

Children North East

Safeguarding policy and procedure



Because growing
up can be hard



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Code of conduct

Sets out the expectations Children North East has for all those who work for it in a volunteer or paid capacity.

Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Procedure

Provides a sound framework for recruitment, selection and recruitment of staff, including the assurance of meeting compliance with legislation and best practices.

Equality, diversity and inclusion policy

Ensures compliance of Children North East processes and activities with the Equality Act of 2010.

Managing complaints

Demonstrates the process that will be followed if a complaint is received.

Whistleblowing policy

Demonstrates the process that will be followed if a concern is raised by a member of staff.

Health, safety, environment and wellbeing policies

Provides a sound framework for the health, safety, environment and wellbeing of staff, including the assurance of meeting compliance with legislation and best practices.

Training & Professional Development Policy

Sets our Children North East commitment to the current and future development of staff skills, expertise and ability.

Personal safety and lone working policy

Sets out the policy for managing lone worker risks.

For this document (and throughout), when referring to senior managers, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, and students, they will be referred to as employees/volunteers. The Board of Trustees will be referred to as Trustees. Special consideration for volunteers & students is also contained within this document.

1. SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose and scope of this policy statement

Children North East (CNE) is a large North East regional children's charity, with some of our work extending across England, Wales and Scotland. CNE exists because growing up can be hard. We want all babies, children and young people to be happy and healthy and to grow up feeling:

- Safe and loved**
- Resilient to the challenges they may face**
- Valued and confident**

We have a strong children's rights ethos and believe that real social change is achieved when those who have experienced issues lead the change.

CNE deliver services, support and initiatives that provide a platform for children, young people and families to work through issues, take action and provide them with the tools to reach their full potential. This includes; therapeutic services, mental health support, youth work, domestic abuse support, family support, community-based initiatives, participation and consultation activities and our UK-wide Poverty Proofing© initiative.

We campaign on issues affecting babies, children and young people, we challenge those in positions of influence at all levels who make decisions affecting the lives of babies, children and young people and we influence social policy and system change to address obstacles preventing babies, children and young people growing up happy and healthy.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To protect children and young people who receive CNE's services from harm. This includes the babies, children and young people of adults who use our services**
- To provide employees/volunteers, as well as babies, children, young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection**

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of CNE, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

Legal framework

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 guidance is available from Child Protection System in the UK.

To look at specific information affecting those that have a special characteristic please follow the links below:

- [Safeguarding children from Black, Asian and Minoritised ethnic communities | NSPCC Learning](#)
- [Safeguarding d/Deaf and disabled children | NSPCC Learning](#)
- [Safeguarding LGBTQ+ children and young people | NSPCC Learning](#)
- [Children with special educational needs and disabilities \(SEND\) | NSPCC Learning](#)

We believe that:

- **Babies, children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind**
- **We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all babies, children and young people, to keep them safe and to practice in a way that protects them**

We recognise that:

- **The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take**
- **Working in partnership with babies, children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies are essential in promoting young people's welfare**
- **All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse**
- **Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues**
- **Extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse**
- **We will seek to keep all babies, children and young people safe by valuing, listening to and respecting them**
- **Appointing a Child protection lead for babies, children and young people, a deputy and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding**
- **Adopting child protection and safeguarding best practices through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers**

- **Developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures**
- **Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently**
- **Recruiting and selecting employees and volunteers (including trustees) safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made**
- **Recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance**
- **Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions**
- **Making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern**
- **Using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involve babies, children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately**
- **Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately**
- **Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise**
- **Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place**
- **Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our babies, children, young people, employees and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures per the law and regulatory guidance**
- **Building a safeguarding culture where employees and volunteers, babies, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns**

Contact details:

- **Nominated Designated Safeguarding Lead**
Name: Mandy Brown
Phone/email: mandy.brown@children-ne.org.uk / 0776088638
- **Trustee Lead for Safeguarding**
Name: Sophie Bentley

2. SAFEGUARDING GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

The protection and safeguarding of children at risk is paramount in all the work Children North East (CNE) undertakes. The governance accountability for safeguarding set out below shows lines of accountability for safeguarding throughout CNE.

Board of Trustees

The legal duty of all charity trustees is to act in the interests of their charity and in particular to act with care and diligence. Trustees at CNE ensure that we have the appropriate mechanisms in place to make sure that a safe environment is created for staff, beneficiaries and volunteers. Trustees have a collective responsibility for safeguarding even if certain aspects of the work are delegated to staff. Ultimately, trustees are accountable for all that happens within the charity. Trustees can delegate responsibility of duties to staff within the charity.

Safeguarding vulnerable beneficiaries is a key governance priority. Any failure by Trustees to manage safeguarding risks adequately can be a failure in Trustee duties and would be of serious regulatory concern to the Charity Commission – more details can be found here:

- [Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees](#)

CNE Board of Trustees are accountable for ensuring that the organisation has appropriate structure, processes, and resources in place to ensure safeguarding is central to all the organisation does, and for monitoring compliance.

Trustees delegate their safeguarding responsibilities by:

- Having oversight of safeguarding issues within the organisation. They will receive regular update reports from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), supported by a Lead Safeguarding Trustee, the board's named expert on safeguarding. The Lead Safeguarding Trustee provides expert advice and guidance to the board on safeguarding matters. They will receive copies of all documentation relating to the Strategic Safeguarding Group, including meeting papers and agendas, and will report their assessment of the work as appropriate
- Receiving an annual safeguarding report and commissioning specific audits or deep dive assessments into any area pertaining to safeguarding within CNE giving due scrutiny consideration to any concerns identified by the Board or by the DSL

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The CEO has delegated duty from the Trustees to be the most senior responsible

individual for all aspects of safeguarding across the organisation. This includes ensuring that there is a strong culture of safeguarding across the work of CNE and that there are clear reporting processes, structures, and line management accountability to safeguard children at risk.

The CEO further delegates responsibility for Safeguarding to the Operations Director (DSL); their responsibilities are outlined below.

The Operations Director is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and is operationally accountable for safeguarding within Children North East and holds accountability for ensuring that safeguarding policy and practice is developed, implemented, managed and monitored across the charity.

The Operations Director also provides specific expert advice to the CEO, the Strategic Safeguarding Group and Board of Trustees on significant safeguarding matters.

The Operations Director discharges their responsibilities by:

- Chairing the Strategic Safeguarding Group, which includes senior representatives from across the organisation.
- Working to ensure robust safeguarding reporting and governance structures are in place and they are operating effectively, including safeguarding reporting
- Convening a Practice Learning Group (part of the Strategic Safeguarding Group). The Practice Learning Group exists to ensure organisational learning in relation to significant safe practice matters (e.g. internal and external reviews and audits, Serious Case Reviews, legislative and national guidance/policy updates). This includes ensuring learning is monitored, tracked and learning and development activity embedded.

Strategic Safeguarding Group (SSG) members

Each member of SSG is accountable for safeguarding matters within their operational area. This includes ensuring that robust reporting and escalation processes are in place appropriate to the area of work, and that employees, sessional workers, volunteers and students are adequately trained and supported in safeguarding matters. They are also responsible for ensuring that safeguarding incidents are logged on CiviCRM so that they can be collated and reported back to the relevant manager and the Board of Trustees.

Managers

All Managers across all CNE services have responsibility for the safeguarding practice and improvement of all employees, sessional workers, volunteers and students within the teams they directly manage.

Employees, sessional workers, volunteers and students

All senior managers and the Board of Trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students have the responsibility to recognise, report, and record safeguarding concerns about babies, children, young people in line with our policy document, procedures and associated guidance. This includes a responsibility to work closely with local authorities in order to share current information and effectively take part in multi-agency discussions.

Sessional workers, volunteers and students must work with nominated employees directly on the reporting and recording of safeguarding concerns.

Designated Safeguarding Lead – safeguarding duties as outlined in job description

- Safeguarding Lead within the organisation which includes oversight of the policy, training, Strategic Safeguarding Group, safeguarding investigations, safeguarding reporting, ensuring that Children North East is up to date with legislation, procedures and practices.**
- Responsible for reporting to the Board of Trustees on safeguarding, to ensure they are kept up to date with safeguarding issues and are fully informed of any concerns about organisational safeguarding and child protection practice.**
- Take a lead role in developing, implementing and reviewing CNE's safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures: ensuring all safeguarding and child protection issues concerning babies, children and young people who take part in CNE's activities are responded to appropriately.**
- Make sure that everyone working or volunteering with or for babies, children and young people at CNE, including the Board of Trustees understands the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures and knows what to do if they have concerns about a child's welfare.**
- Make sure babies, children and young people who are involved in activities at CNE and their parents know who they can talk to if they have a welfare concern and understand what action the organisation will take in response.**
- Receive and record information from anyone who has concerns about a child who takes part in CNE's activities.**
- Take the lead on responding to information that may constitute a child protection concern, including a concern that an adult involved with CNE may present a risk to babies, children or young people. This includes:**
 - a) assessing and clarifying the information**
 - b) making referrals to statutory organisations as appropriate**
 - c) consulting with and informing the relevant members of the organisation's management**

d) following the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures.

- Liaise with, pass on information to and receive information from statutory child protection agencies such as the local authority child protection services and Police.
- Store and retain child protection records according to legal requirements and the organisation's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures.
- Be familiar with and work within inter-agency child protection procedures developed by the local child protection agencies.
- Be familiar with issues relating to child protection and abuse and keep up to date with new developments in this area.
- Attend regular training in issues relevant to child protection and share knowledge from that training with everyone who works or volunteers with or for children and young people at CNE.

3. WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT FOR?

This document sets out Children North East's (CNE) approach to safeguarding children, including:

- Children North East's commitment to safeguarding
- **Key safeguarding principles**
- **Safeguarding governance and accountabilities**
- **Safeguarding procedures for all employees, students, sessional workers and volunteers to follow**
- **Working with a local authority on safeguarding**
- **Specific safeguarding circumstances**

A [glossary of terms](#) to aid all is included at the end of this document. Further safeguarding guidance to support the actions outlined in this policy and procedure is available on [Children North East's safeguarding and quality practice SharePoint page](#).

DEFINITIONS

Child or young person

Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday (unless they have a disability which is under the age of 25)

Employees

Anyone employed by Children North East, including sessional workers, agency workers and those on secondment

Students

Anyone undertaking a placement with Children North East as part of their academic studies

Volunteers

Anyone volunteering for Children North East, regardless of their role, including trustees

Child abuse

Babies, children, young people may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their daily lives. Abuse can take a variety of different forms, including:

- **Sexual**
- **Physical**
- **Emotional abuse**
- **Neglect**

Other abuses that may fall under the main 4 headings include:

- **Exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups**
- **Trafficking and modern slavery**
- **Online abuse**
- **Sexual exploitation**
- **Influences of extremism leading to radicalisation**
- **Domestic abuse**
- **Financial abuse**
- **Discriminatory abuse**
- **Organisational abuse**

Safeguarding

Safeguarding children is defined in [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#) (publishing.service.gov.uk) 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 and effective care**
- **Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes**

4. KEY SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES IN THIS DOCUMENT

- 4.1 The well-being of babies, children, young people is paramount to the work of Children North East.**
- 4.2 All senior managers, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, students and the Board of Trustees have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the well-being of babies, children, young people. They must read and understand this policy and procedures, be aware of their responsibilities, and undertake their duties with care for quality, efficiency and effectiveness.**
- 4.3 Children North East (CNE) works in partnership on safeguarding matters. While everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe, no one person or organisation alone can have a full picture of an individual's needs and circumstances. Therefore, all partners have a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action.**
- 4.4 CNE makes sure that senior managers, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, students and the Board of Trustees are provided with training and support to equip them to safeguard children and young people within their day to day professional practice.**
- 4.5 This document reflects the legal framework set out in The Children Act 1989. These laws set out the statutory safeguarding duties of local authorities. More information about safeguarding law and connected guidance can be found in CNE's safeguarding and quality practice SharePoint page.**
- 4.6 CNE's safeguarding policy must always take precedence over all internal organisational policies or frameworks for all senior managers, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, students and the board of trustees.**

This remains the case when employees, sessional workers, volunteers and students are placed within other organisations (such as a local authority) or have current professional registration attached to a regulatory framework.
- 4.7 The care and support of babies, children, young people is CNE's responsibility as an organisation, rather than that of the individual or service.**

5. SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES FOR SENIOR MANAGERS, PAID STAFF, VOLUNTEERS, SESSIONAL WORKERS, AGENCY STAFF, STUDENTS AND THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

For the purpose of this document (and throughout), when referring to senior managers, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, students, they will be referred to as employees/volunteers. The Board of Trustees will be referred to as Trustees. Special consideration for volunteers & students is also contained within this document.

