



Connections

Safeguarding Vulnerable Children and Adults Policy and Procedures 5.0

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1. Purpose and Scope

Connections is a person-centred service providing Conductive Education, Neuro Linguistic Programming and Neuro Physiotherapy.

The Neurological Support Services (Conductive Education and Neuro-Physiotherapy) is provided to both children and adults with neurological and/or physical difficulties or disabilities. The clients at Connections have a very wide range of disabilities and difficulties. Consequently, they have a wide variety of cognitive, communication, physical, social and emotional needs. These varied difficulties and needs have the potential to cause any of our clients to be particularly vulnerable to abuse.

The General Support Services (Neuro Linguistic Programming) are provided primarily to adults without disabilities/difficulties. However, due to the ‘talking therapy’ nature of the approach the clients accessing these services may be more vulnerable to mental ill-health.

We provide services both within clients’ homes, online and in community locations such as schools, gyms and community centres.

We have a duty to safeguard all the individuals that access our services. We are completely committed to this and safeguarding therefore forms a part of everything we do.

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2. Context

Since we work across the age-range we have a duty to safeguard both children and adults. We have made the decision to create a single combined policy for safeguarding both children and adults across all of our support services.

Although we provide services across the North-West the Connections practitioners are based in Lancashire. We will therefore utilise both the Pan-Lancashire Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Children Manual and the Safeguarding Adults: Pan Lancashire Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures as guidance for best practice in safeguarding the range of clients whom we work with. We will also utilise guidance from our clients' own regions if considered necessary/appropriate or if advised to do so by our own local authority.

Safeguarding of our Connections clients is of the utmost importance. We will not over-complicate this with an overly detailed policy. Since Connections practitioners all work as self-employed individuals, and are mainly lone working, a complex safeguarding policy for Connections would be neither useful nor necessary. Instead, we will use the manuals identified above to guide our practice.

3. Policy Statement

- We believe that we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.
- We will give equal priority to keeping all children and vulnerable adults safe regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- The clients at Connections may have a very wide range of disabilities and difficulties. Consequently, they may have a wide variety of cognitive, communication, physical, social and emotional needs. These varied difficulties and needs have the potential to cause any of our clients to be particularly vulnerable to abuse e.g. due to challenges with communication, social isolation and discrimination.
- At Connections we support parents, carers and other family members of children and adults with additional needs. The challenges the family and carers face in living with, and supporting, a family member with additional needs may mean that they themselves have an increased likelihood of being or becoming children or adults at risk.

We will meet our commitment to keeping our clients safe by:

- Listening to and respecting all the children and adults with whom we work
- Appointing Jules McDonald as Designated Safeguarding Lead (Children and Adults) and ensuring that all other practitioners (Bret McDonald and Emily Heys) have a minimum of level 2 safeguarding training with children and adults.
- All practitioners taking mutual responsibility for safeguarding at the highest level in their services.
- Following detailed safeguarding procedures (see below)
- Ensuring all clients, their families and carers know about our safeguarding policies and what to do if they have a concern.

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- Building a safeguarding culture within our services where clients, carers, families and others with whom we come into contact know how they are expected to behave and feel comfortable about sharing concerns.

4. Types of Abuse

Below is a consolidated list of abuse types, incorporating definitions relevant to both children and vulnerable adults:

1. **Physical Abuse:**
Deliberate infliction of physical harm, such as hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, or misuse of medication.
2. **Sexual Abuse:**
Involvement in sexual activities without consent, including rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault.
3. **Emotional (Psychological) Abuse:**
Persistent emotional maltreatment causing adverse effects on emotional development, such as intimidation, threats, humiliation, or verbal abuse.
4. **Neglect and Acts of Omission:**
Failure to meet basic physical and psychological needs, resulting in serious impairment of health or development. This includes ignoring medical needs, withholding necessities like food or heating, and inadequate supervision.
5. **Financial or Material Abuse:**
Misuse or misappropriation of funds, theft, fraud, or coercion regarding financial matters, including undue pressure in financial transactions or exploitation of assets.
6. **Discriminatory Abuse:**
Unequal treatment based on protected characteristics such as age, disability, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation, including verbal abuse or harassment.
7. **Organisational (Institutional) Abuse:**
Neglect or poor care practices within an institution or specific care setting, such as inadequate supervision, failure to provide adequate food, or misuse of medication.
8. **Modern Slavery:**
Encompasses human trafficking, forced labour, domestic servitude, sexual exploitation, and debt bondage, where individuals are exploited through coercion, deception, or force.
9. **Self-Neglect:**
Failure to care for one's personal hygiene, health, or surroundings, leading to a threat to personal health and safety.
10. **Domestic Abuse:**
Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, or 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.
11. **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE):**
Involves manipulating or coercing a child (under 18) into sexual activities, where the child receives 'something' (e.g., food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities.

