

# Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy







## Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy

Developed in Partnership with the NSPCC

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This policy and its associated appendices was adopted by Home-Start in Suffolk on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2024 and is to be reviewed by July 2025

Name: [Redacted]

Signe [Redacted]

Date: 18 July 2024.

**This should be signed by the most senior person in your organisation i.e. child protection lead on the board of trustees**



Below is a list of policies that are also relevant to safeguarding and protection. You may find it helpful to refer to any of these additional documents when reading and using this policy.

- [Safer recruitment and selection of staff policy](#)
- [Safeguarding Checklist](#)
- [Confidentiality](#)
- [Data Protection](#)
- [Staff supervision & appraisal](#)
- [Recruitment, Supervision and Management of Volunteers](#)
- [Safeguarding & protecting children Code of Conduct](#)
- [Safeguarding & Protecting Adults](#)
- [Record of Concern and Action \(ROCA\) - form](#)
- [Looking After Children in the Absence of their Parents](#)
- [Reporting Serious Incidents and reputational threats to HSUK](#)
- [Health & Safety](#)
- [Employment Handbook](#)
- [Complaints](#)
- [Online Safety guidance](#)
- [Whistleblowing](#)
- [Recruitment of ex-offenders - model policy](#)

This policy covers all Home-Start services across the UK and is supplemented with nation specific policy and procedures.

**Everyone in Home-Start, regardless of their role, has a responsibility to protect children and be familiar with the local policy and procedure in reporting a concern.**

If you would like assistance in understanding the detail in this document when reading it, please speak to the Designated Safeguarding/Protection Lead person in your local Home-Start who will be able to assist you in answering questions relevant to your local practice.

I, [INSERT NAME] as an [EMPLOYEE/VOLUNTEER/TRUSTEE] of Home-Start [INSERT] have read and understand this policy and associated appendices.

Signed:

Date:



## Policy Statement

At Home-Start we believe that every child has the right to protection from all forms of abuse or harm. The overall purpose of this policy and its associated procedures is to protect the welfare of children and young people using and receiving the services Home-Start provide. Home-Start is committed to reviewing the policy annually.

**The purpose of this policy is to:**

- create a culture where children are valued and their right to safety and respect is upheld;
- protect children who come into contact with Home-Start in the course of its work by actively managing risk to minimise circumstances where children engaging with Home-Start may suffer harm;
- work collaboratively with other organisations to ensure that children are safeguarded and protected;
- inform partners, beneficiaries and the general public of the overarching principles in relation to safeguarding and protecting children;
- provide all staff, volunteers and trustees with the overarching principles and procedures that guide our approach to safeguarding and protecting children.

## Scope of the Policy

This document sets out the responsibilities of all those who work for Home-Start, including trustees, employees, volunteers, consultants, self-employed contractors, agency staff, students and those working pro bono for Home-Starts (these will be referred to throughout the policy as 'staff').

This policy outlines the shared responsibility we have across Home-Start to protecting children, aged 0-18 years that we encounter and work with. This is the overarching policy regardless of where in the UK your Home-Start is located.

## Definitions (see also specific guidance in nation relevant appendices)

### Who is a 'child'?

For the purposes of this policy the definition of a 'child' or 'young person' is anyone aged under 18 years of age. Supported by legislation and guidance across the UK.

### What is child abuse and neglect? (Recognising)

The main types of abuse are: physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect. Each nation specific policy has further definition in accordance with their legislation (see [Appendices](#)). Child abuse and





neglect is the maltreatment of a child in any form. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly, or may be responsible for abuse or neglect because they fail to prevent significant harm by another person. It can occur within a relationship of trust and can happen to a child regardless of their age, gender, race, disability or ability, sexual orientation, religion or socio-economic status.

Children and young people may be abused in a family or in residential care or in the community, including artistic and sporting activities by any individual known to them or by a stranger.

Children with disabilities are at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse has occurred.

**Other areas of concern include female genital mutilation, honour-based abuse and forced marriage, child trafficking, radicalisation/Prevent. (please refer to the appendices in this policy and NSPCC website for further information <http://nspcc.org.uk>)**

## **What is harm and significant harm in a child protection context?**

'Harm' means the ill treatment or the impairment of the health or development of the child, including, for example, impairment suffered as a result of seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. In this context, 'development' can mean physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development and 'health' can mean physical or mental health.

Whether the harm suffered, or likely to be suffered, by a child or young person is 'significant' is determined by comparing the child's health and development with what might be reasonably expected of a similar child. Deciding whether harm has been or is likely to be significant can be complex, and where there are concerns about harm, abuse or neglect, Home-Start staff and or volunteers must share these with the relevant agencies who will assess whether the harm is, or is likely to be, significant.

## **Home-Start approach to keeping children and young people safe from harm and abuse**

We will seek to keep children safe by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them and keeping them at the centre of everything we do;
- being mindful of, and implementing the articles and principles of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#);
- appointing for each service a nominated child protection lead, a deputy, and a lead trustee/board member;



- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that they know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently;
- recruiting and selecting staff, trustees and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made;
- sharing information about safeguarding and effective practice with staff and volunteers, parents and carers, children and young people;
- all record keeping is accurate and timely;
- recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance.
- ensuring children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern;
- sharing concerns and relevant information with agencies (on a need to know basis) involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately;
- managing allegations against staff appropriately and timeously;
- creating an anti-discriminatory environment utilising policies such as equality and diversity policy, and building a culture of inclusion;
- ensuring we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place;
- ensuring we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, and staff in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance;
- building a culture where staff, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

