DSL should be made aware when a child has a social worker. This enables the DSL to ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. Moreover, knowing the vulnerabilities associated with a child who has an allocated social worker should inform decisions about safeguarding (e.g. responding to absence where there might be an increased safeguarding risk) as well as considering ways in which they might access additional support to improve their engagement and educational outcomes. Helpful advice on this is available from the interim review: 'Improving the educational outcomes of Children in Need of help and protection' and final review 'Help, protection, education' (2019) both available

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/809236/190614_CHILDREN_IN_NEED_PUBLICATION_FINAL.pdf

Children missing from education

EVOLVE will closely monitor attendance, absence and exclusions alongside the referring school. A child regularly missing from school is a potential indicator of abuse and

neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The DSL/DDSL will work with the schools attendance team to monitor any unauthorised absence and take appropriate action, including notifying the local authority if appropriate, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day.

Privately fostered children

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16 or under the age of 18 if the child is disabled. Children looked after by the local authority or who are placed in a residential centre, children's home or hospital are not considered to be privately fostered. Private fostering occurs in all cultures, and children may be privately fostered at any age under the limit. Most privately fostered children remain safe and well but safeguarding concerns have been raised in some cases so it is important that we are alert to possible safeguarding issues, including the possibility a child has been trafficked into the country and will notify the referring school. If a member of staff becomes aware a child may be in a private fostering arrangement, they should raise this with the DSL/DDSL who should notify the appropriate local authority of any concerns that may be linked to the placement. Any safeguarding concerns about the child or placement which arise following the placement should be reported to Children's Social Care.

Children who are lesbian, gay, bi or trans (LGBTQ+)

There is no reason why children who are LGBTQ+ should be seen as inherently at greater risk of harm and abuse. However, they may be targeted for bullying or suffer exclusionary pressures. It is important that LGBTQ+ children have a trusted adult and a 'safe space' where they can express any concerns. It is equally important that our centre works to be inclusive thereby reducing incidents of intolerance and bullying.

Other vulnerable learners

Other children may have an increased risk of abuse. Many factors can contribute including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and a reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur. To ensure all children receive equal protection, all staff should give special consideration to those who are:

- Young carers
- Affected by parental substance misuse, domestic violence or parental mental health needs
- Asylum seekers
- Living away from home
- Living in temporary accommodation
- Live transient lifestyle
- Live in frequently disrupted and unsupportive home situations
- Vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
- Do not have English as a first language

The above list provides examples of additional vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive.

Children in the Court System

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age-appropriate guides to support children 5-11 year olds and 12-17 year olds.

Making arrangements for the custody of children via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be particularly stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers. <https://helpwithchildarrangements.service.justice.gov.uk/>

Children with parents/carers in prison

Approximately 200,000 children have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. National Information Centre for Children of Offenders (NICCO) provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children. <https://www.nicco.org.uk/>

Attendance, Exclusions, Children Missing from Education and Safeguarding

Good attendance at EVOLVE or school is a protective factor for children. Parents/carers also have a legal obligation to ensure that their children attend EVOLVE or school every day unless there is a good reason for absence.

Unexplained absences from EVOLVE or school can indicate an increased risk of child sexual exploitation, radicalisation, neglect, 'county lines' or other forms of harm and abuse.

In accordance with EVOLVE's Attendance Policy, absences will be pursued and recorded. EVOLVE, in partnership with the appropriate agencies, must take timely action to pursue and address all absences in order to safeguard the welfare of children in its care. The Attendance Policy identifies how individual cases are managed and how we work proactively with parents/carers to ensure that they understand why attendance is important. In certain cases this may form part of an Early Help Assessment (EHA) or Children & Family Assessment Notification (CFAN), and form part of the evidence relating to child protection procedures. We implement the statutory requirements in terms of monitoring and reporting children missing education (CME). We understand how important this practice is in safeguarding children. Should a child leave the building without permission a call is made to the parent/carer, school/referring agency and the police. The incident, police reference number and any relevant outcomes are logged. All parents/carers who are collecting a child from EVOLVE during the day will be asked to sign the child out in the signing out book.

