



Families Growing Together
Heidi Pannell

Families Growing Together Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure

I believe that everyone I come into contact with regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin are safeguarded from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination, whether deliberate or inadvertent, in accordance with written policies and procedures.

The purpose and scope of this policy statement

I am a sole trader providing training, consultation and therapeutic interventions to families, parents and professionals.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To protect the children, young people and families who receive services from me.

Legal Framework

In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, I will act in accordance with the following legislation and government guidance;

- Children Acts 1989
- The Protection of Children Act 2004
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual exploitation (DCFS 2019)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2015) and guidance (2018)
- Information Sharing: advice for practitioners (DfE 2015)
- National action plan to tackle child abuse linked to faith or belief (2015)
- Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan, DfE 2011
- Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual exploitation (DfE 2017)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused guidance - March 2015
- Revised Prevent Guidance (Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015) to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism
- The Common Assessment Framework (CAF)
- Procedures set out by the local Safeguarding Children Boards
- Social Work England Standards of conduct, performance and ethics



Key Principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part. We all have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.
- For services to be effective they must have a child-centred approach and be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.
- I will aim to keep children safe by:
- Valuing them, listening to them and respecting them as individuals
- Implementing child protection best practices
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, vulnerable adults, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of those we need to protect
- Sharing information about safeguarding children and good practice with children and adults
- Using my Safeguarding procedures to address concerns and share relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involve children, young people and their families appropriately
- Recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance see GDPR Policy and Procedure (more information about this is available from the Information Commissioner's Office: ico.org.uk/for-organisations)
- Making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- Using my procedures to manage any allegations against me or other professionals; see Allegations Policy
- Using my procedures to deal with any complaints; see Complaints Procedure
- Ensuring that I provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people and adults by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance; see Care and Control and Health and Safety Policy and Procedure.

Safeguarding Policy Statement;

- I commit to ensure that safeguarding and child protection is central to all the work I undertake with children and families.
- I commit to create an environment conducive to the safeguarding of children
- I commit to follow the LSCB guidelines for safeguarding children and young people
- I commit to follow the statutory guidance around safeguarding and sharing information, in Working Together 2018
- I commit to implement and follow my Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure, when required.
- I commit to undertake Safeguarding training every 3 years.
- I commit to maintain an up-to-date log of all safeguarding incidents and action taken
- I commit to ensure there is an annual review of my Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and that the policy is available



Families Grow Together Safeguarding Procedure

The following procedures prescribe the actions to be taken in the event of concerns about safeguarding children.

If there is suspicion or disclosure of harm to a child, the following steps should be undertaken.

1. Any incidents, allegations or suspicions of abuse will be fully and accurately recorded
2. Any incidents, allegations or suspicions will be discussed with the family and consent to share information sought. See below
3. The matter will be discussed with the referring social worker.
4. A risk analysis will be undertaken with the referring social worker to decide whether the incident meets the threshold for a referral to the local authority.
5. The referring social worker will be involved in co-ordinating action and deciding who will make the referral to the local authority safeguarding team. The local authority has a statutory responsibility to make further enquiries in relation to concerns about the wellbeing of any child, that meet their thresholds.
6. Any referral to the local authority will be made in writing and followed up
7. When a decision is made not to make a safeguarding referral, evidence of this decision making will be clearly recorded along with the recommended steps needed.
8. If there is no social worker involved with the case the incident, the risk assessment will involve peer therapists supporting the risk assessment and decision making process
9. Records of all discussions with other professionals and a chronology of events and actions will be documented and stored securely and confidentially.
10. The parents should be involved throughout the process, as appropriate; being kept informed of what is happening and what they should do.
11. For serious and critical incidents, I will inform and liaise with Social Work England as required.

Consent

Seeking consent should always be the first option before sharing information.

Sharing information without parental consent will only be undertaken when I have a statutory duty to do so because;

- There is evidence of significant risk of harm to a child/young person by doing so.

