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Introduction

This policy should be read alongside our other policies and guidance, with specific reference to:

- Code of Conduct
- Compliments & Complaints Policy
- Disclosure - Protected Vulnerable Groups (PVG)
- Health & Safety Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- On Call Guidance
- Whistleblowing Policy

Our mission

Our mission is to improve outcomes for children and families affected by imprisonment, creating and promoting opportunities for families to uphold and defend their rights.

As the only national charity working in Scotland working solely on behalf of families affected by imprisonment, we strive to safeguard the welfare of all those who come into contact with Families Outside staff, students, and volunteers.

Principles

We recognise that:

- all people, including children and young people, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some people are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, individual circumstances, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Safeguarding against harm to children and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility. Any information that indicates that a child or vulnerable person may be, or is, at risk of significant harm, cannot be kept confidential and must be passed on.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy statement is to protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults who receive Families Outside's services and activities. This includes the children of adults who use our services, and provision to guardians, staff, students, and volunteers of the overarching principles that guide our approach to child and adult protection.

Scope

This policy and accompanying procedures are mandatory for all individuals working at all levels and grades, including directors, senior managers, employees (whether permanent, fixed term or temporary), students, volunteers, or any other person associated with or providing services to Families Outside, both whilst at work and in their private lives. We expect everyone to behave appropriately towards all children and vulnerable adults and to know what to do if a concern arises.

This policy has been developed in consultation with Senior Management, Family Support and HR Teams, and the Child and Adult Protection Coordinator.

Our activities

Families Outside works with children and families as part of its day-to-day activities including:

- Providing a free telephone helpline and webchat service, 9 am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, which anyone seeking advice relating to a family member being imprisoned, including affected family members, who may be children and young people, professionals, and others working with those affected by imprisonment.
- Providing 1:1 support in the community, including in people's homes. This may include working with, or coming into contact with, children, young people, and vulnerable adults, who are either seeking support for themselves or who are living with someone in receipt of our services.
- Attending events in the community, to promote Families Outside and the services we offer, where children, young people, or vulnerable adults may be in attendance, including prison Visitor Centres, schools, community centres.
- Running peer support groups in the community with those affected by imprisonment, which may include children, young people, and adults, including adults at risk.
- Providing support for a befriending service, matching volunteer befrienders with people affected by imprisonment.
- Providing participation opportunities, such as media engagement, advocacy and policy engagement, research, and running participation groups with opportunities to feed into Families Outside's policies and processes.
- Managing organisation's social media accounts, including X (formerly Twitter) Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, to raise awareness of issues faced by those affected by imprisonment, which family members, including children and vulnerable adults, can engage with.

Our day-to-day activities take the form of 1:1 and group activities in a range of physical and online settings, where staff, students, and volunteers may be present. It is therefore important to ensure everyone working on behalf of Families Outside who may encounter children and vulnerable adults is appropriately vetted and trained in safeguarding and in our policies and procedure for raising concerns, which can be applied to all our activities. It is also important that when developing new and existing areas of work, activities are risk assessed, with consideration to child and adult protection measures.

Our commitment

Families Outside is committed to having procedures and processes in place to enable staff, volunteers, and students to:

- Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.
- Ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of child and vulnerable adult protection and is provided with appropriate training to recognise, identify, and respond to signs of abuse, neglect, and other safeguarding concerns relating to children, young people, and vulnerable adults.
- Ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern.
- Ensure that confidential, detailed, and accurate records of all child protection and vulnerable adult protection concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- Prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals through safer recruitment practices.
- Ensure robust child protection arrangements and procedures are in operation;
- Protect adults at risk from harm and exploitation; and
- Respond appropriately in the event of abuse being suspected.

Legal framework and guidance

This policy has been drawn up based on the below law and guidance that seek to protect children and young people and vulnerable adults.

- The Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 provides a framework for safeguarding the welfare and managing the finances of adults who lack capacity. The Act provides for three types of

protection when an adult lacks capacity: welfare guardianship, financial guardianship and power of attorney.