All procedures with respect to people over 18 years (unless they have a disability which is under the age of 25) will be outlined in a separate document; Adults at Risk policy and procedure.

5.1 HOW TO DEAL WITH CONCERNS RELATING TO THE ACTUAL OR POTENTIAL ABUSE OF A BABY, CHILD, YOUNG PERSON

- 5.1.1 Always place the babies, child welfare and interests as the paramount consideration.**
- 5.1.2 Make safeguarding personal, using a person-led and outcomes-focused approach. Employees, sessional workers, students must talk with the child, young person about how best to respond to their safeguarding situation in a way that enhances their involvement, control, and choice throughout the safeguarding process. Employees will speak to the child, young person on the volunteer's/students behalf where necessary.**
- 5.1.3 Listen carefully and actively to the person – at this stage, there is no necessity to ask questions. Let the person guide the pace and remember their ability to recount an allegation will depend on age, culture, language, communication skills and disability.**
- 5.1.4 Do not show shock at what is being said. This may discourage the child from talking, as they may feel you are unable to cope with what they're saying, or perhaps that you're thinking badly of them.**
- 5.1.5 Do not investigate. If anything needs to be clarified in order to understand the safeguarding risk, ask clear, open questions:**
 - use the TED rule: tell, explain and describe**
 - ask 'what, when, who, how, where' questions**
 - ask 'do you want to tell me anything else?'**
 - do not ask any 'why' questions as these can suggest guilt or responsibility.**
- 5.1.6 Remain calm and reassure the person that they have done the right**

thing by talking to a responsible adult.

- 5.1.7 Never promise to keep a secret or confidentiality. CNE works within wider statutory systems and must collaborate in order to effectively support and care for babies, children and young people. It is important that this fact, and its implications of transparency and reporting, are emphasised in early and ongoing conversations
- 5.1.8 Ensure the child and young person understands what will happen next with their information.

5.2 DEALING WITH CONFIDENTIALITY

- 5.2.1 Employees have a duty to ensure that the information is passed on in order to keep the child safe. Volunteers/students will be supported by an employee to do this.
- 5.2.2 If a child requests confidentiality, employees/volunteers must explain Children North East requirements, for example, 'I'm really concerned about what you have told me, and I have a responsibility to ensure that you are safe'.
- 5.2.3 As concerns arise, employees/volunteers must talk to their manager or, if they're not available, another manager from another CNE service, a list of relevant managers can be found here.

5.3 RESPONDING TO A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

Immediate risk of harm

- 5.3.1 If an employee/volunteer believe a child to be at immediate risk of harm or abuse, and/or a criminal offence is taking place, they must take immediate steps to protect that person by calling 999. Sessional worker, volunteers and students will be supported by an employee to do this.

Employees/volunteers must contact their line manager or relevant coordinator to let them know what has happened and take advice on next steps, this must be done within the same day.

- 5.3.2 If an emergency arises outside of a service's usual working hours (some services operate on evenings and weekends), employees/volunteers must contact the manager who is providing out of hours support for that service. This must be done on the same day once any immediate dangers are addressed.

Where this is not possible, please contact another senior manager in the first instance or if this is not possible please see appendix 1 with relevant children social care numbers.

5.3.3 Employees/volunteers must record their safeguarding concerns and actions on CiviCRM on the same day and complete the Children North East Child Concern Form, volunteers will be supported by an Employee to do this.

If there is any barrier to being able to do this, employees/volunteers must discuss this with their manager on the same day, to agree who will make the record.

No immediate risk of harm

- 5.3.4** Employees/volunteers must consult with a line manager or the manager who is providing out of hours support for that service as soon as possible on the same day of the safeguarding concern.
- 5.3.5** If there are concerns that a child is, or has been, at risk of abuse, employees/volunteers with management support, must make a referral on the same day to the Local Authority Children's Social Care Department in the area where the child is living (or is found). Employees/volunteers, must take guidance from their manager as needed.
- 5.3.6** For safeguarding concerns raised by sessional workers, volunteers and students a relevant manager must appoint an appropriate employee to make the referral. This must be done as soon as possible on the same day.

Employees must (subject to issues of confidentiality or other sensitivities) keep volunteers, sessional workers and students informed as to the outcome of the referral.

- 5.3.7** A safeguarding record must be logged on CiviCRM on the same day of any safeguarding referral being raised or when a new safeguarding concern is shared with Children's Social Care when the child or young person is already open to them.

Concerns from the general public

- 5.3.8** Employees/volunteers, may receive safeguarding concerns from the general public via email, social media channels, in person or by telephone.
Where such concerns are received, these must immediately be passed onto the relevant manager, or where this isn't possible, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy DSL) for Children North East
- 5.3.9** Where the concern is received via telephone or in person, the employee/volunteer, must:
- Listen to the concern
 - As soon as possible during the conversation tell them that their concern will be passed onto the relevant manager or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy DSL)
 - Take the caller's contact details and share with the relevant manager or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy DSL)
 - Always confirm with the relevant manager that they have received the information

5.4 RECORDING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

- 5.4.1 As soon as possible, employees/volunteers must record using CiviCRM (employee support will be available for sessional workers, volunteers and students to complete this task) what the child has told them (in the child's own words) or what the employee/volunteer has observed. These records must include the date, time, place and observations of behaviour.**
- 5.4.2 If practical barriers exist to prevent employees/volunteers in making timely entries in CiviCRM, they must discuss this with their manager (or coordinator) on the same day as the safeguarding concern.**
- 5.4.3 Volunteers must consult with their coordinator to provide the necessary information for the coordinator to record concerns on CiviCRM. Students must consult with their mentor or a manager. Sessional Workers must consult with their line manager to record concerns on CiviCRM.**
- 5.4.4 If employees fail to record accurately, or if they write down their own interpretation of the child account (as opposed to a factual account), this may lead to inadmissible or unusable evidence should the information be required for court processes.**
- 5.4.5 Employees/volunteers, must not contact any individual about whom an allegation or concern is being raised. This could be putting the person making the allegations in serious danger, for example, where domestic violence is taking place. It could also prejudice an investigation.**
- 5.4.6 If a manager decides that a referral to the local authority children's social care teams is not warranted, this decision must be recorded by the senior manager on CiviCRM as a case note under the case note type: 'Decision not to make a referral to social care' (with evidence to support decision making). Managers must be sure to include the reasons why this decision was reached**

5.5 MAKING A REFERRAL

Making a referral to the local authority

- 5.5.1 Any sensitive information sent outside CNE must be sent using a secure email i.e. works email address using password protected systems.**
- 5.5.2 Referrals must be made on the same day where harm or risk of harm has been identified. If concerns arise out of office hours, referrals must be made to the local authority out of hours' service.**
- 5.5.3 Employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students with employee support) must make referrals to the local authority children's social care services, following local procedures. Employees must always confirm the referral in writing**

5.5.4 Where possible, employees (sessional worker, volunteers and students with employee support) must discuss their concerns with the child's parent, and an agreement should be sought for a referral to the local authority children's social care services. They must only do this if it does not increase risk to the child (through either delay, or the parent's possible actions or reactions).

5.5.5 If employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employees re: parental permission) decide not to seek parental permission before making a referral to children's social care, they must record and date this in the child's file on CiviCRM along with reasons. This must also be confirmed in writing in the referral to children's social care

Referrals when working with a partner organisation

5.5.6 If the safeguarding concern arises within the context of CNE working with a partner organisation or service (for example a school or college), employees, must check with their manager for any agreed safeguarding processes contained in the Service Level Agreement (SLA). If sessional workers, volunteers or students are working in these environments, they must be made aware. Usually, this will involve contacting the designated officer within the partner organisation. Employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by an employee) must also consider any local safeguarding children multi-agency arrangements, including their local child protection procedures which are detailed on the Local Safeguarding Children Partners.

5.5.7 In such cases, both CNE's and the partner organisation's policies must be followed.

Referral responses: What to expect from the local authority

5.5.8 Children's social care services are required to provide referrers with a response within 24 hours of receiving a referral and acknowledge receipt to the referrer. Responses may include:

- referral progressing to a social work assessment
- no further action
- signposting to another service
- a recommendation that the referring agency or another agency undertake an early help assessment (or that the referral remains within early help services).

5.5.9 If no response has been received within 72 hours, CNE's employee or their manager must contact the local authority children's social care services again and, if necessary, ask to speak to a line manager to establish progress.

5.5.10 If the local authority's response is inadequate, or doesn't sufficiently

address the risk of abuse, employees must discuss this with their manager on the same day. The manager must then review the details on the same day and make a decision to take action regarding any escalation required (refer to procedure 7. 'Escalating a concern').

Making referrals to child in need or early intervention services

- 5.5.11 In cases where a local authority children's social care services decides that a child is not at risk of abuse, consideration must be made about whether other services are required. Employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) must be familiar with the services on offer from a range of agencies, including how these are accessed in the relevant local area.
- 5.5.12 Any referral or signposting to other agencies for help and support for a baby, child, young person and family must be recorded on CiviCRM. Sessional workers, volunteers and students will be assisted to do this by a relevant manager.

6. WORKING WITH LOCAL AUTHORITY CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

It is vitally important that all employees/volunteers collaboratively and transparently work with relevant children's social care services, regardless of their role at Children North East.

Employee's/volunteers active involvement in conversations, meetings, and individual risk management or strategy development adds depth and detail to statutory processes.

While employees/volunteers relationships with babies, children, young people are unique and personal, work cannot effectively take place in a silo.

6.1 Children who have a child protection plan or who are in care

- 6.1.1 Where employees/volunteers have safeguarding concerns about a baby, child or young person who already has a child protection plan, is in care, or is in receipt of other services from the local authority, they must ensure that an up-to-date Individual risk assessment is in place and recorded in CiviCRM.

In these instances, local authority children's social care services will often not accept a formal safeguarding referral, despite current concerns. While an employee/volunteers may have a view that the local authority in question is potentially unlikely to take specific action on the new information or change in circumstances, they must still share the information. This is essential in order to ensure the local authority has relevant and up to date information and therefore, that Children North East (CNE) is undertaking effective partnership work.

6.1.2 Employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) must take the following steps:

New safeguarding concerns must be shared with the local authority and confirmed in writing to the allocated social worker (or in their absence, their manager or the duty social worker) as soon as possible on the same day.

Employees, students – as this is part of their training, (sessional workers and volunteers must take advice and be supported by employee) must record their concerns on CiviCRM on the day that their concerns are shared. Concerns raised by volunteers will be recorded by an employee.

If the safeguarding concern is not fully addressed within the existing child's plan, this must be reported to the social worker in line with the plan and confirmed in writing in the same timescales as above.

Receiving a response

6.1.3 In cases where an employee, student (as this is part of their training), does not receive a satisfactory response from the children's social care social worker or manager, or they believe it will not adequately address the risk of abuse or neglect, employees, students must raise concerns with their manager on the same day of such conclusions. They must record these outcomes on CiviCRM.

Sessional workers and volunteers must follow the same process but with support from the employee they link with.

The manager must then review the details of the case on the same day before making a decision and take action regarding any escalation required

6.2 Contributing to a section 47 enquiry

Initial strategy discussion

6.2.1 When a local authority has identified that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer significant harm, they will convene an initial strategy discussion. This strategy discussion will be used to:

- Share available information.**
- Agree the conduct and timing of any criminal investigation.**
- Decide whether enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 must be undertaken.**

6.2.2 A strategy discussion might take the form of a multi-agency meeting or phone calls, and more than one discussion may be necessary. If an employee (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take

advice and be supported by employee) is invited to participate or is asked to report into such a discussion, they must inform a manager the same day that the request has been made.

The manager must then review CiviCRM records and ensure the discussion is attended by a suitable employee.