Helping children to keep themselves safe

Children are taught to understand and manage risk through our personal, social, health and economic (PSHCE) education and sex and relationships lessons. Our approach is designed to help children to think about risks they may encounter and with the support of staff, work out how those risks might be reduced or managed. Discussions about risk are empowering and enabling for all children and promote sensible behaviour rather than fear or anxiety. Children are also reminded regularly about online safety, the risks of sharing content and images online and tackling bullying, including cyber bullying procedures. We continually promotes an ethos of respect for children and encourage them to speak to a member of staff of their choosing about any worries they may have.

Section 5: Safeguarding and Staff procedures

Allegations against staff

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a child are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount. The EVOLVE's whistleblowing policy enables staff to raise concerns or allegations, initially in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

All adults working in the setting have a duty to disclose to the DSL where their relationships and associations both within and outside of the workplace (including online) may have implications for safeguarding children in educational establishment.

The DSL has completed Safer Recruitment training and will be involved in all staff/volunteer recruitment processes and sit on the recruitment panel.

A safeguarding complaint that meets the above criteria must be reported to the DSL immediately. If the complaint involves the DSL, then the Hounslow LADO must be informed.

All staff must fully understand that any adult behaviours that deviate from the Guidance for Safer Working Practice, including inappropriate conduct outside of work are a concern, even if they are low-level. Low-level concerns are concerns that do not meet the harm test/allegations threshold. Examples of such behaviour include:

- Being over familiar with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or
- Humiliating children

Where the harm threshold has been met, the DSL must use the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Details in **Appendix 1** in order to assess the level of concern.

The completed LADO form must be sent the Hounslow LADO team lado@hounslow.gov.uk within one working day of the allegation being made. This will assist the DSL in consultation with the LADO to decide on the most appropriate course of action. This includes when to inform the member of staff/ volunteer or professional visitor of the concerns raised. Parents/carers of the child or children involved should be told about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it.

Concerns can be raised by the following methods:

- The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line
- is available from 8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday and Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Full details of managing an allegation against a staff member is listed in Appendix 3.

Staff training

It is important that all staff receive training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to know what to do if they have a concern.

Staff should read KCSIE ([Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025: Part 1](#)). This should be signed and recorded internally.

New staff will receive a briefing during their induction, which includes the EVOLVE safeguarding & child protection policy and staff behaviour policy, reporting and recording arrangements, and details for the DSL. All staff will receive training that is regularly updated and the DSL will receive training updated at least every two years including training in interagency procedures.

Contractors and other visiting staff will be given the EVOLVE Visiting Staff Leaflet.

All staff will be made aware of the increased risk to abuse of certain groups, including disabled and SEN children, looked after children and young carers

Safer recruitment

We endeavour to ensure that we do our utmost to employ safe staff by following the centre's Safer Recruitment policy and procedures.

Safer recruitment means that applicants will:

- complete an application form which includes their employment history and explains any gaps in that history
- provide two referees, including at least one who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children
- provide evidence of identity and qualifications
- if offered employment, be checked in accordance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) regulations as appropriate to their role. This will include an enhanced DBS check and a barred list check for those engaged in Regulated Activity
- if offered employment, provide evidence of their right to work in the UK
- be interviewed, if shortlisted.

We will also

- verify the preferred candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- obtain references for all shortlisted candidates, including internal candidates or carry out additional or alternative checks for applicants who have lived or worked outside the UK
- ensure that applicants for teaching posts are not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State

At least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training.

All new members of staff will undergo an induction that includes familiarisation with the EVOLVE safeguarding and child protection policy and staff behaviour policy and identification of their child protection training needs.

All staff sign to confirm they have received a copy of the child protection policy and staff behaviour policy.

Contractors

We check the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS checks and barred list checks where appropriate. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or in regulated activity

Confidentiality and sharing information

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the children and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

However, following a number of cases where senior leaders in school had failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) emphasises that any member of staff can contact children's social care if they are concerned about a child.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. Information sharing is guided by the following principles. The information is:

- necessary and proportionate
- relevant
- adequate
- accurate
- timely
- secure

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share

Record of concern forms and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

Every effort will be made to prevent unauthorised access, and sensitive information should not routinely be stored on laptop computers, which, by the nature of their portability, could be lost or stolen. Child protection information will be stored separately from the children's file.

