

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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Important Contacts

Role	Name	Contact
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) - Artistic Director/CEO	Callum Shallcross	callum.shallcross@flipthescripttheatre.co.uk
Deputy DSL	To be Appointed	TBC
Designated member of senior management if DSL (and Deputy) can't be on site	Kelis Ajayi-Deacon	kelisajayid@hotmail.com
Local Authority Designated officer (LADO)	Not named	0161 234 1214
Chair of the Board of Directors	Callum Shallcross	callum.shallcross@flipthescripttheatre.co.uk

Aim/Purpose

Nothing is more important to us than the protection and welfare of the children and young people we engage with through our creative work. Children who are in need deserve high quality, effective and tailored support as soon as a need is identified.

This policy has been developed to ensure that all staff and volunteers at Flip The Script are working together in an effective way to promote the welfare of children and young people and to ensure their safety when working with us.

Everyone that comes into contact with children and young people has a part to play and safeguarding children and young people is everyone's responsibility regardless of rank and role.

This policy describes the protocols and arrangements in place to create and maintain a safe working environment that ensures the safety and welfare of the children and young people the company comes into contact with. It identifies the actions needed to be taken in response to concerns and allegations in line with statutory best practice including protecting children and young people from extremist views, abuse (in its different forms – see Appendix 1), vocal or physical actions that are against the company's values and the values that society relies upon. All opinions and actions that are against the mission, values and vision of the company will be vigorously challenged and appropriate action/investigations will be taken.

The Artistic Director/CEO holds ultimate responsibility for the safeguarding of children and young people who engage with the company and responsibility for promoting a safe working environment and advocating for the welfare and safety of children and young people.

Flip the Script implements a MDT approach to safeguarding (Multi-Disciplinary/Agency Team). This is to ensure best practice and to ensure we achieve the best outcomes possible for the child.

At the heart of this policy and the physical actions to safeguard children and young people is the child/young person and all actions taken will be taken with the child/young person in mind, ensuring that the outcome is the best for them.

General Principles

Flip the Script aims to build and maintain a safe working and creative environment that promotes safe creative development through the arts. All staff, children, young people, and volunteers should feel safe, secure and valued, with the knowledge that any allegations and concerns brought to light will be taken seriously and they will be listened to. Our company is committed to the principles and guidance outlined in the 'Working together to Safeguard Children' 2018 policy and implements policies, interventions, and actions in line with this policy.

The company is committed to delivering (and supporting the delivery) effective early help in response to Multi-Agency Levels of need and Response Framework. Children and Young People who participate and engage with our artistic provisions including: shows/performances; outreach programmes and educational programmes should free to develop in a creative and stimulating environment and express themselves in however they see fit with the aim of educating, developing self-esteem and confidence of the young people.

Flip The Script will always be diligent and will prevent any organisation or speaker from using our platform to disseminate extremist view or radicalise children, young people, staff, and volunteers.

Definitions

The definitions set out below are from the UK Government 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018'

A Child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th Birthday. The fact the child has reached 16 or is in further education, or is currently serving in the armed forces etc. does not change their entitlement to protection or agency services.

Safeguarding and promoting welfare of children means:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Safeguarding is defined as the actions we take to prevent harm.

Child Protection is part of this action. It is defined as the actions taken to prevent children from suffering, or likely to be 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 serious impairment of the child's health or development. Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

Safeguarding at Flip The Script

All Children and Young People who engage and participate with the company should have access to a safe environment, where they can develop and express themselves freely and creatively and we aim to provide the skills necessary to build their self-esteem and confidence in an environment surrounded by like-minded people. The staff at Flip The Script will always be the children and young people's biggest advocates and we will always defend them and their creative decisions to present issues they care about and want to share. We aim to provide them with the knowledge and skills they need to take their training and careers further after their time with the company comes to an end.

Children and young people are actively encouraged to express their thoughts, feelings, and ideas through a variety of creative activities (not exclusive to acting) and will have access to a range of cultural activities to explore their own cultures and the cultures of other young people around them. This is fundamental to our work and will provide children and young people with the skills and attributes to be tolerant and accepting members of society. Young people will not be forced into believing in any views they do not believe in. However, we aim to teach tolerance through expressive arts. They will be exposed, in a careful and understanding manner, to different social, cultural, spiritual, and moral well-being topics to develop their creative visions through exposure to different creative influences.