The employee (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by an employee) attending must take a full record of decisions made during the discussion. These minutes and other documents discussion must be read and saved to the relevant CiviCRM file when they are received. The local authority should send out any formal minutes from the discussion within 5 working days.

If support or advice is needed, employees/volunteers may contact a member of CNE's Strategic Safeguarding Group.

Multi-agency checks as part of the Section 47 enquiry

- 6.2.3** If a strategy discussion decides that multi-agency checks are required, it is likely that the relevant service will be contacted to contribute to these enquiries.

In such cases, employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) must notify their manager on the same day they are contacted by the local authority.

Managers must then ensure that employees, sessional workers, volunteers and students understand the purpose of the checks and what is required. An employee (sessional worker must work with an employee re: responses and take relevant instruction) volunteer or student, must respond to such enquiries.

- 6.2.4** Case records must be read, and any employees/volunteers who have had recent contact with the child or family must be invited to share their views.
- 6.2.5** Any new concerns, changes in circumstance, unusual activity from family or friends, or changes in behaviour in the child must be shared with the local authority. Additionally, the local authority must be made aware of any involvement from other agencies with the child or family.
- 6.2.6** Agency checks that are made by telephone – including the information shared – must be confirmed in writing to the local authority on the same day as the call.

Section 47 enquiry outcomes

- 6.2.7** There are a number of possible outcomes to a section.47 enquiry:

- The decision is made to take no further action. If employees/volunteers disagree with this outcome, they must raise concerns with their manager on the same day.
- The decision is made to provide other support services.
- Concerns are substantiated and the child is assessed to be at risk of significant harm. There must then be a child protection conference within 15 working days of the strategy discussion.

6.3 Attending a Child Protection Conference

Employees to attend a child protection conference

- 6.3.1 Managers must consult with their manager to decide which employee, (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) will attend a child protection conference.**

Preparing a child protection conference report

- 6.3.2 Written reports must be prepared for the meeting or conference, which must be agreed with and countersigned by a senior manager. The written report must include details of:**
- CNE's involvement with the child and their family
 - Information and concerns regarding the child's development needs
 - A professional view on the capacity of the parents to meet the needs of the child within the family and environmental context
 - Which specific children are the subject of the conference, addressing any known circumstances for all children in the household.

Sharing the report

- 6.3.3 In most cases (those children/young people with learning difficulties may need more time), the author of the report must share it with the child and/or their family in advance of the meeting and at least 24 hours prior to the meeting, unless doing so would put the child at further risk of harm or jeopardise any ongoing investigation.**
- 6.3.4 When considering whether to share the written report with family members or agencies, employees (sessional workers and volunteers must seek advice from their relevant manager/coordinator) must speak to our Data Protection Officer ([Data Protection Services - Speak to an Expert | DPO Centre](#)) and the Strategic Safeguarding Group.**

6.3.5 If the child or another family member disagrees with something in the report, and a difference of opinion remains after discussion, this must be brought to the attention of the meeting chair either verbally or in writing.

Employees/volunteers must then inform the manager and senior manager of the disagreement.

6.3.6 The conference report must be made available to the conference chair at least two working days in advance of an initial conference and five working days in advance of a child protection review conference, or as detailed by the local safeguarding arrangements.

Recording the conference outcome

6.3.7 Whatever the outcome of the conference, the employee (if students/sessional workers or volunteers are involved they should take advice/lead from relevant manager/coordinator) student attending must record the following on CiviCRM within five working days:

- A record of their attendance
- A summary of meeting decisions
- Any actions affecting CNE.

The employee (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) must also save the minutes of the meeting and any plans produced as soon as possible following receipt.

6.3.8 Managers are responsible for ensuring that child protection conference minutes are received and checked by employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) who attended the meeting.

Any amendments must be agreed with the manager and submitted to the chair within the locally stipulated timeframe.

Disputing a conference outcome

6.3.9 If an employee (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) does not agree with a decision or recommendation made at a child protection conference they attended or are supported to participate in; they must ensure this is noted in the meeting record.

Employees, (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) must use the relevant local safeguarding partners' escalation procedures to address this as soon as possible after the conference has concluded.

Employees, (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take

advice and be supported by employee) must inform their manager and Senior Manager of their dissenting view on the same day.

6.4 Contributing to a child protection plan

Child protection plans and the local authority

- 6.4.1** When a conference decides that a child should be the subject of a child protection plan, a local authority children's social worker must be appointed as lead social worker to coordinate all aspects of the inter-agency child protection plan.
- 6.4.2** CNE's employees must not accept lead responsibility for this. All children with child protection plans must have a designated local authority social worker as lead professional.

Core group

- 6.4.3** The core group is responsible for the detailed formulation and implementation of the child protection plan. The meeting must occur within 10 days of the initial conference. A key aim of the plan is to enable work with the family to reduce risk to a point where professionals agree that there is no requirement for the child protection plan. Members must undertake their roles and responsibilities effectively in accordance with the agreed plan.
- 6.4.4** All action points of core group meetings must be recorded. Analysis of the risk of harm to the child must be made, and all the information must be shared with the lead social worker and the core group. All core group members are responsible for keeping a record of the outcome of the meeting.
- 6.4.5** A record must be made on CiviCRM of information shared, and with whom, by the employee attending the core group. Record decisions and actions on the same day. Employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) must save minutes and plans as soon as they are available.
- 6.4.6** These records must be regularly reviewed by the manager.

Outcomes and review conferences

- 6.4.7** The plan is reviewed at a child protection review conference, which must be held within three months of the initial child protection conference. Further reviews should be held at intervals of not more than six months, for as long as the child remains the subject of a child protection plan.
- 6.4.8** CNE must provide written reports for each conference whilst it is still directly involved with the child, or as part of the plan.

Employee responsibilities

6.4.9 When CNE is working with a child with a child protection plan, management employees and students must have full oversight as per the following procedures:

- **Managers must make sure they have access to the details of each individual through the provision of data and reporting (CiviCRM)**
- **Senior managers are responsible for arranging a recorded supervisory discussion with the Operations Director regarding any child protection case with escalating concerns, for example, cases where CNE disagrees with the decisions made during conference, or where there is evidence that plans are not progressing due to the ineffectiveness of other services and/or challenges in effectively completing a part of the plan allocated to a CNE employee.**
- **All cases of children with a child protection plan (accept where cases are only held due to an advocacy service supporting the child within child protection conferences) should be reviewed within a recorded supervisory discussion between the senior manager and the operations director at least every 3 months, or more often as required to ensure that any areas of challenge, escalation or delay are addressed, and to ensure suitable leadership oversight.**

The decision to review a child protection case within supervision is a judgement that must be made by the senior manager with the support of the Operations Director. The decision should be based around, but not exclusively to, the following factors:

- **How many child protection cases the team hold and what the current status of these cases are.**
- **Any child protection case that are presenting a particular challenge to the organisation, or where outstanding practice needs celebrating.**
- **Any cases which outline significant delay in the plan or provision of service to the child or family.**
- **Any cases in which the future plans are not clear, or where risk level has changed.**
- **Any cases the senior manager has identified due to particular concerns raised by the worker and/or themselves.**

- Any case receiving an advocacy service for child protection conferences which has raised additional safeguarding concerns or has required escalation, and/or complaints.
- At every supervision between an employee and a manager, they must discuss all cases where there is a child with a child protection plan or any child where there have been new safeguarding concerns. This must include progress, compliance with the plan, new concerns or other issues. Sessional workers, volunteers and students will also discuss safeguarding concerns in their supervision with relevant staff and volunteer coordinators.
- Between supervision sessions, it is the responsibility of employees, (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) to alert their manager of any increase in risk, new concerns or change of circumstances for the child.
- They must also ensure CiviCRM is regularly updated with risk assessments and alerts.
- Supervision discussions, case discussions and key decisions must be recorded by the manager on the employee, sessional worker, volunteer or student supervision file and copied onto CiviCRM for each child. Decision-making outside supervision must be recorded on CiviCRM by either the employee (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) or manager as agreed.

7. ESCALATING A CONCERN

7.1 Escalation procedures within services

- 7.1.1** If an employee/volunteer within a CNE service believes that a local authority or another agency is not responding to a concern in a suitable or timely way, or that safeguarding concerns are not being responded to suitably, they must raise their concerns with their manager/volunteer coordinator.

Employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) must raise their concern and the potential need for escalation as the concern occurs and develops and must record the conversations and outcomes on CiviCRM.

- 7.1.2** Managers must then review the concerns and, if agreed, contact the local authority team manager to discuss the decisions and issues of concern.

A record must be made of the outcome of this discussion on CiviCRM. Employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) and managers must agree who will be responsible for recording decisions and agreed actions.

7.1.3 If the matter warrants further escalation, managers must follow local authority escalation processes and notify their Operational Lead.

7.1.4 The Operations Director (DSL), alerted by Operational Leads to unresolved concerns, must take further escalating action with local authority senior managers when required.

7.1.5 If, following escalation action, the outcome does not address the safeguarding concerns, the Operations Director (DSL) must take the matter up with the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

7.1.6 Conversations with an Operational Lead or Operations Director (DSL) must be recorded on CiviCRM within five working days.

7.2 Escalation procedures for non-service based managers

7.2.1 If an employee/volunteer outside of Children North East operational services believes that a local authority or another agency is not responding to a concern in a suitable or timely way, or that safeguarding concerns are not being responded to suitably, they must raise their concerns with their manager.

Employees/volunteers must raise their concern and the potential need for escalation as the concern occurs and develops.

7.2.2 Operational Leads must then discuss the concern with CNE Strategic Safeguarding Group, who will maintain a record of this and advise on further action.

7.3 Responsibilities in escalation and managing safeguarding risk

7.3.1 Safeguarding is a multi-agency activity. Babies, children, young people can only be kept safe when agencies are working together effectively and efficiently. CNE employees/volunteers at all levels must be clear on their responsibilities in the management of safeguarding risk for children at risk.

7.3.2 Employees/volunteers must play an active role in managing safeguarding risk by:

- Identifying safeguarding concerns (new or changed) quickly**
- Discussing these with managers as soon as possible**
- Sharing concerns quickly with local authority and police as relevant**
- Quickly escalating concerns where the response is insufficient**

or slow

- Participating in multi-agency planning activity
- Supporting children and young people to consider how they can take action to help protect themselves
- Recording their conversations, decisions and actions.

7.3.3 All Managers must play an active role in managing safeguarding risk by:

- Prioritising conversations with employees who have safeguarding concerns
- Supporting employees/volunteers to think through concerns and decide a suitable course of action with statutory partners
- Quickly escalating concerns within the local authority as required
- Discussing safety planning strategies for the child at risk with the employee/volunteer
- Escalating concerns to the Operational Lead/Operations Director (DSL) when circumstances require it
- Ensuring discussions and decisions are recorded on CiviCRM

7.4 Safety planning when escalating concerns

7.4.1 A safety plan is an action plan specifically addressing the known safeguarding concerns and risks for an individual baby, child or young person.

7.4.2 When escalating concerns, there may be a delay between informing the local authority of new or changed concerns and receiving a suitable response.

Employees may therefore have information about a baby, child or young person that the local authority has not yet heard and acted upon.

7.4.3 After escalating a concern in a local authority and waiting for an appropriate response, employees & managers will likely share a sense of needing to manage or “hold” risk in the intervening period until the local authority responds suitably.

7.4.4 This risk management is best done through safety planning with the young person and/or family in order to help them remove, mitigate and better manage risks present.

Safety planning is best done in partnership with the young person and/or family involved, and should feature:

- Identifying the risks present to the individual
- Considering potential changes to current circumstances that

can be made to reduce the risks present

- **Generating practical, realistic responses to risks**
- **Considering the physical and emotional needs of the person at risk when exploring potential actions and changes**
- **Encouraging the person to make positive decisions in the interest of their own self-protection**
- **Develop an emergency safety plan with suitable phone numbers.**

7.5 Escalation for a child protection conference

- 7.5.1 If an employee/volunteer is concerned that a baby, child or young person is at risk of significant harm, and the local authority has decided not to call a child protection conference, they must raise their concerns with their manager immediately.**

The manager must then escalate this matter according to normal escalation procedure.