I will not seek consent if it will

1. Prejudice the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime
2. Lead to unjustified delay in making enquiries

Responsibility for Policy Heidi Pannell

Policy Operational Date 1.2.24

Policy review date 2.8.27



Appendix 1

Definitions

Types of abuse and neglect

- 'Child abuse and neglect' is a generic term encompassing all ill treatment of children including serious physical and sexual assaults as well as cases where the standard of care does not adequately support the child's health or development
- Children may be abused or neglected through the infliction of harm, or through the failure to act to prevent harm
- Abuse can occur in a family or an institutional or community setting, and the perpetrator may or may not be known to the child
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 sets out definitions and examples of the four broad categories of abuse which are used for the purposes of registration:
 - Neglect
 - Physical abuse
 - Sexual abuse and
 - Emotional abuse (including domestic violence)

These categories overlap and an abused child does frequently suffer more than one type of abuse.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may take many forms e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating and bullying.

It may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child. This unusual and potentially dangerous form of abuse is now described as fabricated or induced illness in a child.

It should be noted that a bruise on a baby who cannot yet crawl or walk is very unusual and can be a serious cause for concern (it may be due to an underlying health condition, blood disease or an infection) but this should be immediately discussed with the Clinical Director and referral considered to the appropriate local authority safeguarding service.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development, and may involve:

- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person Imposing developmentally inappropriate expectations
- Causing children to feel frightened or in danger



- Domestic violence - the evidence of a child(ren) witnessing or being caught in the crossfire of domestic violence
- Exploitation or corruption of children
- Bullying or intimidation – It involves the abuse and/or intimidation by a person, people or an organisation against another or others. Children may bully other children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in most types of ill treatment of children, though emotional abuse may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening and includes penetrative (i.e. vaginal or anal rape or buggery) and non-penetrative acts.

It may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic materials, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexual inappropriate ways.

Sexual abuse also includes sexual exploitation – children or young people being sexually exploited in the community and female genital mutilation.

Neglect

Neglect involves the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, medical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development.

Neglect may involve failure to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failure to protect from physical harm or danger or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs.

Neglect may include children not attending or missing from school.

Safeguarding Disabled Children

Any child with a disability is by definition a 'child in need' under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Disabled children are more vulnerable to significant harm through physical, sexual, emotional abuse and / or neglect than children who do not have a disability. The presence of multiple disabilities increases the risk of abuse and neglect.

Safeguards for disabled children are essentially the same as for non-disabled children. Particular attention should be paid to promoting a high level of awareness of the risks of harm, high standards of practice, and awareness of barriers to communication that may make it difficult for the child or young person to tell others what is happening.

Where there are concerns about the welfare of a disabled child, they should be acted upon in accordance with the guidance, in the same way as with any other child.

The national guidance, Safeguarding Disabled Children 2009 – Practice Guidance, provides a framework of collaborative multi-agency responses to safeguard disabled children.

Domestic Violence



Domestic violence is defined by the Home Office as: 'Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass psychological, physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse.

Controlling behaviour is 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 behaviour.

Coercive behaviour 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.

The Government definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group. It has been widely understood for some time that coercive control is a core part of domestic violence. It is important to recognise coercive control as a complex pattern of overlapping and repeated abuse, perpetrated within a context of power and control.

The main characteristic of domestic violence is that the behaviour is intentional and is calculated to exercise power and control within a relationship.

Children of all ages living with a parent, most often the mother, who is experiencing domestic violence, are vulnerable to significant harm through physical, sexual, emotional abuse and / or neglect. The legal definition of significant harm includes "the harm that children suffer by seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another, particularly in the home".

Situations of domestic violence may also include women or girls who perpetrate violence against men and boys, within same sex relationships and from a child. Professionals should be aware of the possibility that teenage girls or boys could be experiencing violence within an intimate partner relationship.

