

# Child Safeguarding Policy

<b>Department</b>	<b>Governance</b>
<b>Policy Owner</b>	<b>Director (Legal and Governance)</b>
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## **Purpose**

- To help protect a child's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect
- To raise awareness and understanding of safeguarding children

## **Definitions**

Safeguarding duties apply to any child. A child is defined as any person under the age of 18 yrs. (The Children Act 1989) Safeguarding children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health and 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.

Abuse is defined as "the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person". It is behaviour that either deliberately or knowingly causes harm or endangers life or infringes on rights. It may be a single or repeated act. It may be deliberate or involve neglect, such as failing to take appropriate action. It can also involve a person being persuaded to do something that he or she has not consented to or cannot consent. It can often occur where there is an expectation of trust.

Recognising abuse:

### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing significant 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**

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 children 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. These may include interactions that are beyond the 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 online 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, though it may occur alone and may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving 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 online and through social media). 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 abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers) or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

Other concerns may be:

- Children living away from home or gone missing
- Children living in households where domestic abuse is present
- Peer abuse including bullying
- Race and racism
- Radicalisation
- Gang membership
- Sexual exploitation, county lines and cuckooing
- Female genital mutilation
- Forced marriage
- Concealed pregnancy
- Child trafficking
- Online safety and grooming

We take all concerns, whether current or historical seriously and will refer as appropriate.

### **Principles**

Working together to Safeguard Children 2018 defines a child as anyone who has not reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. It indicates that providing early help is crucial in safeguarding children and requires all relevant staff to understand their role in identifying emerging problems and sharing information with other professionals.

Flagship will ensure relevant staff are particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Has a disability and has specific additional needs
- Has special educational needs
- Is a young carer
- Is showing signs of engaging in anti-social behaviour or criminal behaviour
- Is in a family circumstance which presents challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems and/or domestic violence
- Has returned home to their family from care
- Is showing early signs of abuse or neglect

### **Policy objectives**

The key objectives of this policy are in line with Section 11 Children Act 2004:

- Commitment to safeguarding children from relevant people throughout Flagship Group including senior management
- To recognise and report safeguarding concerns regarding children
- To record safeguarding children concerns centrally
- To provide relevant safeguarding children information to Local Authorities when requested
- To co-operate with local authorities, the Police, social services and other relevant agencies on safeguarding children issues.

### **Further detail**

We will provide appropriate induction, role specific and refresher training on recognising and reporting abuse or neglect, to all relevant staff. All safeguarding Leads will be provided with Lead specific training.

We will share information with relevant agencies if we are concerned that a child is being abused or neglected, or if we believe there is a risk of this happening in the future.

We will bring to the attention of the local authority, social services, relevant body and the police any concerns in relation to safeguarding or allegations of abuse identified through any part of its work.

We will not investigate individual child protection cases or referrals. Flagship is not the statutory authority for the conduct of enquiries into specific child protection concerns; therefore, all staff should follow internal procedure to ensure that all allegations or suspicions of abuse or significant harm to any child are referred to statutory agencies as soon as possible.

The reasons for action taken, or not taken, by Flagship will be clearly recorded.

We will participate in multi-agency case conferences where appropriate.

We will keep a record of all safeguarding concerns and referrals involving children in a central electronic location. We will store records, notes and documents relating to safeguarding referrals securely and confidentially.

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

Where a concern arises in respect of a person who works with children in a position of trust, an appropriate referral will be made to the Local Authority Designated Officer.

Flagship will ensure that it fulfils its responsibilities to work jointly with others (subsidiaries, volunteers, contractors etc.) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and where necessary, to help bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes.

This policy applies to all Flagship Group staff.

This Policy is supported by the Safeguarding Adults Policy, Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Data Protection Policy and ASB Policy.

## **Review**

This Policy will be reviewed as necessary, and at least every three years by the Director (Legal and Governance) and any changes will be approved by the Governance, Audit and Risk Committee.

## **Measures**

- The number of safeguarding referrals to assess demand and awareness of safeguarding children
- The source of safeguarding children referrals to assess awareness and effectiveness of the reporting system and training
- The frequency of safeguarding children referrals to assess the nature and frequency of safeguarding issues arising

These measures will be monitored by the Governance, Audit and Risk Committee in their Annual Safeguarding Review.