- 7.5.2 If concerns remain, CNE can formally request that local authority children's social care services convene an initial child protection conference.**

Statutory guidance states that children's social care should convene a conference where one or more professionals, supported by a senior manager or a named/designated professional, request one.

- 7.5.3 Employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by an employee) must record any conversations with their manager or Operational Lead relating to these escalations on CiviCRM within five working days.**

8. CONSULTING CNE's STRATEGIC SAFEGUARDING GROUP

- 8.1.1 The Strategic Safeguarding Group provide tailored support depending on the circumstances of the safeguarding issue. Employees/volunteers can contact members of the Strategic Safeguarding Group directly for guidance, advice, or instruction.**

- 8.1.2 Any safeguarding concerns noted outside of service-based provision must always lead to a consultation with the Strategic Safeguarding Group through a direct conversation with a member of the team.**

8.1.3 Any safeguarding concerns noted within services must be responded to by the appropriate manager.

However, when the safeguarding concern is unusual, complex or of a serious nature, the Strategic Safeguarding Group must also be notified. The Strategic Safeguarding Group must then decide whether further support is needed.

Should managers require advice, guidance or instruction, the Strategic Safeguarding Group can always be consulted through a direct conversation with a member of the team.

8.1.4 The Strategic Safeguarding Group must be consulted if:

- An allegation is made against Children North East employees/volunteers or Trustees.**
- Any incident reported happened during CNE's arranged trips or activities**
- The death or serious injury of a child or adult working with CNE occurs**
- A Rapid Review or Child Safeguarding Practice Review is announced**
- Efforts to escalate a safeguarding issue are not proving effective.**

8.1.5 Employees/volunteers can contact CNE's Strategic Safeguarding Group with general, non-urgent safeguarding inquiries or practice questions at safeguarding@children-ne.org.uk

This email address must not be used for any matters requiring an urgent response.

CONTRIBUTING TO A LEARNING REVIEW

9.1.1 Employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) asked to contribute to a learning review (for example a child safeguarding practice review, a domestic homicide review, or a serious incident investigation) must ensure that the relevant manager is told immediately.

The Operations Director (DSL) and the Strategic Safeguarding Group must then be informed within one working day.

9.1.2 If the team is required to use CNE's incident logging (held by HR), any request to contribute to a learning review must be logged as an incident within five working days via CiviCRM.

9.1.3 The Strategic Safeguarding Group will provide guidance to the manager on the process for securing relevant hard copy notes and digital data.

Operational Leads are responsible for ensuring the documents are secured on the same day of becoming aware of the review.

The Strategic Safeguarding Group will oversee the appropriate retention of this data for the duration of the review process.

- 9.1.4 Operational Leads and the Operations Director (DSL) must ensure that employees/volunteers who are, or who have been, directly involved with the baby, child or young person are appropriately supported.**
- 9.1.5 Only the people who need access for the purpose of the review should be able to access these records except where agreement is given by the Strategic Safeguarding Group to enable continued timely and appropriate case work by an employee (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee).**
- 9.1.6 Following a request from a local area Safeguarding Children Board/Partnership for a Serious Case Review, the relevant manager should inform a suitable member of the service to complete the relevant paperwork and provide this to CNE's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for approval within 5 days. The DSL will forward the completed report to the local area Safeguarding Children Group and liaise with them over next steps.**
- 9.1.7 All other local area learning requests (such as child safeguarding practice reviews and safeguarding adult reviews) must be sent via the DSL for approval prior to being sent by the Strategic Safeguarding Group. The Strategic Safeguarding Group will be responsible for liaising with the local area over next steps and monitoring of internal action plans.**

10. SAFEGUARDING IN COMPLEX CIRCUMSTANCES

- 10.1.1 CNE has a strategic focus on working with babies, children and young people who are at risk of, or experiencing severe and multiple disadvantages. This means employees/volunteers are supporting people who are especially vulnerable and for whom complex safeguarding risks are present.**
- 10.1.2 Working with highly vulnerable people places increased importance on effective and ongoing risk assessment, sharing information and intelligence, and collaborating with statutory and voluntary partners to help keep individuals as safe as possible.**

Intelligence in this context refers to any information about a baby, child or young person (or about the risks they face) that is specific to a location, person, and pattern or addresses a wider contextual concern.

- 10.1.3 CNE's employees/volunteers must work collaboratively, regardless of their particular role with the baby, child or young person.**
- 10.1.4 Supporting babies, children and young people in complex safeguarding circumstances requires CNE to take a highly collaborative approach to safeguarding. Employees, (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) may need to:**
- Escalate safeguarding concerns if the local authority response is deemed inadequate**
 - Share ongoing intelligence with police and work intensively with Safeguarding partners to manage the risks present (safety planning)**
 - Share intelligence with any relevant professional networks where it will add to or improve multi-agency action plans**
 - Press the local authority for a contextual safeguarding response if this is not occurring**
 - Assess the risks to the children's family and to the employees involved.**
- 10.1.5 Safeguarding in complex circumstances can be a markedly different task to that of more traditional scenarios. Employees/volunteers must talk with their managers/volunteer coordinator if they are concerned about (or even have a mild suspicion of) any complex circumstances. Support and guidance are also available via the DSL.**
- 10.1.6 When working with people in complex safeguarding situations, it is important that any criminal behaviour does not overshadow the duty to safeguard the baby, child or young person.**
- 10.1.7 Where there are multiple vulnerabilities, professional networks are very important. Risk assessments of either the baby, child or young person, and for the employee/volunteer must be completed and be informed by multi-agency work.**
- 10.1.8 Employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) must follow the usual escalation processes where there are any concerns about partner engagement or action.**
- 10.1.9 In cases of complex safeguarding, risk management and safety planning must be regularly updated.**

11. AGE ASSESSMENT AND AGE DISPUTES

- 11.1.1 Most unaccompanied children arriving in the UK have their age accepted upon arrival, but in some cases, where there is little or no documentary evidence of the child's age or if the child looks like an adult, the Home Office or local authorities may dispute the age stated by the child.**
- 11.1.2 In cases where there is a dispute regarding the age of the young person, the young person must be treated as a child by the local authority while the dispute is ongoing (refer to local statutory guidance).**
- 11.1.3 Age assessments can be challenged. If a CNE employee/volunteer believes this is warranted, they must follow the escalation procedure in Section 7 of this document. CNE may require solicitor support for such a challenge.**
- 11.1.4 Refer to the glossary of terms for a full definition of age assessment and age disputes in the context of unaccompanied children.**

12. CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING

- 12.1.1 Contextual safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, children/young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships young people form – in their neighbourhoods, through their networks, at school and online – can feature violence and abuse.**
- 12.1.2 Because children & young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of contexts, responding to contextual safeguarding concerns means working with children's social care, and other relevant partners, to collectively assess the risks for young people and plan suitable interventions.**

Quality contextual safeguarding action plans will assess and plan interventions in all the spaces in which a child/young person (or group of children/young people) are deemed vulnerable to abuse.
- 12.1.3 Where employees/volunteers are concerned about contextual safeguarding factors for a child or young person (or group of children or young people) they must speak with a local authority social care services and provide information about what they know.**

Local arrangements may vary; however, employees must encourage the local authority to explore a contextual response. Some areas will have co-located teams with a wide brief and oversight of multiple threats. Others will have specific teams based around one threat.

Multi-agency panels bring together information about the relevant threats. Children North East must work with partners to understand the threats individually and in relation to each other.

- 12.1.4 While contextual safeguarding work occurs, all relevant safeguarding processes for individual child/young person must operate in parallel.
- 12.1.5 Employees/volunteers may refer to Children North East's Safeguarding and Quality Practice SharePoint page for further guidance on exploitation and contextual safeguarding.

13. INTELLIGENCE SHARING

- 13.1.1 Soft intelligence is very important when working contextually to safeguard children and young people and must be treated as a safeguarding concern. Sharing intelligence (information employees, sessional workers, volunteer and students have gathered that may be relevant to crimes being committed) can help establish patterns and themes and improve clarity on the risks present.
- 13.1.2 If employees, sessional workers, volunteers or students are given information that relates to a child or young person about immediate harm, they must call 999 immediately and make a referral to social care in accordance with this policy. Sessional workers, volunteers and students must be supported by employee.
- 13.1.3 If an employee, sessional workers, volunteers or students receives information about criminal activity either through direct practice with children and young people or via members of the public – this must be reported by calling the police 101 line. Employees, sessional workers volunteers and students should in the first instance consult with their manager/volunteer coordinator before sharing the information with the police to consider risks present for the child or young person. Conversations with the police must be recorded on CiviCRM. For more details about information sharing refer to [guidance on the Children North East Safeguarding and Quality Practice SharePoint page](#).

- 13.1.4** Employees when acting for themselves or on behalf of a sessional worker, volunteer or student must ensure they receive a crime reference number for the information shared and must check with police that they have all the key risk information and intelligence available. Students must follow this process also when acting on behalf of themselves.
- 13.1.5** If employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) know the investigating officer on a specific case, they must inform them of all known information, to ensure it is managed effectively.
- 13.1.6** Where employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) have concerns about a child or young person that is connected to travel on public transport, they can also contact the [British Transport Police](#) – who will also participate in multi-agency strategy meetings where relevant.
- 13.1.7** Employees, sessional workers, volunteers, students may be aware of local “hot spot” areas of concern. Sharing information on these can help police target resources effectively and build a more detailed picture of the safeguarding risks within neighbourhoods or communities.
- 13.1.8** Employees (including sessional workers) and students (as part of their training) may also present information at multi agency child exploitation (MACE) meetings or the local area equivalent. These are exploitation-centred meetings facilitated by local authorities. Intelligence will be recorded in the meeting minutes and information shared effectively with statutory bodies. Employees will represent volunteers at these meetings where necessary.

Employees, sessional workers and students must discuss any information with their manager ahead of sharing it in the MACE forum and record the discussion in case notes on CiviCRM.

14. COMPLEX, ORGANISED OR MULTIPLE ABUSE

- 14.1.1** Complex or organised abuse involves one or more abusers and a number of abused children. For a full definition, refer to the glossary of terms at the end of this document.
- 14.1.2** Where complex or organised abuse is suspected, the relevant Team Manager with support from an Operational Lead, must take the lead in notifying relevant authorities via the following procedures: The Team Manager must make a referral to the police as soon as

possible on the same day.

They must also contact the relevant children's social care services as soon as possible on the same day.

The Operational Lead must inform the Operations Director (DSL or Deputy DSL)

Internal communication by meeting or telephone must take place within one working day of the concern. This must include the Team Manager, Operational Lead, a member of the Strategic Safeguarding Group, and the employee who initially noted the concern. This meeting must ensure:

- The safety and welfare of the child/children are being duly considered by all
- The preparations for any joint work with other agencies are in place
- Relevant records have been or are being secured
- Employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) are being appropriately supported

Appropriate resources are deployed to the team, including access to:

- Legal and other specialist advice and information
- Members of the team are themselves supported with personal counselling if necessary
- Suitable accommodation and administrative support are available for the team.
- The Team Manager must write an internal briefing note setting out the issues and the potential implications to relevant Operational Leads within one day of attending the meeting.
- The Strategic Safeguarding Group must convene a temporary steering group to oversee operational involvement on the matter.

14.1.3 Where there are concerns about professionals working with children, the Designated Officer in the local authority (formerly known as the LADO) must be informed. The sensitivities and complexity of the concern must be clearly highlighted.

15. COURT PROCEEDINGS

15.1.1 Children being supported by Children North East may come in contact with court in the following contexts:

- As a victim of a crime when they appear as a witness
- Via the Family Court, in private proceedings where decisions about which parent or family member they will live with, and contact arrangements with the non-resident parent
- Care proceedings where the local authority seeks to share

- **Parental Responsibility for the child by gaining a Care Order**
- **When they are charged with a criminal offence.**

15.1.2 A child cannot be interviewed by the police without an Appropriate Adult being present.

Where there is no parent or family member, often local Youth Offending Services or Local Authority Social Workers who have undertaken Appropriate Adult training can fulfil this role.