- The Adult Support and Protection Act (Scotland) 2007 places the lead role of the local council and its related powers and duties on a statutory footing. Section 4 of the Act requires local councils to make inquiries about a person's wellbeing, property or financial affairs where it appears that an adult at risk may need intervention and protections. It also includes provisions for assessment orders, removal orders and banning orders.
- The Adult Support and Protection Code of Practice 2014 - provides guidance about the performance functions by councils, their officers and other professionals. It also outlines how councils and practitioners should implement the Adult Support and Protection Act 2007.
- Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 sets out the legal basis for the care and protection of children by the imposition of a Compulsory Supervision Order. The Act sets out the duties and powers of local authorities, police officers and others to make a referral to the Principal Reporter in relation to a child.
- The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 outlines the legislative framework for Scotland's child protection system. It covers parental responsibilities and rights, and the duties and powers local public authorities have for supporting and promoting the safety and welfare of children.
- The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 amends the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 to ensure children's rights are upheld.
- The Data Protection Act 2018 is the UK's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). It controls how your personal information is used by organisations, businesses or the government.
- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 serves to protect victims of both physical abuse and psychological abuse.
- Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) (Scottish Government, 2021a) - the Scottish Government's approach to making a positive difference for all children and young people in Scotland.
- Guidance for Adult Protection Committees
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015 deals with the illegal trade of human beings for exploitation, which also encompasses the offence of slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Human Rights Act 1998
- The Mental Health (Scotland) Act 2015 consists of 10 principles that should be upheld when safeguarding individuals with mental health issues, including that the person's background, beliefs and abilities should be considered, that a range of options for their care should be explored, and that any restrictions on the person's freedom are the minimum necessary in the circumstances.
- The Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 applies to adults living with a mental illness, learning disability or related condition referred to as 'mental disorder'. The Act sets out when and how people can be treated if they have a mental disorder.
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2021 – updated 2023) - this non-statutory guidance provides current national framework for child protection. It sets out the responsibilities and expectations of everyone who works with children.
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) 2024 will incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scottish law. This means that public authorities across Scotland will have to comply with children's rights in all the work they do (Scottish Parliament, 2024).

At Families Outside, we work children, young people, and adults aged 18+. Please note that protection systems for children and adults are conceptually and procedurally different and underpinned by different legislative frameworks. For example, when protecting the welfare of a child, consent is not required to initiate a child protection response; by contrast, where adults are deemed to have capacity, it is broadly considered essential that their consent is sought before making a protection referral.

Definitions (for the purposes of this policy)

Adult at risk	<p>Some adults may find it more difficult to stop harm happening to them. The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 calls people in this situation ‘adults at risk’. The Act was introduced to ensure that adults who experience harm, or are at risk of harm and who need assistance to stay safe, will be offered support and protection. The Act seeks to protect and benefit adults at risk of being harmed and places duties on public bodies to work together to support and protect adults who may be unable to safeguard themselves and their rights.</p> <p>In line with the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007, adults at risk are people aged 16 years or over who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, property, rights, or other interests; • at risk of harm; and • more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected because they are affected by disability, mental illness, or physical or mental infirmity. <p>The presence of a particular condition does not automatically mean an adult is an "adult at risk". Someone could have a disability but be able to safeguard their well-being etc. It is important to stress that all three elements of this definition must be met. It is the whole of an adult's particular circumstances which can combine to make them more susceptible to harm than others.</p>
Child	In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, every human being below the age of 18
Child and adult protection policy	A written policy documenting an overarching commitment to preventing harm to children and vulnerable adults, specifying our organisation’s procedures and principles to be observed in all areas of the organisation to support safeguarding, including confidential reporting mechanisms for safeguarding concerns
Child safeguarding	Child safeguarding is the responsibility that organisations have to ensure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children, that is, that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organisation has about children’s safety within the communities in which they work are reported to the appropriate authorities.
Child abuse	Child abuse is when a child is intentionally harmed by an adult or another child – it can be over a period of time or a one-off action. The 4 main types of child abuse are physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect. To learn more, please read Appendix 2 Types of Child Abuse and the Signs .
Harm	<p>The term ‘harm’ covers all harmful behaviour, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conduct which causes physical harm; • conduct which causes psychological harm (e.g., by causing fear, alarm or distress);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unlawful conduct which appropriates or adversely affects property, rights, or interests (e.g., theft, fraud, embezzlement, or extortion); and conduct which causes self-harm.
Safer recruitment	Safer recruitment is a set of practices to help make sure our staff and volunteers are suitable to work with vulnerable adults, children, and young people. It's a vital part of creating a safe and positive environment and making a commitment to keep others safe from harm.

Roles and responsibilities

Child & Adult Protection Coordinator:	Kerry Knox, Head of Family Support 07538 838776 kerry.knox@familiesoutside.org.uk
Chief Executive:	Nancy Loucks 07984 168388 nancy.loucks@familiesoutside.org.uk
Board Child & Adult Protection Sponsor:	Kim Arbuckle 0131 557 9800 admin@familiesoutside.org.uk
Board Chair:	Linda Bendle 0131 557 9800 admin@familiesoutside.org.uk

Families Outside's **Board of Trustees** has a duty to manage risk and protect the organisation's reputation and assets. This includes acting in the interests of adults at risk of harm whom Families Outside supports, including taking steps to prevent them from harm.