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12. Honour-Based Abuse:

Violence and abuse in the name of 'honour', including crimes such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, where individuals are punished by their family or community for perceived transgressions against 'honour'.

13. Peer-on-Peer Abuse:

Peer-on-peer abuse refers to harmful behaviour or misconduct where one young person or peer abuses another, typically in a school, youth setting, or among peers of similar age or maturity. It can include physical, emotional, sexual, or online abuse, and may occur through bullying, harassment, sexual exploitation, or violence.

5. Procedures within Connections for keeping ourselves and our clients safe.

The following procedures support the overarching safeguarding policy statement. It explains the steps that we will take to keep vulnerable children and adults safe and what we will do when there are concerns about an individual's wellbeing.

1. The Connections application and initial consultation process will be used to find out as much information as possible about individual needs, abilities, challenges etc... at the start of working with them. Information regarding parental responsibility and/or individual capacity/mental health will be asked during application and consultation process.
2. Connections Individual Risk Assessments will be used, when appropriate for General Services Clients and for **all** Neurological Services Clients, to identify and reduce risks in order to create a safe environment for best practice.
3. Connections Policies i.e. Moving and Handling Policy, First Aid Policy, Safeguarding Policy and Lone Worker Policy, Infection Control Policy will be used as a backdrop to all practice to ensure a safe environment of best practice is created and maintained throughout all services.
4. Monitoring and evaluation procedures (e.g. note-keeping, safeguarding recording form, Injury on Arrival form etc..) will be used consistently to ensure a safe environment of best practice is created and maintained throughout all services.
5. Upon initiating sessions all clients (or parents/carers) will be asked to sign an agreement. The agreement will share information regarding all Connections policies and procedures including safeguarding information. We will provide a link to online access to all current policies and procedures to all clients and inform them of any updates etc...
6. If we come across ANY information/incidents that give us cause for concern, no matter how small, we will record these concerns using any or all of the following documents as necessary:
 - Body Maps – Infant, Male and Female
 - Injury on Arrival Form
 - Safeguarding Recording Form
 - Client Monitoring Notes (Online Log in Client's Online Individual file)
7. All staff will consider the 'Threshold of Needs' Guidance (children - <https://www.lancshiresafeguarding.org.uk/media/15003/Thresholds-Guidance-2016.pdf>) or 'Safeguarding Threshold Matrix' (adults - <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/safeguarding/>) guidance to help determine the appropriate response to safeguarding concerns

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8. At ANY time, if we feel it is necessary to do so we will contact EITHER the individual's Local Authority Safeguarding Team OR an alternative guidance source (e.g. NSPCC/Childline) for advice and guidance on the best course of action for us to take for a child or vulnerable adult.
9. Any individual safeguarding records will be kept within individual client records and kept private and confidential at all times.
10. When working within community locations (e.g. schools) we will observe the specific organisation's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. However, we will remain at liberty to follow our own policy, and procedure should we feel it necessary to do so.
11. We will maintain our enhanced DBS Disclosure (and renew this annually).
12. Connections complaints policy will specify how anyone can make a complaint. Clients (or parents/carers) will be made aware of the policy upon commencing sessions.