15.1.3 Any Children North East counsellors, family support workers, and/or therapists working with an alleged victim or perpetrator in an ongoing criminal trial must note the following:

- **The CPS and the police must be informed of any pre-trial therapy or support being proposed, taking place, or which has been undertaken.**
- **In newly arising allegations, support should be offered only after the child or young person has given their statement of evidence to the police, which includes a video-recorded interview. However, in existing cases where therapy is already underway, a decision about how to proceed is best made after a discussion at a multi-disciplinary meeting which includes the child's therapist; disruption of therapy should be avoided.**
- **Detailed factual records of therapy must be kept and made available to the CPS as required. Legal advice should be obtained before release.**

16. CRIMINAL GANGS AND NETWORKS

16.1.1 Children or young people involved with criminal gangs or networks are extremely vulnerable to violence and attempts on their life. They are victims of child criminal exploitation. A child who is affected by organised criminal groups, gang activity or serious youth violence may have suffered, or may be likely to suffer, significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse or neglect.

16.1.2 An organised criminal group is a group of individuals who are normally led by adults whom involvement in crime is for personal gain (financial or otherwise). This involves serious and organised criminality by a core of violent gang members who exploit vulnerable young people. This may involve the movement and selling of drugs and money across the country, known as 'county lines' because it extends across county boundaries.

16.1.3 Children are exploited by organised criminal groups to move and store drugs, money and weapons. Organised criminal groups will use coercion, intimidation, and violence (including sexual violence) to

exploit children into this activity. Those exploited can become indebted to a gang or group and exploited further to pay off debts, often referred to as 'debt bondage'.

16.1.4 Potentially a child at risk involved with gangs or organised criminal groups could be both a victim and a perpetrator. This requires professionals to assess and support their welfare and well-being needs at the same time as assessing and responding in a criminal justice capacity. Refer to procedure 12 & 13 on 'Contextual safeguarding' and 'Intelligence sharing'.

16.1.5 There is a distinction between organised crime groups and street gangs based on the level of criminality, organisation, planning and control, however, there are significant links between different levels of gangs.

Activity can include street gangs' involvement in drug dealing on behalf of organised criminal groups and the sexual abuse of children by organised criminal groups. The definition can therefore be fluid, but in all cases in which it is suspected that a child has been or is being exploited by a gang or organised criminal group Children North East safeguarding procedure must be followed (Refer to procedure 5, 'Safeguarding procedures for senior managers, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, students and the board of trustees').

16.1.6 Partnership working is extremely important when supporting young people involved with criminal gangs or networks. Young people may be moved out of area in order to protect them. Thorough risk assessments and safety planning (for the young person and their wider family and friends as relevant) are critically important.

16.1.7 As detailed by section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (legislation.gov.uk), frontline staff employed by the police, local authorities, National Crime Agency and the Gangmasters Licensing Authority have a duty to notify the Home Office if they encounter a potential victim of modern slavery in England and Wales. Frontline staff employed by UK Visas and Immigration, Border Force and Immigration Enforcement must also comply in accordance with Home Office policy. The Modern Slavery Act outlines all victims of exploitation and trafficking fall within this category. Children North East employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) should work alongside these agencies to ensure relevant National referral mechanism guidance (NRM) referrals are made.

17. DIGITAL SAFEGUARDING

17.1.1 Online based forms of children at risk, physical, sexual or emotional

abuse can include bullying via mobile telephones or online with verbal and visual images.

- 17.1.2 Information communication technology (ICT) can be used to facilitate a wide range of abuse and exploitation, including online based physical abuse (such as children constrained to fight each other or filmed being assaulted), radicalisation, sexual exploitation, or exploitation for criminal purposes.
- 17.1.3 If an employee (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) suspects that a child or young person is at risk is being, or has been, subjected to physical, sexual and emotional abuse through the use of information and communication technology (ICT) they must make a referral to the local authority
- 17.1.4 Intelligence must also be shared with the local police force by calling 101, or 999 if there is a risk of immediate harm. (Refer to procedure 13 'Intelligence sharing'). Each police force area will have a dedicated unit overseeing online investigations.
- 17.1.5 If the concern is in regard to the sexual abuse or grooming of a child online, a referral may also be made to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP), which is part of the UK's National Crime Agency (NCA). Where an employee (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) is unable to establish a local police force area in relation to the abuse, a referral to CEOP must be undertaken. CEOP will make the necessary arrangements to liaise with appropriate police force areas.

CEOP is tasked to work both nationally and internationally to bring online child sex offenders, including those involved in the production, distribution, and viewing of child abuse material to the UK courts. Referrals can be made at CEOP Safety Centre

- 17.1.6 The police will often be interested in securing any evidence of online abuse. Employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) must take advice from the police and/or CEOP regarding deleting content and taking steps to preserve or record evidence of online harm (e.g. screenshots).
- 17.1.7 Children North East has an ICT user policy and procedure for employees/volunteers students which applies to all users of Children North East's IT systems including contractors, temporary employees, volunteers service users (i.e. children) parents/carers and partner organisations.

18. DOMESTIC ABUSE

- 18.1.1 For a full definition of domestic abuse, refer to the glossary of terms at the end of this document.**
- 18.1.2 If employees/volunteers suspect a child at risk to be involved in domestic violence or abuse (whether as a victim, bystander or perpetrator), they must discuss this with their Team Manager/volunteer coordinator on the same working day as concerns arise.**
- 18.1.3 If the concerns present an immediate threat to the safety and welfare of the individual, employees/volunteers must take care not to put themselves at risk, and to seek the assistance of the police.**
- 18.1.4 A child who is within a household where there is domestic abuse may be considered a child in need, and therefore a referral to the local authority must be made. This may also be true of a young person under 18 who is perpetrating abuse.**
- 18.1.5 If at any time a view is reached that an incident, or an accumulation of incidents, may be placing a child at risk of significant harm, a referral to the local authority must be made.**

Team Managers must make a supervisory record of any discussions, including decisions on actions that are to be taken, and by whom.

19. HISTORIC ABUSE

- 19.1.1 Historical abuse is an allegation of neglect, physical, sexual, or emotional abuse made by, or on behalf of, someone who is 18 years or over, relating to an incident that took place when the alleged victim was under 18 years old.**
- 19.1.2 If the historical abuse happened within the care of Children North East, or while Children North East was providing a service, employees must discuss with the Operations Director (DSL).**
- 19.1.3 If an employee/volunteer becomes aware of a historic abuse allegation, they must discuss this with their Team Manager/volunteer coordinator in the first instance. This will then be brought to the attention of the Operations Director (DSL) or a member of the Strategic Safeguarding Group, or another Team Manager providing cover, as soon as possible on the same day.**

Employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) must make notes of any conversations regarding historical allegations, these should be recorded onto CiviCRM.

20. MANAGING SAFEGUARDING ALLEGATIONS OR CONCERNS REGARDING EMPLOYEES/VOLUNTEERS OR TRUSTEES

- 20.1.1** If safeguarding allegations or concerns relate to a Children North East employee/volunteer in the first instance this must be discussed with the Operations Director (DSL) or a member of the Strategic Safeguarding Group, or a Team Manager providing cover, as soon as possible on the same day.

This action must be taken when there are allegations or concerns raised, from any source, that an employee/volunteer is behaving in a way that may pose a present or future risk of harm to a baby, child or young person (this may be about their behavior, both within, or outside work).

- 20.1.2** Employees/volunteers must not alert the individual in question of their concerns before taking advice from the Operations Director (DSL), a member of the Strategic Safeguarding Group, or a Team Manager as subsequent enquiries may potentially be compromised.

- 20.1.3** Where there is a specific identified child at risk of significant harm from that employee/volunteer, the children's safeguarding process must run in parallel. The Operations Director (DLS), Strategic Safeguarding Group or Operational Lead will advise on this

- 20.1.4** If an employee/volunteer receives a complaint that features a concern or allegation of potential risk or abuse about an employee/volunteer the complaint process must be suspended.

The Safeguarding policy must take precedence instead.

21. LOW LEVEL CONCERNS

Sometimes we may have low-level concerns regarding the conduct of individuals working for Children North East in any capacity. These may not meet thresholds for reporting formally but they may be indicators of wider or future safeguarding issues. We want to ensure that all concerns - however minor - are addressed appropriately to uphold the integrity of the organisation and safeguard children and young people.

21.1 Definition of a Low-Level Concern

A low-level concern is any behavior that:

- Causes a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'
- Is inconsistent with the Children North East Staff Code of Conduct
- Does not meet the threshold for referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Examples may include:

- Inappropriate conduct outside of work
- Breaches of professional boundaries
- Behaviour that, while not harmful, raises questions about judgment or values

21.2 Reporting and Identification

Low-level concerns may be:

- Reported by staff, volunteers, or others
- Identified through observation or during supervision

All concerns should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as possible.

21.3 Initial Response and Assessment

Upon receiving a low-level concern:

- The DSL and HR will meet to assess the concern.
- They will determine appropriate next steps, which may include:
 - Supporting the line manager to address the issue directly with the individual
 - Involving HR to formalise a support plan

21.4. Support and Intervention

The support plan may include:

- Management advice or guidance
- Performance management measures
- Additional one-to-one meetings
- Targeted training or development
- Other reasonable and proportionate actions

HR will assist the line manager in implementing and monitoring the plan.

21.5. Record-Keeping

A concise and accurate record must be completed for all meetings and actions related to the concern. This record should include:

- Brief context in which the concern arose
- Chronological and factual details of the incident(s)

- Actions taken and outcomes
- Signature, date, and time of entry

Records may be stored electronically or in hard copy and must be retained securely.

21.6. References

Low-level concerns will not be referenced in employment references unless:

- They escalate into significant concerns resulting in dismissal for gross misconduct, or
- In the case of sessional workers, where no further work is offered

The process for responding to Low Level Concerns Can be found at Appendix

22.MISSING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

For a full definition of a missing person, refer to the glossary of terms at the end of this document.

21.1.1 When determining whether a person is missing, employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) must trust their instincts and knowledge of the person's circumstances and the connected/contextual risk factors.

21.1.2 Where appropriate, employees, (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) may contact relevant family, carers, or other professionals to discuss concerns.

21.2 Notifying authorities

21.2.1 If employees, (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) are concerned that someone is missing based on the information they have they must dial 101 and make a missing person's report immediately or attend the local police station in person.

Employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) do not have to wait 24 hours before reporting. They must make a report to the police as soon as they think a person is missing.

21.2.2 Employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) must give police all the important information about the person's vulnerability and any threat to life they are aware of. Dependent on the police force area, they will risk assess and grade the missing report as no apparent risk, low, medium, or high based on the information provided. Each police force area makes its own arrangements regarding how they risk assess missing episodes of children and young people within their local area.

If an employee (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) makes a missing person's

report, they must inform their Team Manager and record all action taken on CiviCRM.

21.2.3 All reports of missing persons must be recorded by the receiving police area. The police will reassess each individual who is reported missing at regular intervals. They will be considered missing until located and their well-being or otherwise is established.

21.2.4 If an employee (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) is in disagreement with the category of risk outlined by the local police force area, in particularly if a 'no apparent risk' or 'low risk' category is assigned in the case of a child or young person. The employee should follow procedure 7. 'escalating a concern'.

21.2.5 Employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) must also inform the allocated social worker for the child, along with other professionals in the network where joint working, a risk assessment or safety plan are in operation.

21.3 Taking action during the period a person is missing

21.3.1 If employees/volunteers are concerned that someone is missing, based on the information they have, they should take steps to locate them (alongside notifying the authorities as outlined above).

21.3.2 People who work with Children North East may go missing in the context of multiple vulnerabilities and risk factors. This may include factors connected to criminal gangs, modern slavery, trafficking or sexual/criminal exploitation.

When at-risk people with multiple vulnerabilities go missing, it is critical employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) work closely with their professional network.

21.3.3 When a person goes missing, the local authority must have oversight of the situation. Local authorities will usually have their own response to reports of concerns that a child or young person has gone missing.

In some cases, employees/volunteers (as part of their training) may need to advocate for the young person to be considered as missing where the local authority is reluctant to do so, or where action is slow or inadequate. An employee will advocate on behalf of a volunteer where necessary. This should be undertaken as per 6. 'escalating a concern'

21.3.4 For missing children and young people, local authority responses may include one or more strategy discussions involving family and key professionals. The meeting aims must be to:

- Assess risks

- Agree a plan to locate the child or young person
- Identify actions to reduce the likelihood of the child or young person going missing in the future
- Ask the network about potential disruption activity (refer to the [glossary of terms](#) for a definition) that may recover the child or prevent future missing episodes.