The **Chief Executive** and **Head of Family Support and Child & Adult Protection Coordinator** are the accountable senior managers responsible for the management of serious child and adult protection concerns and incidents.

The **Senior Management Team** is responsible for providing support and advice in relation to safer recruitment, learning and development, and the management of allegations against Families Outside employees.

The **Head of Resource & Development** is responsible for ensuring adequate systems are in place to support line managers and HR to monitor the regular and up to date Child and Adult Protection training for staff.

Managers at all levels have a key role in developing and maintaining a culture that protects adults at risk of harm and promotes their welfare.

The **Connecting Families Team Manager** has a responsibility to manage the safer recruitment for volunteers and to keep the Volunteer Policy updated in line with this policy.

Line managers are responsible for:

- implementing the Child & Adult Protection policy;

- ensuring that their staff understand and have the requisite training and support to apply the policy;
- the effective management of child and adult protection concerns;
- providing advice and support to staff, students, and volunteers; and
- overseeing child and adult protection practice in their area.

All staff have a duty and authority to:

- exercise 'professional curiosity' and to question, challenge and raise concerns about children and adults at risk of harm;
- speak to their line manager (or the On-Call Manager) or Child & Adult Protection Coordinator if something feels wrong;
- remain aware of the reporting policy and procedures of Families Outside and to follow these procedures in should and incident occur;
- follow Families Outside's [Child & Adult Protection Flowchart](#) if they have a safeguarding concern; and
- remain aware of the reporting policy and procedures of any organisation in whose premises they are working (e.g., prison Visitor Centres) and to follow these in addition to our own procedures.

All **frontline staff** are responsible for completing a Families Outside **Monitoring Form** when any safeguarding concerns arise and discussing it with their Line Manager (or On-Call Manager).

Policy

Assessing, managing, and mitigating risk

All staff working with children and young people must comply with the Families Outside risk assessment process for trips, groups, and 1-to-1 work at home, in community, or in a car with children and young people. Please refer to **Risk Assessment Guidance** and the **Risk Assessment Form**, located *1. Family Support\1. Working with Families\Processes, Paperwork and Guidance\2. Risk Assessments* for further information.

New projects and areas of work are subject to the **Project Management Guidance**, including identifying if a [Children's Rights & Wellbeing Impact Assessment \(CRWIA\)](#) is necessary.

Reporting a concern

If a person's safety is at immediate risk, call 999.

To identify the appropriate course of action following a disclosure or concern relating to abuse, please refer to [Appendix 1 - Child & Adult Protection Flowchart](#).

Recording and Monitoring

The Welfare Concern Form will be stored in the relevant Child or Adult Protection Welfare Concern folder on the Families Outside SharePoint:

Family Support\Secure\Adult Protection\Welfare Concern Form

- **Monitoring Form Template** (internal purposes to monitor concerns) – saved in:
1. Family Support /Secure folder/ Adult Protection
- **Welfare Concern Form Template** (for passing information to statutory services) – saved in:
1. Family Support /Secure folder / Adult Protection

- Completed Monitoring Form and Welfare Concern Forms – saved in
1. Family Support / Secure Folder / Adult Protection (save with adult's initial and surname)
- Some Local Authorities will have a specific form to complete when making an adult support and protection referral. A Families Outside Welfare Concern Form should always be completed and saved for our information. The information from this will help to complete the Local Authority form.
- Adult and child protection forms should never be saved on the Families Outside Database, however, the database should be updated to indicate there is a welfare concern form or monitoring form for the family member.

All Child Protection concerns, and Welfare Concern forms will be reviewed regularly at Family Support Managers' meetings. Regional Team meetings will also look at sharing good practice where appropriate.

The effective operation of this policy will be reviewed bi-annually. Internal control systems and procedures will be subject to audit under the internal audit process.

Managing an allegation made against a member of staff, student, or volunteer

Families Outside will ensure that any allegations made against members of staff or volunteers are fully investigated and dealt with swiftly.

A risk assessment will be undertaken to assess the level of risk to all other clients by the alleged perpetrator. This will include whether it is safe for them to continue in their role or any other role within the service whilst any investigation is undertaken.