Children and Young People will be taught how to look after themselves whilst engaging in the arts, with programmes of safe practice, warmups – both vocal and physical, dealing with rejection and its emotional impacts and developing the means for effective and impactful self-expression. They will have the opportunity to discuss and debate a range of subjects including current developments in the arts.

All children and young people should know that they can approach any Flip The Script staff member in confidence and should feel safe to do so. This will be achieved through the Artistic Director/CEO and all staff and volunteers implementing an open and safe culture within all company activities.

Safer Recruitment Policies

The Company's safer recruitment and staff selection policies adhere to all statutory guidance as set out by the UK Government with the aim of keeping all children and young people safe with our company.

Existing Staff

In certain circumstances we will carry out all the relevant checks on existing staff as if the individual was a new member of staff. These circumstances are when:

- There are concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children and young people;
- There has been a break in service of 12 weeks or more.

We will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult where;

- We believe the individual has engaged in relevant conduct; or
- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left

Artists/Creative Teams/Contractors

We will ensure that any artist/creative, contractor (or any employee of said artist/creative or contractor), who work with us and are in direct contact with our children/young people has had the appropriate DBS check. This will be:

- An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for artists/creatives or contractors engaged in regulated activity
- An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other artists/creatives or contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children

We will obtain the DBS check for all other self-employed artists/creatives and contractors. We will not keep copies of such records/checks for no longer than 6 months.

Artists/creatives or contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.

We will check the identity of all artists/creatives and contractors and their staff on engagement with the company.

Volunteers

We will:

- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity;
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity;
- Carry out risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment.

Board of Directors

A board of directors has yet to be appointed. This policy will be amended upon the appointment of a board of Directors. We will ensure that our board of directors have been appointed through our safer recruitment and selection process and policies.

Signs of abuse

Staff have been trained vigorously and are reminded to remain vigilant when it comes to spotting the signs of abuse. Early help and intervention is imperative to ensuring better outcomes for children and young people when it comes to abuse. Our aim at all times is to produce the best outcome possible for the individual child, providing effective early help in line with our MDT approach to safeguarding and child protection.

Many children and young people will not report directly to you what is going on and this can be due to any number of factors, such as:

- Fear of what the outcome may be
- Embarrassment or the feeling of shame
- They may know the person abusing them, it could be a parent or a partner that they feel an attachment for and fear losing them
- They may be worried that they won't be listened to or that their report may not be taken seriously

It is imperative that any preconceived notions about a child or young person do not affect your judgement when it comes to spotting the signs of abuse.

All children and young people respond to trauma in different ways. Although physical injuries may not be visible, the mental and emotional symptoms may very well be visible and all staff at Flip the Script have been trained to watch out for these early warning signs. These may include:

- Abnormal behavioural characteristics, which the child or young person may not have displayed before
- Diminished concentration
- Increased anxiety
- Self harm
- Irritability
- Distressed in the presence of others
- Sudden distrust in others

This list is not exclusive and may not be a sign of abuse, but a sign of something else such as, a mental health condition (e.g. Anxiety and Depressions). It is important that all of these concerns are noted and passed to the DSL so any concerns are followed up swiftly. This is to ensure that we can differentiate between abuse and a different underlying condition that the child or young person may be suffering with.

It is important that no child or young person that engages/participates in activities with Flip The Script suffers in silence and we will work hard to ensure specific and tailored interventions are made based off the child's individual and interpersonal needs at the time. This will be reviewed continuously by the DSL to ensure that the plan we are following is still the right one for that child or young person and so any changes, if necessary, can be made to the approach that the company is taking.

The child must always be at the heart of the process and staff and volunteers are reminded not to dismiss shifts in behaviour as just "bad behaviour".

Incidents or Concerns that must be reported

If any of the following occur, you must report the incident/concern to the DSL and an accurate account/record of the concern/incident should be recorded using the Safeguarding Concern Report Form. The DSL will review the incident/concern and inform the parents/carers, unless this puts the child/young person in danger:

- If a child discloses anything to you that is a cause for concern
- If a child seems distressed in any manner (particularly if this is out of the ordinary for the child/young person in question)
- If you accidentally hurt a child
- If a child appears to be behaving in an inappropriate manner towards you
- If a child misinterprets or misunderstands something you have done
- If physical intervention is required to manage challenging behaviour

If you have any questions about this section, please contact the DSL for further guidance as soon as possible.