If employees/volunteers are concerned this is not happening, they must escalate this following the usual processes.

21.3.5 Alongside the professional network, employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) must think contextually and refer to the risk assessment and safety plan to agree next steps.

21.4 Repeated missing episodes or prolonged missing

21.4.1 Where an employee/volunteer has concerns about a pattern of frequent short missing episodes, or when a person is missing in the long-term, they must request regular strategy meetings held by the Team Manager/Volunteer Coordinator

21.4.2 Where the local authority has a disrupting exploitation team, strategy meetings usually take place weekly (where risks are very high) or fortnightly.

21.4.3 If employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) are concerned about potential trafficking or modern slavery, they must request to a first responder agency (police, local authorities, National Crime Agency and the Gangmasters Licensing Authority) that an National Referral Mechanisms [NMR Referral](#) is made.

21.4.4 If employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) are concerned about a lack of proactivity at any stage regarding a person being missing for any length of time, they must escalate their concerns using the usual process.

23.PREVENT (PREVENTING RADICALISATION)

22.1.1 Current legislation requires all agencies working with children and young people to play a role in preventing and deterring their possible radicalisation – whether on grounds of religion, culture, or for other ends. Extremism can take many different forms, including far-right extremism.

22.1.2 While the Prevent duty is a high-profile one, it is quite rare as a practice issue for Children North East employees/volunteers. Certain behaviours or risks for a young person can indicate criminal exploitation as opposed to radicalisation and are far more likely.

Employees/volunteers are strongly encouraged to closely examine available evidence, assess indicators, and discuss these with a Team Manager experienced in work with such issues, or the Strategic Safeguarding Group, before taking a view on the potential of radicalisation risk.

22.1.3 While the nature of the risk to the child or young person may raise security issues, the process for responding to likelihood of significant harm or vulnerability is the same as for any other safeguarding concern.

22.1.4 If an employee (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) becomes aware of a situation or information that a violent act is imminent, or where weapons or other materials may be in the possession of a child or young person, or member of their family, they must take the following steps, volunteers and students will be supported to do this:

- Call 999 as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Contact a Team Manager (or a Team Manager on rota) immediately for guidance and support and consider together whether further information-sharing is required.
- Consideration must be given to the possibility that sharing information about the concerns with the child's parents/carers may increase the risk to the child, and it may therefore not be appropriate to inform the parents/carers at the referral stage.
- Make a referral to the local authority. Whilst many of these referrals will be received by local authorities as early intervention services, the referral must be recorded on CiviCRM.
- Make a referral to the local police prevent team (call 101 for details) and discuss any concerns in relation to assessing risk in relation to safeguarding individuals from suspected extremist or terrorist behavior and what further actions to take. As a result of this you may be required to attend a Channel Panel to see if the criteria is met for intervention to the person through the Channel Panel process. Each local authority was required to establish a Channel Panel under provisions in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

24.SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO MAY HAVE BEEN TRAFFICKED

23.1.1 While for adults it is necessary to identify an element of coercion in the context of trafficking, babies, children and young people are recognised as being unable to consent to their own exploitation.

Therefore, for a baby, child or young person to be recognised as trafficked, employees/volunteers only need to identify that a child has been recruited, moved, or held by individuals for the purpose of exploitation.

23.1.2 If an employee, (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) comes into contact with a child or young person who may have been exploited or trafficked, they must immediately notify local authority social care and the police. Where exploitation (or the intent to exploit) has already taken place, employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) must request that they complete a referral to the National Referral Mechanism NMR Referral.

23.1.3 Referrals to the NRM must take place for all potential victims of trafficking and modern slavery. The individual can be of any nationality including British national children, such as those trafficked for child sexual exploitation (CSE) or child criminal exploitation (CCE).

23.1.4 A referral into the NRM does not replace or supersede established child protection processes, which must continue in tandem.

25. TRANSITIONAL SAFEGUARDING PLANNING

24.1.1 Where employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) are working with a child who is approaching the age of 18 and where safeguarding concerns exist, they must establish with the local authority how the care needs of the young person will be placed at the forefront of any future support planning.

24.1.2 Assessment of care needs must include issues of safeguarding and risk. Care planning must ensure the young person's safety is not put at risk through delays in provision of the services needed to maintain their independence, well-being and choice. Planning must also consider:

- The information and advice the young person has received about adult safeguarding
- Whether advocacy and support needs have been addressed
- Whether a mental capacity assessment is needed and who will undertake it.

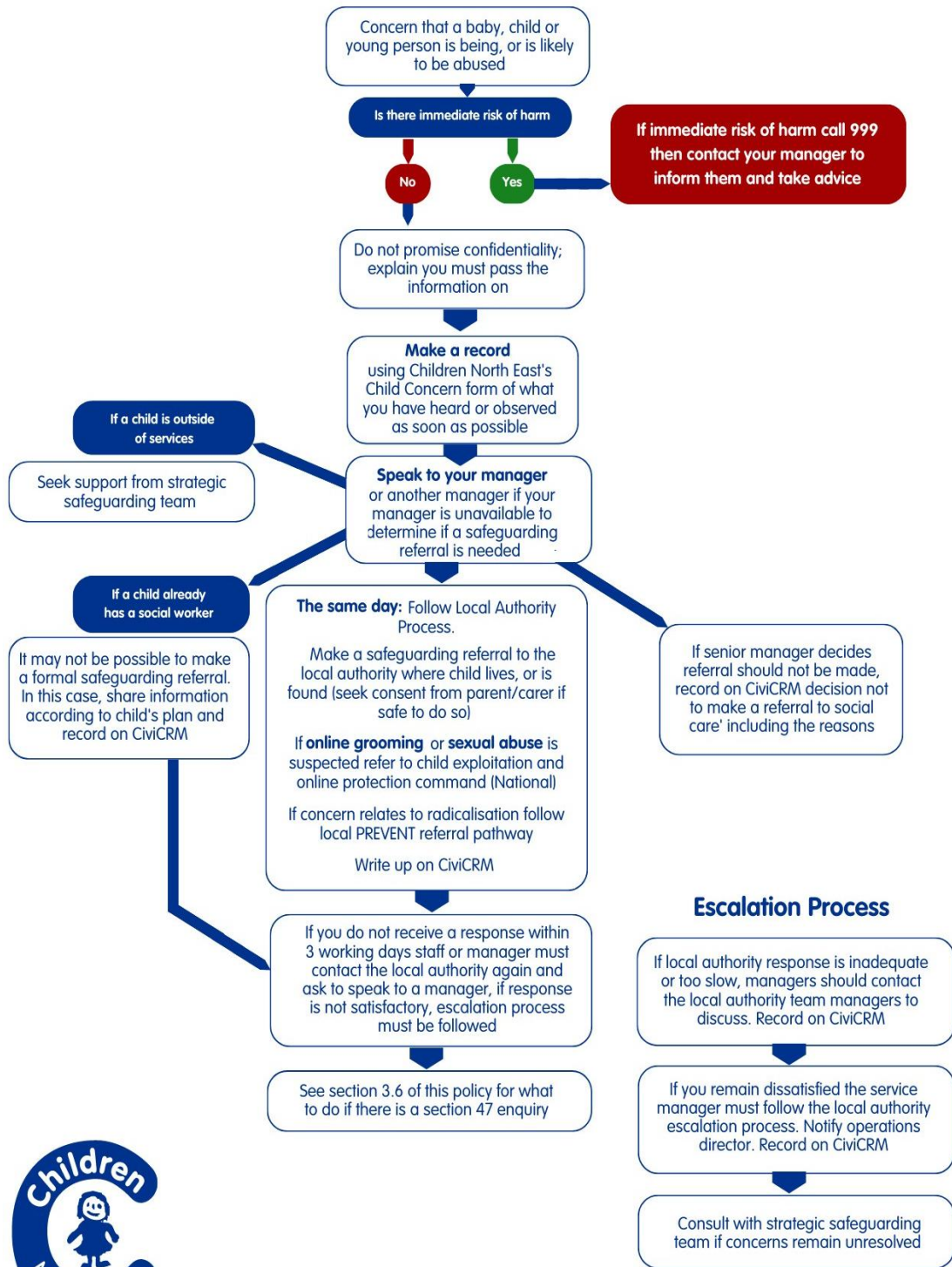
24.1.3 If Children North East's employees (sessional workers, volunteers and students must take advice and be supported by employee) are advocating for the young person, plans must be established for this

provision.

If the young person is a care leaver, they are entitled to support from the local authority's children's social care until the age of 25 years.

- 24.1.4** The Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure must be followed for anyone over the age of 18 years. However, for care leavers, their personal advisor in the relevant local authority team must also need to be made aware of any concerns.
- 24.1.5** Team Managers/Volunteer Coordinators must ensure that any gaps in safeguarding transition planning with other agencies are discussed in supervision with employees/volunteers and that a clear plan is developed on how this will be responded to.
- 24.1.6** Employees/volunteers must inform their Team Manager/Volunteer Coordinator of any responsibilities for safeguarding transition planning that Children North East has taken on. The Team manager is responsible for ensuring such responsibilities are fully covered in the provision of the service.

26.SAFEGUARDING FLOWCHART



27. USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS AND ONLINE REFERRAL FORMS

Newcastle Children's Social Care Initial Response Service

0191 277 2500

Emergency Duty Team

0191 278 7878

Online referral form for professionals [Professional | Newcastle City Council](#)

Northumberland Safeguarding children and young people

24/7 onecall team – 01670 536400

Online referral form – [Northumberland County Council](#)

Sunderland – Together for Children

0191 520 5560 (available 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday - Thursday, 8.30am to 4.30pm Friday)

Out of Hours Team on 0191 520 5552 (also available 24 hours Saturday and Sunday)

Online referral form – [referral form - together for children.docx \(live.com\)](#)

North Tyneside Safeguarding children and young people

Front Door – 0345 2000 109

Online referral form – [SOS Agency Referral v4.pdf \(northtyneside.gov.uk\)](#)

Gateshead Safeguarding children and young people

Phone Gateshead Council's Children's Services (in confidence) on:

0191 433 2653 (office hours: Monday - Friday, 8.30am to 5pm)

0191 477 0844 (out of hours, at night, at weekends and bank holidays)

Online referral form – [Child protection / child in need / child care concern referral - Safeguarding in Gateshead \(gatesheadsafeguarding.org.uk\)](#)

South Tyneside Safeguarding children and young people

0191 424 5010 – Monday to Thursday - 8.30am to 5pm, Friday - 8.30am to 4.30pm

0191 456 2093 – Outside of the above time

Online referral form – [https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/media/5059/Multi-Agency-Referral-](https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/media/5059/Multi-Agency-Referral-Form/doc/MARF_Referral_Final_December_2022_v3.docx?m=638116154950430000)

[Form/doc/MARF Referral Final December 2022 v3.docx?m=638116154950430000](https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/media/5059/Multi-Agency-Referral-Form/doc/MARF_Referral_Final_December_2022_v3.docx?m=638116154950430000)

Durham Safeguarding children and young people

First contact – 03000 267 979 8.30am until 5.00pm, Monday to Thursday and from 8.30am until 4.30pm on a Friday (same number for out of hours, leave message and Emergency Duty Care Officer will call back)

Email: scd@durham.gov.uk

Darlington Safeguarding children and young people
Children's initial Advice Team – 01325 406252
Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team – 01642 524552.

Middlesbrough Safeguarding children and young people
Middlesbrough Multi-Agency Children's Hub – 01642726004
Out of Hours – 01642524552
Email: MiddlesbroughMACH@middlesbrough.gov.uk
Online referral form – [safer-referral-form-with-link-to-threshold-doc.docx \(live.com\)](#)

Redcar and Cleveland Safeguarding children and young people
Children's Social Care – 01642130700
Out of hours – 01642524552
Email: RedcarMACH@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Hartlepool Safeguarding children and young people
Children's Social Care – 01429284284
Out of hours – 01642524552
Email: childrenshub@hartlepool.gov.uk

Stockton Safeguarding children and young people
Children's Social Care – 01429284284
Out of hours – 01642524552
Email: childrenshub@hartlepool.gov.uk

28.GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Description
Adult at risk	A person aged 18 or over who is unable to look after their own well-being, property, rights, or other interests, and are at risk of harm (either from another person's behavior or their own behavior) due to disability, illness, physical or mental infirmity.
Age assessments and age disputes	Where the Home Office or local authorities dispute the age stated by an unaccompanied child or young person arriving in the UK. Young people prematurely judged to be adults miss out on the vital support and protection they are entitled to as children under UK law. They are housed with adults and they do not have the access to the care and education they would receive as children. They may be detained and subject to legal processes as adults. This may put them at high risk of further harm and potential

further trauma.