Where a staff member, student, or volunteer is thought to have committed a criminal offence, this will be reported to Police Scotland. Any Families Outside investigation will be suspended until the conclusion of any police investigations. If the police do not bring charges against the individual, Families Outside will then continue their own internal investigation to ascertain if there has been any wrongdoing in breach of our policies. If an allegation of improper conduct is upheld, this will be dealt with in line with the Disciplinary Procedure, leading to possible dismissal, termination of all relations including contractual and partnership agreements, and where relevant, appropriate legal or other such actions.

Support for staff

Families Outside staff, students, and volunteers should discuss or check the incident with another person either before, or immediately after, taking appropriate action and should advise their line manager of the nature of the discussion at the next opportunity.

After each incident of disclosure, a review should be undertaken by the line manager to address personal or procedural issues. It is important that staff, students, and volunteers are given an opportunity to discuss the incident. Staff, students, and volunteers should also be able to access support for themselves at any time to discuss the way they are feeling, taking time to reflect on the situation. Please refer to the policy on Staff Wellbeing for further guidance.

Safer recruitment¹

Families Outside is committed to safer recruitment practices for all staff, students, and volunteers. All recruitment at Families Outside is supported by our HR team to ensure a consistent, fair, and transparent recruitment process. Please find a summary of our safer recruitment procedures for staff below:

- **Job Descriptions:** All of our job descriptions include reference to responsibilities to adhere to our child and adult protection procedures and code of conduct.
- **Employment History:** Application for any role must include an application form. All application forms require an employment history. We do not accept CVs. Applicants shortlisted for interview must have applications checked for, and be asked to explain, any employment gaps.
- **Interviews:** All interviews must include a panel interview, with multiple interviewers asking planned questions, which are then scored. A minimum of one question must be related to child and adult protection or working with vulnerable people.
- **References:** All employment offers are subject to the receipt of two satisfactory references. One reference must be from the most recent employer. Both references are required to be from a previous employer or education provider. Neither reference may be from a friend or family member. References should be checked against applications for inconsistencies, and any issues or doubts should be followed up and explored with the referee or candidate.
- **PVG Checks:** All staff working in a role where they regularly come into contact with children are subject to a satisfactory PVG check when joining the organisation. Staff working in a support role may not work unsupervised without an up-to-date PVG record check in place.

Safer recruitment of our volunteers is managed by the Connecting Families team. Please speak to the Connecting Families Team Manager for further details.

Training & Awareness

It is a requirement for all staff and students joining the organisation to read this policy in full and to confirm they have read and understood it within 1 month of joining the organisation.

This policy should be available to all our staff and placement students to read and download via the Staff Intranet. This policy should be made available on request to anyone we are working with, including family members. To support this, an up-to-date version of this policy should be published on the Families Outside website.

Families Outside will identify the most appropriate and effective up to date child protection training for staff, students, and volunteers to develop their skills and knowledge in relation to Child and Adult Protection responsibilities, legislation, best practice, and reporting a concern, including:

- On joining the organisation, all staff, students, and trustees, regardless of role, should receive mandatory introductory training to child protection within 1 month of starting.
- All staff should receive Child Protection refresher training every 2 years as a minimum. All training should be recorded on the HR Management System. The Resource & Development team should ensure all Child & Adult Protection training is recorded with an expiry date to flag when this needs to be renewed, and to ensure there is time and budget allocated to allow for regular staff training.
- The Child and Adult Protection Coordinator, and all members of the Senior Management Team who provide the On Call service, receive further training on Child and Adult Protection best practice.

Families Outside works to raise awareness of children's rights, both to children and young people and to stakeholders. We do this by:

¹ <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/safer-recruitment#skip-to-content>

- promoting the use of Child Impact Assessments through our direct work with children and families to highlight to children and young people what their rights are, including a right for to feel safe and to have a say in decisions that affect them at each stage of the criminal justice process; and
- working to influence policy and legislation through direct engagement with decision-makers and inputting to policy and legislative consultations, to bring about greater recognition of children affected by imprisonment to help ensure their rights are respected and protected at all stages of the criminal justice process.

