

South West Family Services, Suite 3 Gandy Street Chambers, 11 Gandy Street, Exeter, Devon, EX43LS
email: office@southwestfamilyservices.com phone: 07961671514

Safeguarding Policy & Procedural Guidelines

South West Family Services Ltd is a Registered Company in the United Kingdom. Registration Number: 14479035.

Purpose

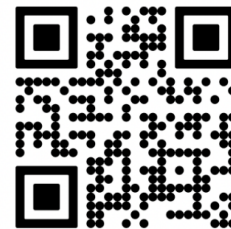
1. The purpose of this policy and the procedures outlined within, is to:
 - a. Abide by the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
 - b. Demonstrate the organisations commitment to safeguarding practice that reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and compliance with best practice.
 - c. Clarify the organisations commitment to protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm, whether they are engaged in services with the organisation or not while carrying out the organisations business.

Review

2. We may amend this policy and the procedures within it, at any time, in our absolute discretion, to ensure it stays up-to-date, effective and compliant.
3. South West Family Services agrees to the standards set by the National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC) and this policy is in line with the National Standards published in June 2022.

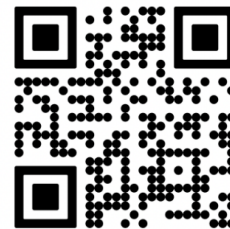
Aims and definitions

4. South West Family Services as an organisation, and the people engaged within it abide by the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and is committed to safeguarding practice that reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice requirements.
 - We recognise the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we make.
 - All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation has an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.



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- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
 - Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.
5. **The Children Act 1989 definition of a child is** anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, even if they are living independently, are a member of the armed forces or is in hospital.
6. **Adult at Risk:** An adult who has needs for care and support (whether or not those needs are being met), is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.
7. **Child and Adult Abuse:** Children and adults may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their daily lives. There are 4 main categories of abuse, which are: **sexual, physical, emotional abuse, and neglect**. More specific types of abuse that fall within these categories, and are covered within this document, are:
- Bullying and cyberbullying
 - Child sexual exploitation
 - Child Criminal exploitation
 - Child trafficking
 - Domestic abuse
 - Female genital mutilation
 - Forced marriage
 - Honour Violence
 - Radicalisation
 - Grooming
 - Historical abuse
 - Online abuse
 - Mental health and self-harm
8. **Safeguarding children:** Safeguarding children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 as:
- Protecting children from maltreatment.
 - Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
 - Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe



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and effective care.

- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Legal Framework and resources

9. This policy has been drawn up based on legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation, and reference for creating this policy and the procedural guidelines are available from nspcc.org.uk/learning and cafcass.gov.uk/policies/

Training and Awareness:

10. South West Family Services will ensure an appropriate level of safeguarding training is available to everyone engaged within carrying out its services. All employees or agents of the organisation will, as a minimum, have awareness training that enables them to:

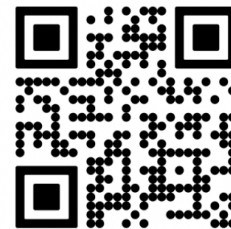
- Understand what safeguarding is and their role in safeguarding children.
- Recognise a child potentially in need of safeguarding and take action.
- Understand how to report a safeguarding concern.
- Understand dignity and respect when working with children.
- Have knowledge of the Safeguarding Children Policy.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing:

11. South West Family Services places an expectation on anyone engaged within carrying out its services to maintain confidentiality. Information will only be shared in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), data protection, and the organisations service agreement.

12. Information will be shared with the Local Authority if a child or young person is deemed to be at risk of harm. The organisation will contact the police if they believe a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be in immediate danger, or a crime has been committed. Families engaged with services provided by South West Family Services are asked to confirm our service agreement before work begins, which includes a specifically implied responsibility for the organisation to share any and all information to the appropriate authority if it is deemed appropriate with regards to the safeguarding principles.