The DSL will normally obtain consent from the child and/or parents/carer to share sensitive information with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so, the DSL may share information without consent, and will record the reason for not obtaining consent.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a children or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Head of Centre.

The Data Protection Act does not prevent staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

Section 6: Safeguarding Onsite & Offsite

Visitors to EVOLVE

Planned Visits by Parents/Carers, Agencies and Other Visitors

- All visitors to the centre will be asked to sign in and will be issued with the visitor lanyard
- All visitors will be issued with the EVOLVE's leaflet explaining the Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures
- Visitors must not be unaccompanied during any part of their visit unless a DBS and Photo ID has been seen
- At the end of the visit, the member of staff meeting the visitor should formally sign them out

Unplanned Visits by Parents/Carers, Agencies and Other Visitors

- All visitors to EVOLVE will be asked to sign in and will be issued with the centre's visitor badge
- A visitor will be asked who they would like to see, and they will see if the person is available.
- If the person is available, procedures will then follow as for planned visits above
- If the person is not available or cannot be located the visitor will be asked to make an appointment with the person, they wish to meet with and to return at that time
- If the visitor wishes to meet with someone as a matter of urgency, another appropriate member of staff should be located who is available to meet and then the same procedures as above will be followed
- Parents who are at the centre to either deliver or collect their child outside of normal hours will not need to sign in but they should wait in reception for their child to come to them

Volunteers at EVOLVE

- Any person who is a volunteer which involves attendance at the site, will undergo the statutory checks commensurate with their role at EVOLVE and contact with children
- Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised by a member of staff or be allowed to engage in regulated activity.

Contractors

- The DSL will check the identity of all contractors working on-site and request DBS checks.
- Contractors will be requested to sign in and will be given a lanyard indicating they have permission to be on the site
- Even where contractors have been appropriately checked and cleared, there should always be a supporting member of staff from EVOLVE present

Complaints procedure

Our complaints procedure will be followed where a child or parent raises a concern about poor practice towards a child. Poor practice examples include unfairly singling out or attempting to humiliate them, bullying or belittling a child or discriminating against them in some way. Complaints are managed by the Head of Centre.

Complaints from staff are dealt with under the EVOLVE complaints and disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Complaints which escalate into a child protection concern will automatically be managed under the EVOLVE child protection procedures.

Off-site arrangements

All extended and off-site activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. Where off-site activities are provided by and managed by the centre, our own child protection policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

When our children attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work related activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place. We will obtain parental consent before all offsite trips.

Photography and images

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent and legitimate reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or distributing images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place.

To protect children we will:

- seek their consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- only use work phones to take pictures
- seek parental consent
- use only the children's first name with an image
- ensure children are appropriately dressed
- encourage children to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them

Online Safety

Our children increasingly use electronic equipment on a daily basis to access the internet and share content and images via social networking sites such as facebook, twitter, MSN, tumblr, snapchat and instagram.

Unfortunately, some adults and children will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to grooming and enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings.

Children may also be distressed or harmed by accessing inappropriate websites that promote unhealthy lifestyles, extremist behaviour and criminal activity. The centre's online safety policy explains how we try to keep children safe in the centre and protect and educate children in the safe use of technology. Cyberbullying and sexting by children will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. Serious incidents may be managed in line with our sexual exploitation policy or child protection procedures

The centre provides advice to staff regarding their personal online activity and has strict rules regarding online contact and electronic communication with children. Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be subject to disciplinary action or child protection investigation

Appendix 1: Safeguarding Contacts

EVOLVE Safeguarding Team

Name	Role	Number
Siobhan Donoghue	Designated Lead for Safeguarding	07563 303648
Danielle Hutchinson	Deputy Safeguarding Lead	07463 795355
Darren Beecroft	Deputy Safeguarding Lead	07923 267678