**Home Office policy states that a decision should only be made to treat the claimant as an adult if either:
A local authority Merton-compliant age assessment has been completed by a local authority, finding the claimant to be 18 or over, which the Home Office has agreed with after giving significant weight to the assessment and taking all reliable evidence into account .**

Two Home Office members of staff – one at least of chief immigration officer or higher executive officer grade – have independently assessed that the claimant is an adult because their physical appearance and demeanor very strongly suggests that they are 25 years of age or over

There is credible and clear documentary evidence that they are 18 years of age or over – unless the claimant’s physical appearance/demeanor ‘very strongly suggests that they are significantly over 18 years of age’, they should be treated as a child until a holistic assessment can be made by a local authority.

A local authority’s assessment must be as full and comprehensive as possible, and conducted in a clear, transparent and fair manner applying best practice guidance. The process includes both interviews and research and should be undertaken by two social workers who have been trained in age assessments. Children and young people should also have the opportunity to have an Appropriate Adult present in their age assessment interview.

Refer to procedure 10. ‘Age assessments and age disputes’ for more information.

Appropriate Adult

The role of the Appropriate Adult is to safeguard the interests, rights, entitlements, and welfare of children and young people who are suspected of a criminal offence, by ensuring they are treated in a fair and just manner and are able to participate effectively in police processes.

A child cannot be interviewed by the police without an Appropriate Adult. Where there is no parent or family member, often local Youth Offending Services or Local Authority Social Workers who have undertaken Appropriate Adult training will fulfil this role. A

Children North East employee trained as an Appropriate Adult can also fulfil the role.

Children also have the right to an Appropriate Adult during an age assessment process.

Asylum seeker

Someone who has arrived in the UK and asked the government for asylum. Until they receive a decision as to whether or not they will be granted refugee status, they are known as an asylum seeker. In the UK, this means they do not have the same rights as a refugee or those a British citizen would.

Anyone seeking protection is legally entitled to stay in the UK while awaiting a decision on their asylum claim. The right to claim asylum is embedded in international law.

Young people seeking asylum are very vulnerable. They are in need of a good immigration solicitor, safe accommodation suitable to their age, and a supportive social worker. Without these, young people seeking asylum are often isolated, at risk of abuse or exploitation, without access to appropriate services and education, unsuitably housed, destitute, and lack any real support from children's social care. These factors are all likely to impact on their mental health and well-being.

Care Act 2014

The Care Act 2014 provides a clear legal framework for how agencies work in partnership with other services to protect adults at risk. This places adult safeguarding on the same statutory footing as child safeguarding.

The Care Act defines an individual as an adult at risk, and states that specific adult safeguarding duties apply, to any adult who:

Has care and support needs

Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect

Is unable to protect themselves because of their care and support needs.

In its definition of adults who should receive a safeguarding response, the Care Act also includes people who are victims of certain types of crime. For example, those who are experiencing sexual exploitation, domestic abuse or modern slavery. However, an individual would only be defined as an adult at risk where there are care and support needs that mean they are unable to protect themselves.

Child criminal exploitation

When an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate, or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity. This may be:

In exchange for something the victim needs or wants
For the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator
Through violence or the threat of violence.

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology (refer to 15. 'Criminal gangs and networks' for more information).

Child in need (Section 17 (10) of the Children Act 1989)

A child or young person is considered a "child in need" if:

They are unlikely to achieve, maintain (or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining) a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him/her of services by a local authority
Their health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of such services
They have a disability.

Where employees are referring a child in need as defined by the Children Act 1989 to local authority children's social care, they should wherever possible seek parental consent.

Child Protection Conference (CPC)

A meeting where safeguarding partners decide whether a child needs a child protection plan.

The local authority will call a child protection conference when they have investigated concerns about child abuse and they believe the child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

A lead social worker and members of the core group (refer to 'core group' definition in this glossary of terms) will be agreed at this meeting. The first conference is called the Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC).

Child protection plan (CPP) The ICPC may decide that a child needs a child protection plan. The plan is developed to ensure the child is safe from harm and to prevent further suffering. The plan will also focus on promoting the child's health and development, and will also include actions to support the wider family so that they can better safeguard and promote the welfare of their child (provided this is in the best interests of the child).

Children's service The department within a local council responsible for early help, children in need, children in need of protection, looked-after children and care leavers.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) A form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity. This may be:

In exchange for something the victim needs or wants
For the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Complex and organised abuse Abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of abused children. It may take place in any setting. The adults involved may be acting in concert, acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority (such as a teacher, coach, faith group leader, or in a celebrity position) to access and recruit children for abuse.

Such abuse can occur both as part of a network of abuse across a family or community and within institutions such as residential settings, boarding schools, day care, or in other provisions such as youth services, sports clubs, faith groups and voluntary groups. Organised abuse may also occur online or via phones, games consoles and computers. Although in most cases of complex and organised abuse, the abuser(s) is an adult, it is also possible for children and young people to be the perpetrators of such harm, with or without adult abusers.

Complex safeguarding Criminal activity or criminal behavior involving children at risk when there is exploitation and/or a clear implied safeguarding concern. This includes:
serious organised crime/gangs/threat to life
honor based abuse/forced marriage
child/young person sexual exploitation
child/young person criminal exploitation
preventing violent extremism
modern slavery/trafficking
female genital mutilation (FGM).

Contextual safeguarding An approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighborhoods, through their networks, at school and online can feature violence and abuse.

These safeguarding threats can take a variety of forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats including exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as those operating across county lines, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation, and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation.

Core group A small group of key professionals and family members who meet within 10 days of an initial child protection conference, and then regularly while the child has a child protection plan to ensure it is effective.

Criminal gang or network Some children or young people working with Children North East are involved in a criminal gang or a wider criminal network. A gang is usually considered to be a group of people that see themselves (and are seen by others) as a noticeable group, and engage in a range of criminal activity and violence. They may also have any or all of the following features:

Identifying with, or laying a claim over, territory
Are in conflict with other, similar gangs

If the majority of offending is on a lower, non-violent level, this would be considered a peer group rather than a gang.

A criminal network is a group of individuals involved in persistent criminality for some form of personal gain. This includes crime for profit and/or to gain or demonstrate status, which is causing significant harm

to the community.

Disruption

A term used within contextual safeguarding work to refer to activity that aims to interrupt current harm or exploitation taking place. Disruption activity attempts to answer the question, 'what can be done to change the environment for the child or young person at risk that will reduce or minimise the safeguarding risk?'.

This question is best answered at multi-agency strategy meetings where agencies can explore how each can play a role in disrupting risk for a particular child or young person.

Police and local authority children's social care services have statutory powers to disrupt activity that is exploiting a child or young person. These powers vary according to the circumstances and are set out in the [Home Office's Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit](#).

Domestic abuse

Any incident; or pattern of incidents, of controlling, coercive, or threatening behavior, violence, and abuse between those aged 16 or over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional abuse. In some cases, young people can domestically abuse their parents and/or siblings, or adults at risk.

Domestic abuse often features:

Controlling behavior, which is defined by a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent, by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape, and regulating their everyday behavior

Coercive behavior, which is an act, or a pattern of acts, of assault, threats, humiliation, and intimidation, or other abuse, that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

Early help

Providing support early in the life of a problem, at any point in a person's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children and adult's at risk than reacting later. Effective help relies

upon local organisations and agencies working together to:

Identify children, families, and adults who would benefit from early help.

Undertake an assessment of what kind of early help is require.

Provide early help services to address the assessed needs of a child, adult, or their family that focuses on activity to improve the outcomes for the child or adult.

Each local authority is required to produce a “threshold document”, which describes the continuum of help and support available for a child, young person, or their family both above and below the statutory threshold.

After reading local threshold information, a Children North East employee can initiate an early help assessment for a child or young person they are working with, or contribute to one initiated by another agency. While local arrangements may vary, there will be an individual or team within the local authority who can offer advice about early help and register early help assessments within their area.

Events

Children North East runs meetings and events with supporters and children and young people in attendance.

Such meetings must be planned for, risk assessed, and recorded appropriately. Children North East has a set of youth engagement principles to guide events involving children, young people and adults at risk.

If a safeguarding concern arises at an event, employees must follow the safeguarding steps outlined in this document.

Local safeguarding (children)

Local safeguarding arrangements are led by three safeguarding partners: local authorities, chief officers of police, and health leaders.

Local safeguarding partners make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs. A threshold document that sets out the local criteria for action should be published in a way

that is transparent, accessible, and easily understood.
This should include:

The process for early help assessment and the type and level of early help services to be provided.

The criteria, including the level of need for when a child should be referred to the local authority children's social care for assessment and for statutory services as a:

- Child in need (Section 17 Children Act 1989)
- Child in need of protection (Section 47 Children Act 1989) where there is a reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Looked-after children: Local authority terms

The following terms are used by local authorities in reference to looked-after children:

Accommodated (Section 20): when a child is looked after by foster carers or in residential care, and their parents/holder of parental responsibility has agreed to this voluntarily, or they are over 16 years and have agreed. The child's parents maintain full parental responsibility when their child is accommodated under section 20

Adoption: transfers all legal parental rights and responsibilities for a child to the adoptive parents. The birth parents of the child lose all legal access to their child once an adoption order is approved by the court. Adopted children may keep in contact with some of their birth relatives if agreed during the adoption process, as long as this is in the child's best interests (the child's safety and well-being is the first priority).

Care leaver: a young person who has previously been in the care of the local authority and is living independently. There are many regulations around the status of a care leaver depending on at what age and for how long they were in local authority care.

Eligible child: a child aged 16 and 17 who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who is still being looked after. Eligible children must be provided with a personal advisor, who will undertake a needs assessment and, based on identified needs, will draw up a pathway plan to outline the agreed action

Extension to 25 years old: where an individual who is

under 25 years old, and who was previously open to the leaving care team under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, returns for support. This is done by contacting the leaving care team

Relevant child: a child aged 16 and 17 who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who has left care. This also includes young people who were detained (e.g. in a youth offending institution or hospital) when they turned 16, but who were looked after immediately before being detained

Former relevant child: a young person over 18 who was previously "eligible" or "relevant" but whose case was closed, for any reason. Local authorities support this group until aged 21

Former relevant child pursuing education: a former relevant child who is planning to continue education or training they can ask the council for support. If eligible, the local authority can support this group until the young person's 25th birthday

Qualifying child: any young person under the age of 21 (or 24 if in education or training) who stops being looked after, accommodated in a variety of settings, or privately fostered, after the age of 16. This also includes young people who are under a special guardianship order. Qualifying children are entitled to the following from children's services:

- 'Keeping in touch' advice and support**
- Payment for accommodation during college or university holidays (if young person is studying full-time away from home, up to the age of 25)**
- Additional financial support for expenses related to their education, work or training up to the age of 25 (in some circumstances only).**

Care Order (CO): where a child is subject to a court order under Section 38 (interim) or a Section 31 (full) care order and is looked after by the local authority. This may be in foster care or residential care, or they could be placed at home with parents. The local authority shares parental responsibility with the parents or whomever has parental responsibility (this may be a family member or friend who has sought parental responsibility through the court)

Child Arrangements Order (CAO): introduced under the Children Act 2014, and decides where a child lives,

when a child spends time with each parent, and any other contact that takes place. The child's mother, father, or anyone else with parental responsibility can apply for this order. The CAO replaces residence orders and contact orders (although some older children may be subject to these orders).

Parental Responsibility (PR): the legal rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority a parent has for their child. A person who has PR has the right to make decisions about the child's care and upbringing.

Private fostering: an arrangement whereby a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if the child has a disability) is placed for 28 days or more in the care of someone who is not the child's parent(s) or a connected person.