Further Advice and Information

- [Police Scotland](#)

Adults

- [The Adult Support and Protection \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#)
- For signs and symptoms of abuse in **adults**, please see: <https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction/types-and-indicators-of-abuse>
- For a list of all the social work departments in Scotland and who to contact with any concerns, please see: <https://www.actagainstharm.org/>

Children and Young People

- [Cyber Safe Scotland](#), a social enterprise working to protect children from online exploitation
- [Getting it Right for Every Child \(GIRFEC\) Wellbeing indicators \(SHANARRI\)](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe: code of good practice in managing child safeguarding allegations](#)
- [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland](#)
- [NSPCC: Safeguarding LGBTQ+ children and young people \(May 2023\)](#)
- [UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#)

Policy Management

Document Name	Child & Adult Protection Policy
Author	Senior Management Team
Review Responsibility	Child and Adult Protection Coordinator, Head of Family Support

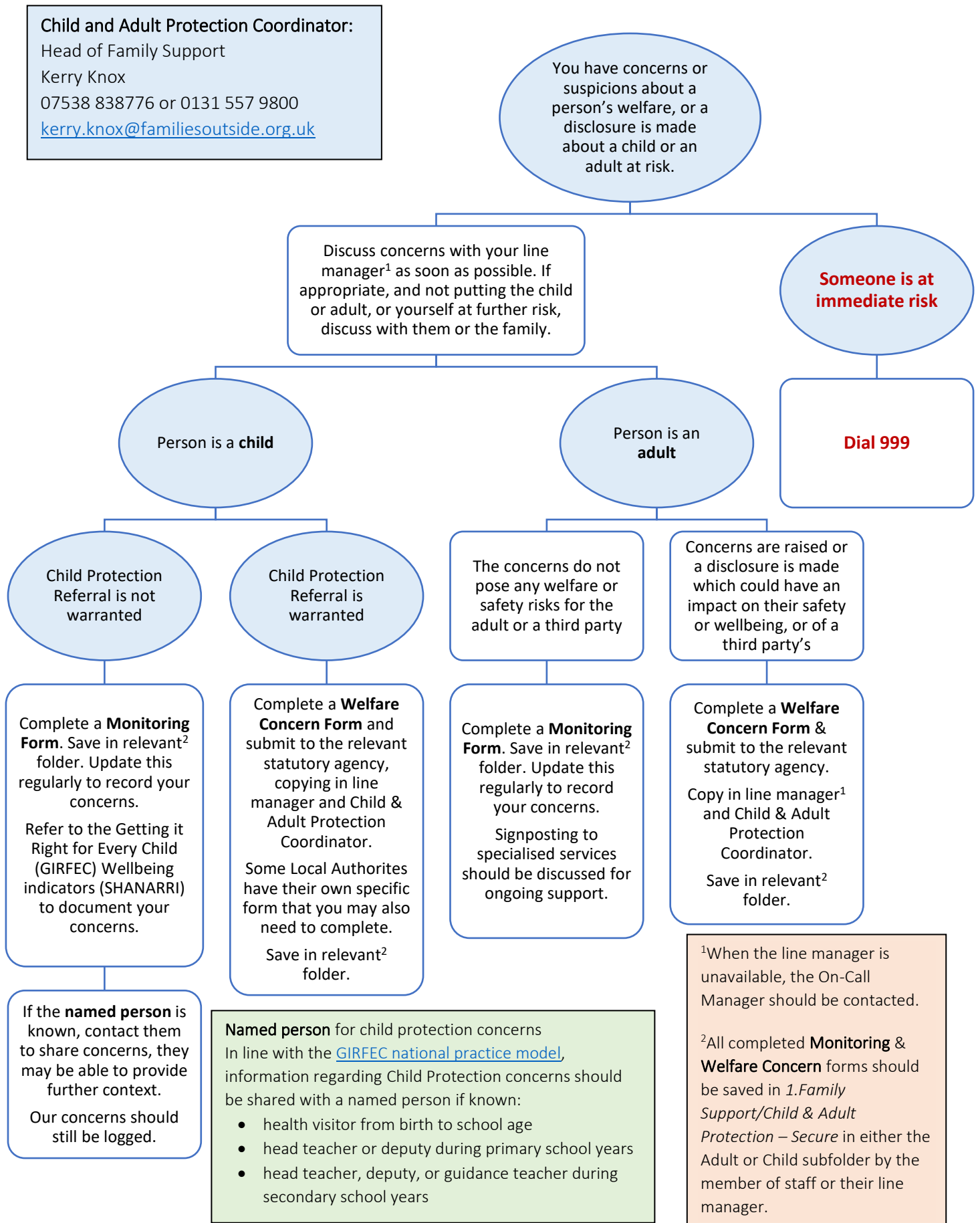
Document History

Version	Author	Date approved	Next review
v1	Senior Management Team	August 2020	August 2022
v2	Senior Management Team	September 2022	September 2024
v3	Senior Management Team & HR	December 2023	December 2025

Supporting Documents

Document
Child & Adult Protection Flowchart
Types of Child Abuse and the Signs
Senior Management Team & HR