Local Authority Contacts

Social Services – Hounslow Borough	<p>Availability: 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday Call: 020 8583 6000 Email: childrensocialcare@hounslow.gov.uk</p> <p>Out of hours: After 5pm weekdays or weekends Telephone 020 8583 2222 and ask to speak to the duty social worker</p>
Hounslow – Local Authority Designated Officer	<p>Availability: 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday Call: 0208 583 5730 Email: lado@hounslow.gov.uk</p> <p>The Hounslow LADO is: Sarah Paltenghi (Monday) Email: sarah.paltenghi@hounslow.gov.uk 0208 583 3423 / 07970 198 380 Grace Murphy (Tue-Friday) Email: grace.murphy@hounslow.gov.uk Tel: 0208 583 4933 / 07975 820 130</p>
CAMHS – Hounslow	Call: 020 8483 2050
Social Services Richmond & Kingston	<p>Availability: 8am to 5.15pm, Monday to Friday</p> <p>Call: 020 8547 5008 Out of hours phone 020 8770 5000 to speak to our duty team. For concerns for an adult: ascmarsh@surreycc.gov.uk</p>
Richmond & Kingston – Local Authority Designated Officer	<p>Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm</p> <p>Call: 020 88917370 Phone: 07774 332675 Email: LADO@achievingforchildren.org.uk.</p>

Richmond & Kingston CAMHS service Kingston Tier 3 Richmond Tier 3 CAMHS Crisis Line	Call: 020 8547 6171 Call: 020 3513 5183/5321 Call: 020 8513 3238 Call: 020 3228 5980
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Social Services – Spelthorne/Surrey Borough	Availability: 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday Call: 0300 470 9100 Out of hours phone: 01483 517898 to speak to our duty team. Email: emails are dealt with during normal office hours For concerns for a child or child: cspa@surreycc.gov.uk For concerns for an adult: ascmash@surreycc.gov.uk
Spelthorne/Surrey – Local Authority Designated Officer	Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm Call: 0300 123 1650 (option 3) Email: LADO@surreycc.gov.uk.
Spelthorne CAMHS service	Call: 01784 884 359
Surrey CAMHS	8am - 8pm Monday to Friday, 9am - 12pm on Saturdays Call: 0300 222 5755

1.3 Other Contacts

NSPCC	0800 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk
Childline	0800 11 11 childline.org.uk
Kidscape – Parent Advice Line (bullying)	020 7823 5430 kidscape.org.uk
Samaritans	116 123 samaritans.org
CEOP Child Exploitation and Online Protection	ceop.police.uk

Appendix 2: Categories of Abuse

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. (this used to be called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy, but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness).

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include 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. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, 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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Indicators of abuse

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

A child who is being abused, neglected or exploited may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- appear fearful
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- self-harm
- frequently miss EVOLVE/school, arrive late or leaves EVOLVE/school for part of the day
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- challenge authority
- become disinterested in their school work
- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age

- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends'

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed.

It is very important that staff report their concerns – they do not need 'absolute proof' that the child is at risk.

Impact of abuse

The impact of child abuse, neglect and exploitation should not be underestimated. Many children do recover well and go on to lead healthy, happy and productive lives, although most adult survivors agree that the emotional scars remain, however well buried. For some children, full recovery is beyond their reach, and the rest of their childhood and their adulthood may be characterised by anxiety or depression, self-harm, eating disorders, alcohol and substance misuse, unequal and destructive relationships and long-term medical or psychiatric difficulties.

Taking action

Any child, in any family in any setting could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of "it could happen here".

Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, if necessary, call 999
- report your concern as soon as possible to the DSL, definitely by the end of the day • do not start your own investigation
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- complete a record of concern
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

Appendix 3: Allegations of abuse made against staff

This section of this policy applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff or volunteer, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children, or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children It applies regardless of whether the alleged abuse took place in the centre
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

It applies regardless of whether the alleged abuse took place in the centre. Allegations against a member of staff who is no longer working at the centre and historical allegations of abuse will be referred to the police.

If we're in any doubt as to whether a concern meets the harm threshold, we will consult out local authority designated officer (LADO).