6. Managing Allegations of Abuse

Managing allegations of abuse is a critical part of safeguarding children and adults. The safety and well-being of individuals must be the top priority, and all allegations should be taken seriously, treated with sensitivity, and handled with professionalism. The following guidelines outline how practitioners will manage allegations of abuse effectively. This guidance should also be followed when managing allegations of peer-to-peer abuse:

6.1. Responding to an Allegation or Concern

- **Listen Carefully and Stay Calm:** When an individual discloses an allegation of abuse, listen attentively and ensure they feel safe and supported. Avoid making judgments, asking leading questions, or pressuring the individual to provide details.
- **Reassure the Individual:** Let them know that they have done the right thing by speaking up. Reassure them that the matter will be taken seriously and that appropriate action will be taken to ensure their safety.
- **Do Not Investigate:** It is not the role of practitioners to investigate allegations. Only trained professionals should conduct investigations, such as social workers or law enforcement.

6.2. Reporting the Allegation

- **Immediate Action:** If the allegation involves immediate risk of harm to a child or adult, take immediate action to protect the individual (e.g., removing the alleged perpetrator from the environment or ensuring the individual receives medical attention).
- **Report to Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** All allegations should be reported to the designated safeguarding lead as soon as possible.
- **Document the Allegation:** Record all information related to the allegation, including the date, time, what was said, and any actions taken. Keep this record confidential and secure.

6.3. Referral to External Agencies

- **Referral to Local Authorities:** If the allegation involves possible abuse or neglect, the safeguarding lead must make a referral to the relevant local

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authority safeguarding team or adult services for further investigation. This could include child protection services, adult safeguarding teams, or the police.

- **Working with Authorities:** Cooperate fully with the relevant authorities during the investigation, sharing information as required and ensuring confidentiality is maintained throughout the process.

6.4. **Managing the Alleged Perpetrator - if a Connections practitioner is the alleged perpetrator.**

- **Ensure Fair Treatment:** Any individual who is accused of abuse should be treated fairly and in accordance with policies. They should be informed of the allegation against them, provided with an opportunity to respond, and supported appropriately.
- **Suspension or Removal from Duties:** In cases where there is a risk to others, the alleged perpetrator may be temporarily removed from their duties while the investigation takes place. This is not an indication of guilt but is necessary to protect the individuals involved.
- **Confidentiality:** Ensure that the process remains confidential, with information being shared only with individuals who need to know to protect others and support the investigation.

6.5. **Support for the Victim**

- **Immediate Support:** Ensure that the individual who made the allegation has access to appropriate support services, including counselling, advocacy, and any other relevant resources to address their immediate emotional and physical needs.
- **Continued Support:** Ongoing support should be provided to the victim throughout the investigation process and beyond. This may include checking in regularly, providing updates on the process, and ensuring their safety.

6.6. **Investigating the Allegation**

- **Cooperate with Authorities:** The investigation should be led by external authorities (e.g., police or social services), and Connections practitioners should cooperate fully, providing all necessary information and following the guidance of those agencies.
- **Maintain Objectivity:** Connections practitioners should maintain an objective stance throughout the investigation, focusing on facts rather than assumptions.

6.7. **Outcome and Follow-Up**

- **Review and Action:** Once the investigation is complete, review the outcome and take any necessary action to prevent further incidents. This may include disciplinary measures for the alleged perpetrator, additional training for practitioners, or changes to policies and procedures.
- **Safeguarding Plan:** If the allegation is substantiated, develop and implement a safeguarding plan to ensure the ongoing safety and well-being of the individual who was harmed. This may include support services and adjustments to their environment.

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6.8. Recording and Monitoring

- **Keep Comprehensive Records:** All steps taken in response to the allegation, including conversations, actions, and decisions, should be thoroughly documented and kept secure.
- **Review Policies:** Following the resolution of an allegation, conduct a review of safeguarding policies and procedures to identify any areas for improvement. This can help reduce the risk of future incidents and improve the organization's response to safeguarding concerns.

6.9. Training and Prevention

- **Regular Staff Training:** Ensure that all practitioners access regular safeguarding training, including recognising and responding to abuse, to ensure they are prepared to manage allegations appropriately.
- **Promote a Safe Environment:** Create and maintain an environment where children and adults feel safe and supported, and where safeguarding concerns can be reported without fear of retaliation.