A connected person is defined as a 'relative, friend, or other person connected with a child'. The latter is likely to include people who have a pre-existing relationship with the child, for example a teacher who knows the child in a professional capacity.

Private foster carers can be from the extended family, for example a cousin or a great aunt, but cannot be a close relative. This is a private arrangement made between a parent and a carer, although the local authority should always be informed of these arrangements.

Respite care (also known as "short breaks"): there are two forms of respite care depending on if the individual is a child or adult.

For children: a form of short-term substitute care provided by someone other than the parents or usual carers for a child. The 1989 Children Act provides a clear framework for the provision of short-term care known as respite care. The Act requires children to be consulted about their needs, the services to be provided if a child is cared for using respite care. Local authority children's social care services will draw up a care plan, visit the child from time to time, and review the placement(s) on a regular basis. Respite care can take different forms, such as support for the child to undertake particular activities, or overnight care.

For adults: full-time carers of adults with complex needs may be entitled to respite care services in their local area. The main types of respite care are day care centres, home care from a paid carer, a short stay in a care home, respite holidays, and sitting services. Adult social care undertake a carer's assessment to

determine the requirements and best options.

Special Guardianship Order (SGO): an order of the court under the Children Act 1989 that grants the holder(s) parental responsibility over a child until the child reaches the age of 18. The SGO enables the special guardian to make day to day decisions on behalf of the child.

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The single point of contact for all safeguarding and early intervention concerns, and requests for support regarding children and young people. It is also the single point of contact for triaging and assessing all safeguarding concerns.

MASH brings together safeguarding professionals from services that have contact with children, young people, adults and families, making the best possible use of their combined knowledge and information to keep people safe from harm. Many local areas now operate a MASH for both children and adults' safeguarding, however it should be noted that different local areas will refer to the MASH with different terminology.

Mental capacity

Some people have difficulties making decisions, which is referred to as "lacking capacity". Under the Mental Capacity Act (2005) there are laws governing who can make decisions to safeguard adults at risk of abuse on someone else's behalf. An assessment of someone's capacity is an integral part of any safeguarding adult's assessment. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 states:

'A person lacks capacity in relation to a matter if at the material time they are unable to make a decision for themselves in relation to the matter because of an impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain. Further, a person is not able to make a decision if they are unable to:

- Understand the information relevant to the decision
- Retain that information long enough for them to make the decision
- Use or weigh that information as part of the process of making the decision
- Communicate their decision (whether by talking, using sign language or by any other means such as muscle movements, blinking an eye or squeezing a hand).'

Missing person Anyone whose whereabouts is unknown, whatever the circumstances or length of their disappearance. The person may, for example, have missed an agreed appointment, or they may have not been seen or heard from in the service for a few days.
Refer to procedure 3.25, 'Missing children, young people and adults at risk' for instructions relating to missing people.

Modern slavery The recruitment, movement, harboring or receiving of children, women or men through the use of force, coercion, abuse of vulnerability, deception or other means for the purpose of exploitation.

National Referral Mechanism (NRM) A framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and/or human trafficking. Only staff at designated First Responders Organisations, such as police and local authorities, can make a referral into the NRM.

Referral forms are sent to a Single Competent Authority (SCA) within the Home Office, who aim to make a reasonable grounds decision within five working days.

Individuals who are recognised as a potential victim of modern slavery through the NRM have access to specialist tailored support, which may include access to advice, accommodation, protection, and independent emotional and practical help.

Online abuse and digital safeguarding Online abuse is abuse via technology, and can occur to children and young people across any digital platform or within any online space.

Digital safeguarding means:

- Recognising the internet as a protective factor, enabling connection, learning, networks of support, and information
- Promoting safe online behavior to children and young people, and their families

- **Listening to children and young people when they talk about their experiences in the digital world**
- **Taking children and young people, and their families' online activity and networks into account when assessing, planning and providing support**
- **Ensuring that any digital platforms promoted or used with children and young people are safe**
- **Ensuring that online behavior with children and young people is safe.**

Practice review

A review that takes place when a child or young person suffers a serious injury or death and there are concerns about the circumstances of the death and/or multi-agency working within the area.

If one of Children North East's services has been involved with a child or young person who is the subject of a review, employees may be asked to contribute.

Children North East is committed to full and meaningful cooperation and participation with any such review.

Prevent Duty

A strategy to reduce the threat of terrorism in the UK by working actively to stop individuals from supporting terrorism or becoming terrorists.

Prevent Duty is a legal requirement of all staff working in a school or registered Early Years environment in the United Kingdom. Children North East believes it should be the responsibility of everybody, regardless of their role, to pay attention to individuals who they believe may be at a greater risk of being radicalised, and to report any concerns they have to the police or local authority.

Prevent Duty is a form of safeguarding and an extension of the policies that should have already been in place prior to the Prevent Duty strategy's introduction.

Refugee

In the UK, a person becomes a refugee when the government agrees that an individual who has applied

for asylum meets the definition in the Refugee Convention. The person is recognised as a refugee and is issued with refugee status documentation. Usually refugees in the UK are given five years' leave to remain. They must then apply for further leave, although their status as a refugee is not limited to five years.

The UN Refugee Convention defines a refugee as follows:

'Owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country' (Article 1, 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees)

Once a young person is granted refugee status, their legal status is more certain, however their support-needs can be very similar to those of asylum seekers. Refugee young people at risk often struggle with mental health problems, insecure accommodation, destitution, and safety concerns associated with unsuitable accommodation.

Refer to the 'Asylum seeker' definition in this glossary of terms for more information.

Risk assessment

An analysis of what could cause harm in a piece of work with a child or young person (either an individual or a group). In a risk assessment, risks are described alongside the steps needed in order to prevent these harms. This process includes:

The identification of hazards (anything that might cause harm)

Considering who might be harmed and how

Evaluating the risk (the chance, high or low that someone could be harmed by the hazards, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be)

Deciding what precautions, or risk mitigations, are necessary.

Risk assessments are recorded, reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

Sexting

Sexting is when people share a sexual message and/or

a naked or semi-naked image, video or text message with another person. It's also known as nude image sharing.

Children and young people may consent to sending a nude image of themselves. They can also be forced or coerced into sharing images by their peers or adults online.

If a child or young person originally shares the image consensually, they have no control over how other people might use it.

If the image is shared around peer groups it may lead to bullying and isolation. Perpetrators of abuse may circulate a nude image more widely and use this to blackmail a child and/or groom them for further sexual abuse.

It's a criminal offence to create or share explicit images of a child, even if the person doing it is a child. If sexting is reported to the police, they will make a record but may decide not take any formal action against a young person.

Schools

Schools have regular contact with children and young people, which puts their staff in a strong position to identify signs of abuse and neglect.

Children North East employees must note that Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges (Sept 2018) requires all schools and colleges to:

- Make a referral to the relevant local authority if they have a concern about a child's welfare**
- Name a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will provide support to employees to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services such as children's social care**
- Take part in multi-agency working in order to plan for safeguarding individual children**
- Have a child protection/safeguarding policy and process, which names the duties of the DSL.**

At the point of commencing work with a school or college, all Children North East employees and

volunteers must locate and read the school's child protection/safeguarding policy, be clear on the safeguarding process, and know which employee is the DSL.

Section 47 enquiry

An enquiry established by a local authority after a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

Child protection enquiries S47 (1) of the Children Act 1989 states, 'Where a local authority have reasonable cause to think that a child who lives or is found in the area and is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the authority shall make such enquiries as they consider necessary to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.'

Serious Incident Management

Serious incidents are relevant for Children North East services working in partnership with the NHS. The NHS Serious Incident Framework defines serious incidents as, 'adverse events, where the consequences to patients, families and carers, staff or organisations are so significant or the potential for learning is so great, that a heightened level of response is justified.'

Serious incidents include:

- Unexpected or avoidable injury to one or more people, which results in serious harm
- Unexpected or avoidable injury to one or more people, which requires further health care treatment in order to prevent death or serious harm
- Actual or alleged abuse or neglect
- An incident (or series of incidents) that prevents, or threatens to prevent, an organisation's ability to continue to deliver an acceptable quality of healthcare services, including but not limited to:
 - Failures in the security, integrity, accuracy or availability of information/or information governance issues
- Property damage or security breach or concern
- Systematic failure to provide an acceptable standard of safe care.

Strategy discussion A discussion held with children’s social care, police and health partners to determine next steps when the local authority receives a referral regarding a child who is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

Transitional safeguarding Safeguarding young people through the period in which they approach their 18th birthday, and therefore when they may start to access adult services.

While a child legally becomes an adult at the age of 18 years, experience of adversity in childhood can delay and extend the process of adolescent development. Young people who Children North East works with are particularly vulnerable to harm, where the effects of child abuse and other harm can last well into adulthood.

Many support services have a simply defined remit of working with those under or over 18 years of age. Assumptions about individual capacity and maturity (for example, for decision making or ability to live independently) are often inherent in adult services.

Safeguarding young people through this transition period can be challenging, and many adult services are not well suited to the needs of adolescents. Some local authority and safeguarding partner areas are developing new approaches to working with adolescents in transition – however this is not yet uniform.

Third-party suppliers Any person or company who Children North East has a contract with, who is not an employee, a volunteer, or agency staff. This could include, but is not limited to:
A professional with a particular skill (such as a filmmaker, photographer, music, or drama specialist)
A Consultant
An outdoor activity provider.

In the course of their work with Children North East, third-party suppliers may come into contact with children and young people. Therefore, in drafting third-party supplier contracts, safeguarding matters must be taken into consideration.

The employee making the contract is responsible for

ensuring all safeguarding precautions have been undertaken. This includes:

- A DBS check**
- Insurance**
- Suitable risk assessments for all activities**

Threshold document

A document published by a local authority setting out the local criteria for safeguarding actions in a way that is transparent, accessible, and easily understood.

Threshold documents should include:

The process for early help assessment and the type and level of early help services provided

The criteria (including the level of need) for referring to the local authority children's social care for assessment and for statutory services as a child in need or child in need of protection, where there is a reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

29.STRATEGIC SAFEGUARDING GROUP

Members:

- **Operations and Development Director**
- **Operational Lead – Communities**
- **Operational Lead – Therapeutic Services**
- **Operational Lead – Poverty Proofing**
- **Head of HR**

Appendix 1 Low-Level Concerns Procedure

A **low-level concern** refers to any behavior—however minor—that causes unease or raises a ‘nagging doubt’ about whether someone working for **Children North East**, in any capacity, is acting in a manner inconsistent with the organisation’s **Code of Conduct**. Importantly, a low-level concern does **not** imply the issue is insignificant.

Identifying Low-Level Concerns

A colleague’s behavior may be considered a low-level concern if:

- It is inconsistent with Children NE’s Code of Conduct , even if it does not meet the threshold for referral to the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**.
- It is in relation to **inappropriate conduct outside of work**.

Responding to a Low-Level Concern

When a low-level concern is reported or identified:

- The **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** and HR will meet to determine appropriate actions.
- The individual’s **line manager** will be supported by **HR** to develop a formal support plan. This may include:
 - Management guidance
 - Performance management strategies
 - Additional one-to-one meetings
 - Targeted training
 - Other reasonable interventions

Record-Keeping

- A **concise and accurate record** must be maintained for all meetings and actions related to the concern (see below). This record should include:
 - o Context in which the concern arose
 - o Chronological details of the incident(s)
 - o Precise and factual information
 - o Signature, date, and time of entry
 - o Records may be kept electronically or in hard copy.

References and Disciplinary Action

Low-level concerns will **not** be included in employment references unless:

- They escalate into more serious issues resulting in **dismissal for gross misconduct**, or
- In the case of **sessional workers**, where no further work is offered
- Failure to comply with this procedure may result in **disciplinary action**, up to and including **summary dismissal**.

Safeguarding Concern Form – For Internal Records Only

DATE

Concern

Overview of concern: please include all relevant and appropriate details, e.g. names, dates, times, summarise the event and why it was raised as a concern.

Action Taken

Description of any action taken, persons responsible for taking action, who was informed/advised of the concern and any changes made to prevent further occurrences (if possible).

Outcome

Description of the outcome and any next steps to be taken, who by and deadline for completion.

Name:

Job Title:

Signature:

Date:

Charity number: 222041

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Because growing
up can be hard