How to report a concern

Again, staff are reminded to remain vigilant and any concern should be documented immediately and swiftly passed onto the DSL as a matter of urgency, a result of increased time between the incident and information being shared with the DSL could result in inaccurate information or missing information due to fragmented memory.

Staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report any and all concerns relating to safeguarding and child protection in order to keep children and young people safe when working with us. If a concern does arise staff and volunteers must:

- Speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the person acting in their absence
- Agree with this person what action should be taken, by whom and when it will be reviewed
- Record the concern on the safeguarding concerns form, this must be as accurate as possible – be clear about what the concern is and assess any potential risk

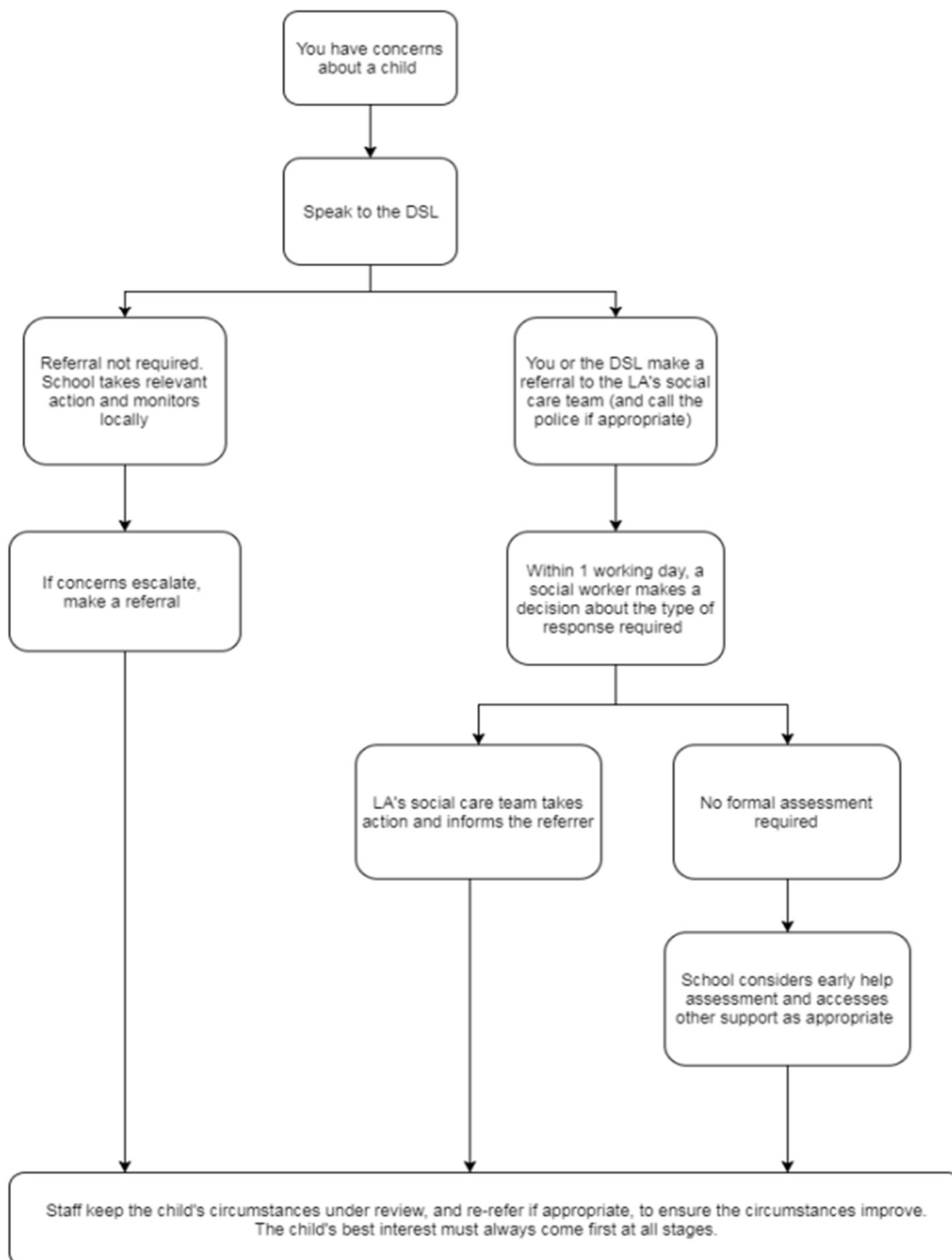
If a Child makes a Disclosure to you

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

- Listen to and believe them. Allow them to talk freely and do not asking leading questions.
- Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset
- Tell the child they have done the right thing by coming to speak to you. Do not tell them that they should've spoken to you earlier
- Explain what will happen next and how you will have to pass this information onto the DSL. 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

- The information should be recorded **Safeguarding – Child Disclosure Record Form**.
- Sign and date the write-up and pass it on to the DSL. Alternatively, If appropriate after referring to the Levels of need, make a referral to Children's Social Care and/or the Police, and tell the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so. Aside from these people, do not disclose the information to anyone else unless told to do so by a relevant authority involved in the Safeguarding process

Figure 1: Flowchart of procedures to follow when responding to a Safeguarding Concern.



Confidentiality and Sharing of Information (Best Practice)

With any safeguarding issues or concerns we aim to maintain confidentiality of all parties involved at all times. We do this by ensuring all staff are up to date and follow all GDPR protocols. Information will not be shared without consent, except where required by a court order, or in the case of a child protection case (e.g. suspected child abuse).

Information will only be shared with parents if it does not put the child at greater risk and advice/guidance from the NSPCC and the LADO will be followed carefully in all situations.

Staff and volunteers should not make any promises to keep information disclosed a secret and this must be made clear.

Fears about sharing information must not stand in the way of safeguarding children and child protection of children and young people engaging in our activities.

Information will be stored in a safe location, will be password protected with limited access for people who legally need it.

Information will regularly be monitored and updated in line with the statutory requirements and will be as accurate as possible.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Artistic Director/CEO of Flip the Script will ensure that:

- The policies and procedures created to safeguard the welfare of children and promote their welfare are implemented and followed by all staff.