13. All clients and service users are made aware that South West Family Services takes it's responsibility seriously and promoting the safeguarding principles as detailed within this document will always override any confidential understanding or disclosures if it relates to a child, young person or vulnerable adults potentially being at risk of harm.



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Recording and Record Keeping:

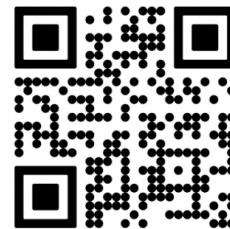
14. A written record will be kept about any concern regarding a child, young person or vulnerable adult with safeguarding needs or who the director of family services deems may potentially have safeguarding needs. This must include details of the person involved, the nature of the concern and the actions taken, decision made and why they were made.
15. All records must be signed and dated. All records are stored securely and confidentially in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) within the families case records.

Safe Recruitment & Selection:

16. South West Family Services is committed to safe employment and safe recruitment practices which reduce the risk of harm to children from people unsuitable to work with them or have contact with them. Anyone concerned with the delivery of services will, as a minimum, have received safeguarding training, background checks, an up-to-date disclosure and barring check and regular supervision and ongoing training.
17. South West Family Services notes the role of LADO for the areas it covers and understands the importance of notifying them should concerns be raised about anyone concerned with the delivery of services within the organisation.
18. South West Family Services makes a commitment to familiarising itself with the safeguarding and whistleblowing policies of any external organisation, authority, company or other it engages with whilst delivering its usual services.

Professional Boundaries, Social Media & Communication:

19. Anyone concerned with the delivery of services within the organisation commits to appropriate and safe professional boundaries which include highlighting any personal or previous professional relationship with a client or service user as soon as it is known so, senior management can assist in decision making around whether it is appropriate for work to continue between the service and a client or service user.
20. Anyone concerned with the delivery of services within the organisation is given onboarding training on maintaining safe and professional social media exposure which includes making, sharing or engaging in online content and engaging in communication in any way with clients or service users in a personal capacity. Anyone concerned with the delivery of services within the organisation is not able to share personal contact details, phone numbers, social media, address or



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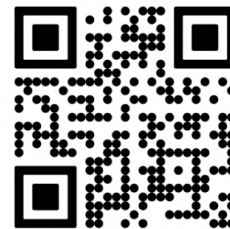
inappropriate personal information. If this is not adhered to, it is considered gross misconduct under the organisation's disciplinary policy.

21. South West Family Services notes the role of Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for the areas it covers. Therefore, understands the importance and procedure for notifying them should concerns be raised about anyone concerned with the delivery of services within the organisation.
22. Anyone concerned with the delivery of services within the organisation is given training to ensure they understand that it is unlawful to photograph children and young people without the explicit consent of the person with parental responsibilities. This consent is usually provided within the service agreement for clients and service users, but all photographs and communication will only ever be using South West Family Services equipment, not personal phones, cameras or devices. All communication and photography are stored in line with GDPR and data protection on the family's case records.
23. **Whistleblowing:**
- Anyone concerned with the delivery of services within the organisation is given training to ensure they have the confidence to come forward to speak or act if they are unhappy with anything. Whistleblowing occurs when a person raises a concern about dangerous or illegal activity, or any wrongdoing within their organisation. The policy and procedural guidelines for whistleblowing is contained with the Whistleblowing Policy & Procedural Guidelines.
24. The **Designated Safeguarding Lead** for South West Family Services is the Director.
25. For the avoidance of doubt, the Safeguarding policy and its principles override all other policies such as confidentiality, data protection, privacy and others, so long as the purpose for breach said policies is to implement the procedures detailed within this policy document.

Kris Hewings - Director – South West Family Services Ltd

Policy Dated: 01/08/2025

Annual Review – Due 1st March each year



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Appendix 1 Safeguarding Flowchart

If the matter is urgent because a child is in immediate danger phone 999 for the Police.

See it.

Are they safe? If you are concerned about a child, you could help stop abuse if you follow this flowchart.

It is not the organisations responsibility to decide if abuse has happened, but it is the organisations responsibility to report it to the appropriate authority.