Appendix 1 – Child & Adult Protection Flowchart



Appendix 2 Types of Child Abuse and the Signs

Types of Child Abuse

Physical abuse	<p>Physical abuse is when someone hurts a child or young person on purpose.</p> <p>Some examples of physical abuse are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hitting, slapping, shaking, or throwing • burning or scalding • drowning, suffocating, or choking • pushing or kicking • inappropriate restraint or false imprisonment • using physical force to discipline • misusing medication • fabricating or inducing an illness or ill health <p>Signs and symptoms of physical abuse in children can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unexplained recurrent injuries, marks, or burns • covering injuries with clothing even in hot weather • fear of physical contact and shrinking back if touched
Sexual abuse	<p>Sexual abuse is when a child is enticed or forced to take part in sexual activities. This kind of abuse does not always involve a high level of violence and the child may or may not be aware of what is happening. The abuse may be committed by adult men and women, or by other children.</p> <p>Examples of sexual abuse are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • causing or inciting a child to watch or engage in sexual activities • encouraging a child to behave in sexually inappropriate ways • involving a child in looking at sexual images or videos • involving a child in the production of sexual images or videos • grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet) <p>Signs and symptoms of sexual abuse in children can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extreme reactions such as depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, or anorexia • personality changes such as becoming insecure or clinging • being isolated or withdrawn • medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals, or venereal diseases
Emotional abuse	<p>Emotional abuse happens in many different ways. It can affect how a young person or child feels about themselves, or how they fit in with friends, at school, or where they live.</p> <p>Examples of emotional abuse include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being made to feel inadequate, worthless, or unloved • being unfairly blamed • being bullied, including over the internet (cyber-bullying) • being made to feel frightened or in danger • witnessing the abuse of others such as domestic abuse <p>Signs and symptoms of emotional abuse in children can include:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduced physical, mental, and emotional development • continual self-depreciation, e.g. 'I'm stupid', 'I'm ugly', 'I'm worthless' • inappropriate response to pain, e.g. 'I deserve this' • neurotic behaviour, e.g., rocking, hair twisting, or self-mutilation
Neglect	<p>Neglect is when a child or young person's basic needs are persistently not being met by their parent or guardian.</p> <p>These basic needs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adequate food, clothing, and shelter • protection from physical and emotional harm or danger • adequate supervision (including not being left at home alone) • access to appropriate medical care including dental treatment <p>Signs and symptoms of neglect in children can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • constant hunger or tiredness • poor personal hygiene • poor condition and cleanliness of clothing • untreated medical problems • no social relationships

Indicators of physical abuse

There may be **physical indicators** that a child or young person is being physically abused. Some examples of this are:

- Unexplained bruises, welts, cuts, abrasions
- Unexplained burns
- Unexplained fractures or disclosures

There may also be **behavioural indicators** that child or young person is being physically abused. Some examples of this are:

- Is wary of adults or of a particular individual
- Is violent to animals or other children or young people
- Is dressed inappropriately to hide bruises or other injuries
- May be extremely aggressive or extremely withdrawn
- Cannot recall how the injuries occurred or gives inconsistent explanations

There may be **indicators in adult behaviour** that could indicate physical abuse. Some examples of this are:

- May be vague about the details of the cause of injury and the account of the injury may change from time to time
- May blame the accident on a sibling, friend, relative, or the injured child or young person
- Shakes an infant
- Threats or attempts to injure a child or young person
- Is aggressive towards a child in front of others
- May delay in seeking medical attention for a child or young person

Indicators of sexual abuse

There may be **physical indicators** that a child or young person is being sexually abused. Some examples of this are:

- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing

- Bruises, lacerations, redness, swelling, or bleeding in genital, vaginal, or anal area
- Blood in urine or faeces
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Unusual or excessive itching or pain in the genital or anal area

There may also be **behavioural indicators** that a child or young person is being sexually abused.

Some examples of this are:

- Age-inappropriate sexual play with toys, self, others
- Bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge
- Comments such as “I’ve got a secret”, or “I don’t like uncle”
- Fire lighting by boys
- Fear of certain places e.g., bedroom or bathroom

Some examples of this in older children or young people are:

- Eating disorders
- Promiscuity or prostitution
- Uses younger children in sexual acts
- Tries to make self as unattractive as possible

There may be **indicators in adult behaviour** that could indicate sexual abuse. Some examples of this are:

- May be unusually over-protective of a child or young person
- Is jealous of a child or young person’s relationships with peers or other adults or is controlling of the child or young person
- May favour that child over other children
- Demonstrates physical contact or affection to a child or young person which appears sexual in nature or has sexual overtones

Indicators of emotional abuse

There may be **physical indicators** that a child is being emotionally abused. Examples of this are:

- Bed-wetting or bed soiling that has no medical cause
- Frequent psychosomatic complaints (e.g., headaches, nausea, abdominal pains)
- Prolonged vomiting or diarrhoea
- Has not attained significant developmental milestones
- Dressed differently from other children in the family
- Has deprived physical living conditions compared with other children in the family

There may also be **behavioural indicators** that a child or young person is being emotionally abused.