- Safe recruitment of staff and volunteers is practiced at all times.
- A Designated member of staff taking on the role of the DSL is selected and supported through on-going training and support.
- Sufficient time and resources are made available so said member of staff can confidently discharge their responsibilities effectively as well as support colleagues through their training.
- Staff and volunteers receive regular training and keep a record of this training and identify areas of lack of knowledge.
- Temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the company's safeguarding policies and adhere to them at all times.
- Staff and volunteers feel safe, and supported, to raise concerns and challenge poor practice, which goes against the company's safeguarding and child protection policies.
- Parents/carers are made aware of our roles and responsibilities.
- The safeguarding and child protection policy is made available on the company website.
- The company cooperates with other agencies with the aim of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

The board of Directors has yet to be appointed and their responsibilities will be updated as soon as they are in post.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Callum Shallcross (Artistic/Director/CEO) and is contactable via email callum.shallcross@flipthescripttheatre.co.uk He has the overall responsibility for championing the importance of safeguarding and child protection within the company. The Designated person will:

- Act as the first point of contact with regards to all safeguarding matters.
- Attend up-dated training every two years.
- Provide relevant information to the LA on how the school carries out its safeguarding duties.
- Provide support and training for staff and volunteers
- Ensure that the schools actions are in line with the MCSB Safeguarding Inter-Agency Procedures.
- Support staff to make effective referrals to the Children and Families Services and any other agencies where there are concerns about the welfare of a child.
- Keep copies of all referrals to Children and Families Services and any other agencies related to safeguarding children.
- Ensure that staff and volunteers receive information on safeguarding policies and procedures from the point of induction.
- Ensure that staff with specific responsibility for safeguarding children receive the appropriate training to undertake this role.
- Manage and keep secure the company's safeguarding records.
- Ensure that staff and volunteers understand and are aware of the company's reporting and recording procedures and are clear about what to do if they have a concern about a child.
- Liaise with the Artistic Director/CEO about any safeguarding issues.
- Ensure that the Safeguarding Policy is reviewed and up-dated.
- Keep up to date with changes in local policy and procedures and are aware of any guidance issued by the DfE concerning Safeguarding.
- In addition to their formal training, as set out above, their knowledge and skills should be updated, (for example via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments), at regular intervals, but at least annually, to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

Vulnerable Groups

We ensure all key staff work together to safeguard children through weekly safeguarding and child protection meetings and records of these meetings are taken and stored securely.