Children and Young people vulnerable to Child Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan, DfE 2011

There are six key points to emphasise in this definition which will affect the understanding of CSE:

- CSE as a form of abuse can apply to all children and young people, not just those under the age of consent – children aged 16 or 17 can still be sexually exploited, and children from any ethnic or religious background can be victims;



- CSE can occur in a wide range of relationships, contexts and exploitative situations, including bullying;
- There is typically a power imbalance between perpetrator and victim;
- The victim commonly has limited choice – resulting from their various vulnerabilities – though may not recognise the limitations of their ability to choose;
- Increasingly, the use of technology (particularly mobile phones and social networking) is involved in incidences of CSE.
- A victim cannot consent to their abuse: children are not responsible for being sexually exploited.

There are many characteristic warning signs that a child may be being sexually exploited. These include, but are not limited to:

- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or education or not taking part in education
- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Having older 'boyfriends' or 'girlfriends'
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections
- Mood swings or changes in emotional wellbeing
- Drug and alcohol misuse; and
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour

If sexual exploitation is suspected or disclosed there is guidance in Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual exploitation (DCFS 2017)

Children missing from school

A minimum standard of safety should be afforded to children not attending school. This includes children who are: registered with schools and go missing from school, children who have poor attendance, children who are not registered with a school and children educated at home where there are concerns about their welfare.

When a child is absent or missing from school, they could be at risk of significant harm. The child/ young person may be absent or missing because they are suffering physical, sexual or emotional abuse and/or neglect. It might mean the child/young person is being sexually exploited – see below under 'Children and young people missing from care and vulnerable to sexual exploitation' Children who are absent or missing from school may also be missing from care or home.

Vulnerable Adolescents

As well as threats to the welfare of children from within their families, children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including: exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime



groups such as county lines; trafficking, online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Extremist groups make use of the internet to radicalise and recruit and to promote extremist materials. Any potential harmful effects to individuals identified as vulnerable to extremist ideologies or being drawn into terrorism should also be considered.

Assessments of children in such cases should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life and are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Children who may be alleged perpetrators should also be assessed to understand the impact of contextual issues on their safety and welfare. Interventions should focus on addressing these wider environmental factors, which are likely to be a threat to the safety and welfare of a number of different children who may or may not be known to local authority children's social care. Assessments of children in such cases should consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of each child. They should look at the parental capacity to support the child, including helping the parents and carers to understand any risks and support them to keep children safe and assess potential risk to the child.

The Children Act 1989 promotes the view that all children and their parents should be considered as individuals and that family structures, culture, religion, ethnic origins and other characteristics should be respected.

Spirit possession or witchcraft

Spirit possession is when parents, families and the child believe that an evil force has entered a child and is controlling them; the belief includes the child being able to use the evil force to harm others. In such cases, the child might be involved in the parent's ideation.

A child may suffer emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect if they are labelled and treated as being possessed with an evil spirit. Significant harm may occur when an attempt is made to 'exorcise' or 'deliver' the evil spirit from the child.

Dismissing the belief may be harmful to the child involved.

For supplementary guidance, please refer to the Government's guidance 'Safeguarding Children from Abuse Linked to a Belief in Spirit Possession: DfE 2012.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

The World Health Organisation defines FGM as: "all procedures (not operations) which involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons" FGM is a criminal offence in the UK. It is also illegal to take a child abroad to undergo FGM. A child for whom FGM is planned is at risk of significant harm through physical and emotional abuse. Where a child is thought to be at risk of FGM, practitioners need to act quickly before the child is abused through the FGM procedure in the UK or taken abroad to undergo the procedure. Any information or concern that a child is at immediate risk of, or has undergone, FGM should result in a child protection referral.

Forced marriage



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Forced marriage, as distinct from a consensual arranged one, is a marriage conducted without the full consent of both parties and where duress is a factor. Duress cannot be justified on religious or cultural grounds. A child who is being forced into marriage is at risk of significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Suspicious that a child may be forced into marriage include: A family history of older siblings leaving education early and marrying early; depressive behaviour including self-harming and attempted suicide; being kept at home by their parents; being unable to complete their education; a child always being accompanied including to school and doctors' appointments; a child talking about an upcoming family holiday that they are worried about; a child directly disclosing that they are worried they will be forced to marry.