We will deal with any allegation of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

Suspension of the accused until the case is resolved

Suspension will not be the default position, and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a child or other children is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. In such cases, we will only suspend an individual if we have considered all other options available and there is no reasonable alternative.

Based on an assessment of risk, we will consider alternatives such as:

- Redeploying the individual to alternative work in the centre so that they do not have unsupervised access to children

Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

- Substantiated: there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- Malicious: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive

- False: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- Unsubstantiated: there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)
- Unfounded: to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made

Procedure for dealing with allegations

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the Head of Centre will be informed.

In the event of an allegation against the Head of Centre, the allegation should be reported to Local Authority.

Immediately discuss the allegation with the designated officer at the local authority. This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children's social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police before consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police)

Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or children's social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children's social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies

Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the centre is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police and/or children's social care services, as appropriate

If immediate suspension is considered necessary, agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day, and the individual will be given a named contact and their contact details

If it is decided that no further action is to be taken in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation

If it is decided that further action is needed, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action and/or liaise with the police and/or children's social care services as appropriate

Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate.

Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with children's social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against a staff member (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a member of staff will be advised to seek legal advice

Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case and the outcome, where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process (in confidence)

Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child

Where the police are involved, wherever possible the senior management will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point.

Specific actions

Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution

The case manager will discuss with the local authority's designated officer whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or children's social care services.

Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the DSL will discuss with the local authority whether to make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required. If they think that the individual has engaged in conduct that has harmed (or is likely to harm) a child, or if they think the person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child, they must make a referral to the DBS.

If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the case manager and personnel adviser will discuss with the designated officer whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

Individuals returning to work after suspension

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this.

The DSL/DDSL will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation, if they are still attending EVOLVE.

Unsubstantiated or malicious allegations

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the Head of Centre, or other appropriate person in the case of an allegation against the Head of Centre, will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the child(s) who made it, or whether the police should be asked to consider whether action against those who made the allegation might be appropriate, even if they are not a child on the EVOLVE programme.

Confidentiality

We will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. The case manager will take advice from the local authority's designated officer, police and children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:

- Who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child/children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality
- What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation
- How to manage press interest if, and when, it arises

Record-keeping

The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case. Such records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- Notes of any action taken and decisions reached (and justification for these, as stated above)

If an allegation or concern is not found to have been malicious, we will retain the records of the case on the individual's confidential personnel file, and provide a copy to the individual.

Where records contain information about allegations of sexual abuse, we will preserve these for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), for the term of the inquiry. We will retain all other records at least until the individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

The records of any allegation that is found to be malicious will be deleted from the individual's personnel file.

References

When providing employer references, we will not refer to any allegation that has been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any history of allegations where all such allegations have been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious.

Learning lessons

After any cases where the allegations are substantiated, we will review the circumstances of the case with the local authority's designated officer to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to our procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff
- The duration of the suspension
- Whether or not the suspension was justified
- The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual

Recording low-level concerns

Low-level concerns about a member of staff should be reported to the DSL (or, in their absence, the DDSL) . Where a low-level concern is raised about the designated safeguarding lead, it should be shared with Hounslow LADO. Furthermore, staff should feel confident to self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

Where a low-level concern relates to a contractor to work in the centre, that concern should be shared with the DSL (or, in their absence, the DDSL) and recorded.

All low-level concerns should be recorded in writing. The record should include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible.

These must be kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, the DSL/DDSL will decide on a course of action, either through its disciplinary procedures

or where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harms threshold, in which case it will be referred to the LADO.

Consideration should also be given to whether there are wider cultural issues within the centre that enabled the behaviour to occur and where appropriate policies could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again. These concerns will be retained at least until the individual leaves the centre's employment.

Low level concerns should not be included in references unless they relate to issues which would normally be included in a reference, for example, misconduct or poor performance. It follows that a low-level concern which relates exclusively to safeguarding (and not to misconduct or poor performance) should not be referred to in a reference.

However, where a low-level concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the LADO and found to be substantiated, it should be referred to in a reference. If the concern has been raised via a third party, the DSL/DDSLs should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously; or to the individual involved and any witnesses.