Any child may benefit from early help interventions, but all staff will be particularly alert to the potential need for help for a child who:

- Have special educational needs (SENO) or disabilities or health conditions
- Are young carers

- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. The company will ensure that all staff and volunteers receive adequate training to recognise these challenges and implement the best access strategies possible to allow the child to reach their full potential. They are at risk of peer group isolation, bullying and abuse indicators being missed under the presumption they are related to the child's disability without further investigation. Staff are reminded to remain vigilant here and remember the signs of abuse and rely on their training to be able to spot them and respond appropriately.

Record Retention Periods

In line with Flip the Scrip's Deletion policy, personal information should not be retained for any longer than 5 Years after the child's last contact with the company. There are exception to this policy and these include when records:

- Need to be retained because the information in them is relevant to any legal action that has been started
- Are required to be kept longer by law
- Relate to individuals and providers of services who have, or whose staff, have been judged unsatisfactory
- Are held in order to provide, for the subject, aspects of his/her personal history (e.g. where the child might seek access to the file at a later date and the information would not be available anywhere else)
- Are archived for Historical purposes.

Where records are being kept for more than the 5-year period, they should be clearly marked and the reason for extending the period clearly identified.

Whistleblowing

The NSPCC Whistleblowing advice lines is for anyone with child protection concerns in the workplace. The helpline provides support and advice to those who feel unable to get a child protection issue addressed by their employer. It can be contacted anonymously on 0800 028 0825.

Mental Health Concerns

Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has or is currently suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Staff and volunteers will be alert to behavioural signs, which suggest a change in the child's mental state, with particular reference to a deviation in their normal behaviour.

If you have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, take immediate action by following the company's reporting and actioning procedures.

If you have a mental health concern that is **not** a safeguarding concern, speak to the DSL to agree a course of action.

Concerns or complaints made by children/young peoples, staff, volunteers, creatives or visitors

Any allegation made will be listened to carefully and actioned accordingly to safeguard their welfare.

Throughout the process the person making the allegation will be supported and will be informed of any action taken. We will continuously update them on the action taken/planned, where it is safe to do so and we will **not** compromise anyone's safety.

Complaints made against staff or volunteers

Any allegation made against a member of staff or a volunteer, including contractors, will be dealt with quickly and fairly. We will balance the need to safeguard the child, support them and support the person the allegation has been made against. We will follow all statutory guidance and seek inter-agency guidance when necessary.

Managing complaints made against staff or volunteers

We will inform all parties involved, separately, on what action will be taken and implement any policies as soon as possible to separate the parties whilst an investigation is underway and have been reviewed by the Artistic Director/CEO.

Outside organisations/agencies

We will follow all statutory guidance both on a local and national level when working with outside agencies to safeguard children and young people and we will cooperate with them at all stages of the safeguarding and child protection process.

Serious Case Reviews (SCR's)

The Manchester Safeguarding Children Board will always undertake a serious case review when a child or young person dies and abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor in their death. The purpose of an SCR is to:

- Find out if there are any lessons to be learnt from the case about how local professionals and agencies work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

- Identify what those lessons are, and how they will be acted on and what is expected to change as a result of the serious case review.
- Improve inter-agency working to better safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.
- If require Flip the Script will provide an individual management report for a serious case review and will cooperate fully with implementing the outcomes of the reviewing policy, practice and procedures as required.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This is undertaken by the relevant senior staff especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Artistic Director/CEO). Changes to the policy will be approved by the board of Directors (when in post).

Appendix 1 – Types of Abuse

Abuse, including neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

Physical abuse 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.

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

Emotional abuse 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
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed 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
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person 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 nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing
- 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 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)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Appendix 2

<https://www.manchestersafeguardingpartnership.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Multi-Agency-Decision-Framework-2022-03-01.docx>