Examples of this are:

- Suffers from severe developmental gaps
- Severe symptoms of depression, anxiety, withdrawal, or aggression
- Severe symptoms of self-destructive behaviour – self-harming, suicide attempts, engaging in drug or alcohol abuse
- Overly compliant; too well-mannered; too neat and clean
- Displays attention seeking behaviours or displays extreme inhibition in play
- When at play, behaviour may model or copy negative behaviour and language used at home

There may be **indicators in adult behaviour** that could indicate emotional abuse. Some examples of this are:

- Constantly calls the child or young person names, labels, or publicly humiliates the child
- Continually threatens the child or young person with physical harm or forces the child to witness physical harm inflicted on a loved one
- Has unrealistic expectations of the child or young person
- Involves the child or young person in “adult issues”, such as separation or access issues
- Keeps the child or young person at home in a role of subservient or surrogate parent

Indicators of neglect

There may be **physical indicators** that a child or young person is being neglected. Some examples of this are:

- Inappropriate dress for the weather
- Extremely dirty or unbathed
- Inadequately supervised or left alone for unacceptable periods of time
- Malnourished
- May have severe nappy rash or other persistent skin disorders or rashes resulting from improper care or lack of hygiene

There may also be **behavioural indicators** that child or young person is being neglected. Some examples of this are:

- Demonstrates severe lack of attachment to other adults
- Poor school attendance or school performance
- Poor social skills
- May steal food
- Is very demanding of affection or attention
- Has no understanding of basic hygiene

There may be **indicators in adult behaviour** that could indicate neglect. Some examples of this are:

- Fails to provide for the child or young person’s basic needs, such as housing, nutrition, medical and psychological care
- Fails to enrol a child or young person in school or permits absenteeism
- Leaves the child home alone
- Is overwhelmed with own problems and puts own needs ahead of the child or young person’s needs

Appendix 3 - Responding to a disclosure

Adults

Should an adult disclose issues of abuse, it is important to be aware of the following guidelines:

- How you react, what you say, and how you handle the situation regarding disclosures is hugely important. The abused person may not understand that they are being or have been abused and might not realise the significance or severity of what they are telling you. It may be the case that the disclosure is happening many months or even years after the abuse took place. One reason for the delay in disclosure may be the person they were afraid of has left the setting or organisation and they now feel safe to tell you.
- Speaking out is never easy. If someone does confide in you, it's important that you listen carefully to what you're being told.
- Be aware of your body language and tone of voice; stay calm and try not to show the disbelief or shock you may feel.
- It is important you let the person know you are sorry this has happened to them and that what has happened isn't their fault. Remember to tell them they have done the right thing telling you and that you will keep them informed and involved in any decisions.
- Letting the person know that you are taking them seriously is most important and assuring them that steps will be taken to prevent them from any further harm. You may also consider asking the person what action they would like you to take. Do not press the person for more information; remember, it is not your job to investigate the situation. If the matter is referred to the adult social care team, they will decide who, how, and what to investigate.
- Never promise to keep secrets, as you cannot keep the information, they have shared with you confidential – you must report it. Likewise, don't make promises you can't keep, such as "I will never let this happen to you again".
- Don't be judgemental or jump to any conclusions – just focus on the person and listen.
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.

At the end of the disclosure:

- If you believe the person is in immediate danger or in need of urgent medical assistance, you must contact the emergency services.
- Investigation into the disclosure of abuse is the responsibility of the Police and/or Social Work Department.
- Immediately seek help, in the first place from your line manager or the designated Adult Protection Coordinator.
- Write down accurately what the person has told you. Records should be detailed and precise, including any key words or phrases verbatim. Sign and date your notes. Keep all notes in Child & Adult Protection folder. These are essential in helping your organisation/ Social Services/ the Police decide what is best for the person, and as evidence if necessary.
- Use the reporting form is a sensible way of making sure that you gather all the relevant and important information.
- Seek help for yourself if you feel you need support.
- Let them know what you are going to do next.