Where a suspicion or allegation of forced marriage or intended forced marriage is raised, there may be only one opportunity to speak to a potential victim, and an appropriate initial response is vital. Professionals should not minimize the potential risk of harm or attempt to be a mediator. Any information or concern that a child is at immediate risk should result in an immediate child protection referral. For supplementary guidance please refer to the following: Forced Marriage Unit's multi-agency guidance; 2014.

Honour Based Violence

The definition of so-called honour-based violence is: 'a crime or incident, which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community'. Honour based violence cuts across all cultures and communities.

The perceived immoral behaviour which could precipitate a murder include: Inappropriate make-up or dress; the existence of a boyfriend; kissing or intimacy in a public place; rejecting a forced marriage; pregnancy outside of marriage; being a victim of rape; inter-faith relationships; leaving a spouse or seeking divorce.

A child who is at risk of honour-based violence is at significant risk of physical harm (including being murdered) and/or neglect and may also suffer significant emotional harm through the threat of violence or witnessing violence directed towards a sibling or other family member.

Murders in the name of 'so-called honour' are often the culmination of a series of events over a period of time and are planned. These include: House arrest and excessive restrictions; denial of access to the telephone, internet, passport and friends; threats to kill; pressure to go abroad. There tends to be a degree of premeditation, family conspiracy and a belief that the victim deserved to die. When receiving a disclosure from a child, professionals should recognise the seriousness / immediacy of the risk of harm. Professionals should not minimize the potential risk of harm or attempt to be a mediator.

Children and young people missing from care

In recent years there have been a number of high-profile incidents of children and young people missing from care who are at risk or victims of sexual exploitation. A whole systems approach is required by agencies and organisations to reduce the risk of Looked After Children running away and becoming vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Assessing risk is a vital element in preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and running away. It is essential that staff in Family Futures have a good understanding of the individual case histories of children and young people known to it.

The characteristics and risk factors of children and young people who go missing and who are at risk of sexual exploitation include as follows: those who have poor attachments, lack a stable home



environment and may have disrupted or chaotic family backgrounds; those who have previously suffered neglect, those who have been excluded from school, those in residential care; children and young people who use drugs and alcohol, or self-harm as a reaction to previous traumatic experiences; vulnerable young people transitioning into adulthood.

Repeat incidents of going missing even for short periods of time are strongly linked to sexual exploitation. Children and young people who go missing for longer periods and become detached from adult support are at increased risk of violence and sexual assault and coercion to use drugs and alcohol. It is important to be aware that going missing is not a pre-requisite for sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation can occur online or by telephone and does not require physical contact. Individuals, groups or gangs can commit sexual exploitation. Signs of sexual exploitation include inappropriate sexual behaviour, having unexplained gifts, disengagement from education, substance misuse and behavioural and emotional disruption.

Radicalization

Radicalization is a process by which an individual or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideals and aspirations that (1) reject or undermine the status quo or (2) reject and/or undermine contemporary ideas and expressions of freedom of choice. One of the key issues for staff is how to take account of the risks presented by extremism and radicalization as part of safeguarding children and young people. The process of radicalization involves a complex interplay between individual, family and community factors, including identity and belonging,

alienation and boredom, passive support for far-right extremism as well as intergenerational attitudes and beliefs. Emphasis is placed on prevention.

The Prevent Duty Departmental Advice for Schools and Child Care Providers (June 2015) "In order for schools and childcare providers to fulfil the Prevent duty, it is essential that staff are able to identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and know what to do when they are identified.

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation should be seen as part of schools' and childcare providers' wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other harms (e.g. drugs, gangs, neglect, sexual exploitation), whether these come from within their family or are the product of outside influences".

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to a terrorist ideology. As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Children or young people at risk of radicalisation may display different signs or seek to hide their views. Staff should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately. Even very young children may be vulnerable to radicalisation by others, whether in the family or outside, and display concerning behaviour. The Prevent duty does not require staff to carry out unnecessary intrusion into family life but as with any other safeguarding risk they must take action when they observe behaviour of concern.

In Prevent priority areas, the local authority will have a Prevent lead that can also provide support