By following these steps, Connections can ensure that allegations of abuse are handled in a way that prioritises safety, fairness, and transparency, while also ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

7. Prevent Duty

The Prevent duty is a key component of the UK's counter-terrorism strategy, aiming to stop individuals from being drawn into terrorism. Established under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, this duty places specific responsibilities on organisations/groups including those involved in safeguarding children and adults. It requires Connections to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". Connections has **key responsibilities within this as follows:**

1. **Risk Assessment:** Identify individuals who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and assess the risk of them being drawn into terrorist-related activity.
2. **Intervention:** Provide appropriate support and interventions to individuals identified as being at risk, aiming to divert them from potential extremist influences.
3. **Collaboration:** Work with local Prevent coordinators, the police, and other partners to share information and coordinate efforts in safeguarding individuals from radicalisation.
4. **Training:** Ensure that practitioners are trained to recognise signs of radicalisation and understand the procedures for reporting concerns.

8. Further/Detailed Guidance:

For detailed information on recognising abuse and procedures to be followed we will use the following as best practice guidance:

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- Lancashire Safeguarding Partnership Children's Policies and Procedures
<https://panlancashirescp.trixonline.co.uk/>
- Lancashire Safeguarding Partnership Adult Policies and Procedures
<https://www.lancshiresafeguardingpartnership.org.uk/p/safeguarding-adults/safeguarding-adult-policies-and-procedures>
- Keeping Children Safe in Education – Updated September 2024
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d7301b9084b18b95709f75/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf

9. Designated Safeguarding Lead

Since there are only three people working under a partnership as Connections, whilst Julia McDonald is DSL all contact details of practitioners are below.

- **DSL - Julia McDonald - 075915291915**
- Emily Heys - 07736064845
- Bret McDonald - 07970297448

10. Training

We will have regular training (every 2 years minimum) in both child and adult safeguarding. This can either be online or face-to-face (ideally face-to-face where possible) to ensure our knowledge and practice is up to date. We will also undertake Prevent training periodically.

Suggested training sources

- Designated Safeguarding Officer (Level 3 Training)
https://www.highspeedtraining.co.uk/safeguarding-people/designated-safeguarding-officer-training-course.aspx?fbclid=IwAR2_CjSnkIWRfRL0ReY8Q9qHngDnSCVV-ed5Z_VR4UTcCvOz6i08N0gkqmdx4
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (Children) -
<https://www.hsge.co.uk/course/designated-safeguarding-lead-children/>
- Advanced Safeguarding Adults Training -
<https://www.highspeedtraining.co.uk/safeguarding-people/advanced-safeguarding-adults-training.aspx>

11. Contact details



Key telephone numbers in the event of a child safeguarding issue	
LSCB	0300 1236 701
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Tim Booth / Shane Penn / Donna Green - 01772 536694 LADO.admin@lancashire.gov.uk
MASH Education Officers	Jenny Ashton 01772 531643 jennifer.ashton@lancashire.gov.uk Matt Chipchase 01254 220989 matt.chipchase@lancashire.gov.uk
School Safeguarding Officer	Victoria Wallace Advice Line – 01772 531196 E: school.safeguarding@lancashire.gov.uk
Lancashire Children's Social Care	0300 1236720 cypreferrals@lancashire.gov.uk

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	Out of hours (8pm to 8am)
Other County Safeguarding Board	Cumbria – 01228 226898 LADO - 01768812267 Cheshire - 01925 443126 Greater Manchester - 01204 337479 Merseyside - 0151 934 4706 Yorkshire - 01609 797167
Other County Social Work Teams	Cumbria – 0300 123 6720 Cheshire - 01244 9770210 Greater Manchester - 0161 205 7321 Merseyside - 0151 233 3700 Yorkshire - 01609 780 780
NSPCC Helpline Childline	0808 800 5000 0800 1111
Key telephone numbers in the event of an adult safeguarding issue	
Adult Social Care	Lancashire - 0845 053 0028 Blackburn with Darwen - 01254 585949 Blackpool - 01253 476913 Cumbria - 0333 2401727

12. Appendices

1. Body Maps – Infant, Male and Female
2. Injury on Arrival Form
3. Safeguarding Recording Form

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