Children and Young People²

If a child discloses child abuse to you, it is critical to be prepared to handle the situation in the appropriate manner and then report it to the appropriate authorities. If a child or young person informs you that they are concerned about someone's behaviour towards them or makes a direct allegation, you can follow the points below and follow the [Child and Adult Protection Flowchart](#).

The guiding principle in responding to any concerns around child protection is that the safety and welfare of the child should always take precedence. No child should be put at more risk by any action you undertake. You should do all you can **to remove the child from immediate danger** and ensure she or he is comfortable. You should respect the two-adult rule, and you should do all you can to minimise delays.

As much as 80% of child abuse cases may include a digital component. The person receiving a disclosure should note any disclosures in this regard, which may be essential to capture compelling evidence during any investigation.

General points:

- Accept what the child says
- Keep calm
- Don't panic
- Don't seek help while the child is talking to you
- Take what they say seriously, even if it involves someone you feel sure would not harm them.
- Be honest
- Look at the child directly
- Do not appear shocked
- Let them know that you need to tell someone else
- Assure them that they are not to blame for the abuse
- Never ask leading questions
- Try not to repeat the same questions to the child
- Never push for information
- Do not fill in words, finish their sentences, or make assumptions
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened
- Take proper steps to ensure the physical safety and psychological well-being of the child. This may include referring them for medical treatment or to a psychologist
- Make certain you distinguish between what the child has actually said and the conclusions you may have made. Accuracy is paramount in this stage of the procedure
- Do not permit personal doubt to prevent you from reporting the disclosure
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens
-

Things to say or do:

- Repeat the last few words in a questioning manner
- 'I believe you'
- 'I am going to try to help you'
- 'I will help you'
- 'I am glad that you told me'
- 'You are not to blame'

² Drawn from: <http://guides.womenwin.org/gbv/readiness-and-response/response-referral-and-reporting/disclosure-dos-and-donts>

- 'You did the right thing by telling me'
- Say 'I cannot keep this a secret, but I won't tell anyone except for those who must know to help' (doctors, police)
- Report to the authorities
- Bring the person to get external medical and legal help immediately

Things not to say or do:

- 'You should have told someone before'
- 'I can't believe it! I'm shocked!'
- 'Oh that explains a lot'
- 'No not...he's a friend of mine'
- 'I won't tell anyone else'
- 'Why? How? When? Where? Who?'
- Doubt the child's disclosure
- Make promises you cannot keep
- Confront the offender
- Wash or fix the person if they have been abused (as long as their safety is not jeopardised). The person's physical condition is evidence for prosecution.

At the end of the disclosure:

- Reassure the child that it was right to tell you, but do not promise confidentiality
- Let them know what you are going to do next.
- Immediately seek help, in the first place from your line manager or the designated Child Protection Coordinator.
- Write down accurately what the young person has told you. Records should be detailed and precise, including any key words or phrases verbatim. Sign and date your notes. Keep all notes in Child & Adult Protection folder. These are essential in helping your organisation/ Social Services/ the Police decide what is best for the child, and as evidence if necessary
- Use the reporting form is a sensible way of making sure that you gather all the relevant and important information
- Seek help for yourself if you feel you need support
- Seek help for yourself if you feel you need support.

Feedback from children who disclosed abuse to keep in mind:

- "My teacher noticed that I was often quiet, came late and that I would flinch when someone touched me. She did not give up, and in the end I told. She clearly explained that what I had experienced was not okay. I noticed she cared. She responded when I told."
- "It is not safe to report when we do not know what happens next. We need to know what is happening, how it is happening and how many cases are going through. This must be explained with words children understand. Then it will be safe, and when it is safe, we will speak the truth."
- "I was interrupted when I tried to tell. They did not need to hear anything from me, that's how it felt. Before they talked to me, they had read what had happened."
- "Cry with us, not after we have left. If I am I met without emotion, I may never tell again. It feels like what I told was not bad enough."
- "Children need to know if something is to be told further, so that the child and adults can figure out together how to do it. It has to happen in a way that is good for the child."
- "I would have answered if someone had asked me direct questions."
- "I would rather carry what hurt inside me than what I said could be told further without me knowing where. I had never received some information on what could really happen if I told."

- “Talk to me for a moment before I am sent on, otherwise I dare not trust adults anymore. It takes a lot to tell about violence. Wait with sending me on.”
- “If we tell an adult, then that person is selected. Then that person should not jump and contact child welfare, police, or other adults. Then the person has the competence to talk to us, because we know very well which competence works and which does not. We do not need what adults think is cutting-edge expertise.”