Recognise it.

- Share your concerns/ information with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- If you need to discuss whether or not a referral is required, contact the local authority for the area the child is resident in. This is usually the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- If there is immediate danger to the child call 999 for the Police.

Report it

- If you have a concern about a child and need to make a safeguarding referral this is almost always done via the local authority for the area the child is resident in. This is usually the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- Parents and/or Carers should always be advised that you are making a referral unless this might put the child at risk or cause any delay in referring.
- Family Court Advisors, Commissioners for funded work, Case Managers or Local Authority Social Workers should be advised you are making a referral as soon as reasonably possible. The emphasis on shared working and sharing knowledge must always be recognised.

Contact information

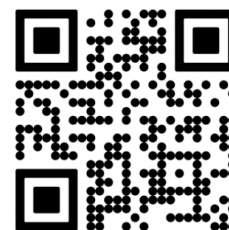
The local authority for the area the child is resident in. This is usually the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). **Police: 999 if it is an emergency or 101 if it is not an emergency.**

Designated Safeguarding Lead for South West Family Services: Kris Hewings

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Referrals

If you have concerns about an adult working with a child under the age of 18 that you would like to report contact the LADO for the local authority in the area the adult is working in. (EG For an adult working in South West you would contact the LADO for South West County Council as the local authority.)

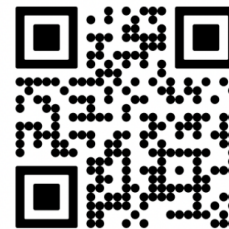
- All records, reports and notes will be disclosable should a formal or criminal investigation occur.



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Signs & Symptoms in the context of Safeguarding

Physical Abuse	Neglect	Sexual Abuse	Emotional Abuse
Unexplained bruises, welts, lacerations, abrasions, cuts • On face, lips, mouth, ears • On torso, back, buttocks, thighs • In various stages of healing • Clustering forming regular patterns • Reflecting shape of article used e.g. belt, buckle, electrical flex; • On several different surface areas • Regularly appear after absence, weekend, or holiday; • Bite marks or fingernail marks	Physical indicators: The following may give cause for concern • Consistent hunger • Poor hygiene • Inappropriate dress • Unattended physical problems and/or medical needs • Always tired	Physical indicators: • Difficulty in walking, sitting down • Stained or bloody underclothing • Pain/itching in genital area • Bruising, bleeding, injuries to external genitalia/vaginal areas • STD • Excessive crying • Sickness • Wetting / soiling	Physical indicators: • Failure to thrive • Delays in physical, mental or emotional development or progress
Unexplained burns • Cigar, cigarettes, especially on soles, buttocks, palms, back • Immersion burns, forcibly immersed in hot water • Patterned such as an iron, • Rope burns on arms, legs, neck, torso Unexplained fractures Some of the behavioural signs for physical abuse include:	Behavioural indicators: • Begging • Stealing food • Care givers always late to bring or collect child • _Constant fatigue or listlessness • Attention seeking • Not achieving milestones • Isolates themselves	Behavioural indicators: • Bizarre, sophisticated or age-inappropriate sexual behaviour / knowledge • Promiscuity • Sudden changes in behaviour • Wary of adults • Feeling different from other children • Over compliance	Behavioural indicators: • Sucking, rocking, biting • Anti-social / destructive • Sleep disorders, inhibition of play • Either compliant and/or passive and/or aggressive and/or demanding • Inappropriately adult or infant



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• Flinching when approached or touched • Afraid to go home • Wary of adult contacts, frightened of parents / carers • Difficult to comfort • Becomes apprehensive when other children cry • Extremes of behaviour: aggressive, compliant, impulsive, withdrawn • Poor peer relationships • Panics as a response to pain • Inappropriate clothing (long sleeves in hot weather) covering injury		• Eating / sleep disorders • Overtly seductive • Excessive masturbation • Inability to focus/concentrate • Regressive behaviour	• Rapid swings of behaviour.
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