### **This policy is based on the following principles:**

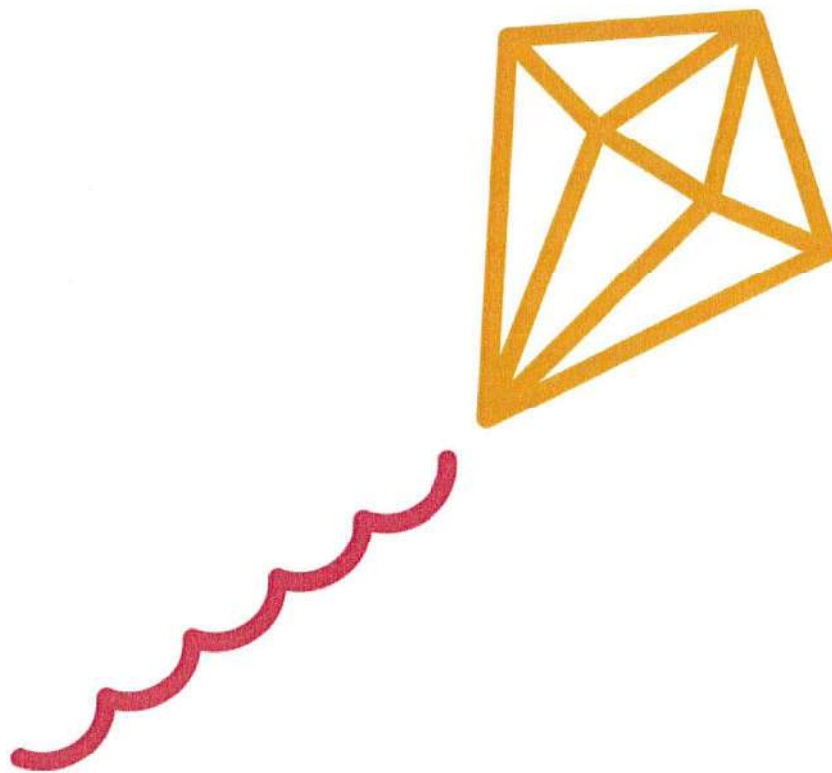
- the welfare of children is paramount;
- no child or group of children must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs;
- all people, regardless of age, ability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, culture or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse and no person or group of people should be treated less favourably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs;
- recognition that some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues;



- We reflect actively on our experience of safeguarding and child protection issues, and seek to review and improve our practice accordingly.

Home-Start will treat any breach of this policy very seriously. For those who work for us, failure to follow the principles and procedures of child protection could lead to disciplinary action, which may ultimately result in dismissal. For those who work with us, we reserve the right to immediately terminate any contract and, for trustees and volunteers, to require them to immediately cease being a trustee or volunteer.

All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously.







## Internal roles and responsibilities

**All those who work for or with Home-Start share the responsibility for protecting children.**

No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

As evidence of a child being abused or neglected may not always be present, suspicion of abuse or neglect may take the form of 'concerns' rather than 'known facts'. Therefore, you may only suspect abuse or neglect of a child and this still needs to be escalated through local procedure.

Alternatively, 'concerns' may be based on information derived from a variety of sources and accumulated over time. All staff, volunteers and trustees should also remember that their concerns may, in isolation, not be significant. However, alongside those from others they may build up a picture which suggests that a child may be suffering harm, abuse or neglect.

**DON'T HOLD ONTO CONCERNS ABOUT CHILDREN, NO MATTER HOW INSIGNIFICANT THEY MAY APPEAR, SHARE THEM WITH YOUR DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING/CHILD PROTECTION LEAD**

**Staff, volunteers and trustees at all levels have a key role in developing and maintaining a culture that protects children and promotes their welfare and have a duty to exercise 'professional curiosity', question, challenge and raise concerns when they feel something feels wrong.**

This is done through regular updates and meetings for staff and volunteers on interactions with children, staff and volunteer behaviour, reminder of ethos and values, and in Scotland specifically making reference to GIRFEC and the points from SHANAARI wheel discussed regularly.

**Trustees** have a responsibility to ensure appropriate child protection measures are in place and promote a culture that prioritises children and young people. Our trustees also have duties to manage risk and to protect Home-Start assets and reputation. They are responsible for ensuring that those benefitting from, or working with the organisation are not harmed in any way through contact with it.

**Home-Start trustees** must make sure the charity fulfils this responsibility. Even if some activities are delegated to a safeguarding/child protection lead or group, trustees retain overall responsibility.

Harm and abuse have a devastating impact. A strong safeguarding/child protection culture means:

- People are protected from harm
- risks of harm or abuse are minimised
- everyone has confidence their concerns will be dealt with appropriately





- everyone at the charity understands their role.

Each Home-Start must have a nominated Safeguarding/Child Protection Trustee who has a working knowledge of Safeguarding or who undertakes local training in order to fulfil that role.

Local Home-Start's, depending on their size may have a number of people with additional safeguarding/child protection responsibilities. These may be known as Strategic Lead/Officer, Designated Lead/Officer, Deputy Lead/Officer. The specifics of these roles can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

**This policy and all nation specific policies and procedures are based on the 4R's approach to support staff Recognise, Respond, Refer and Record**

- **Recognise** any concerns for a young person at risk that you are working with, this may be welfare/wellbeing or child protection.
- **Respond** appropriately to any concerns about a child within Home- Start policy and procedures
- **Refer** – this will be the responsibility of the designated safeguarding/child protection lead following discussion with staff and others. This may include calling **local statutory services or the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000**
- **Record** – as per local procedure to ensure accurate and timely record-keeping for use by internal and external agencies as necessary.

Additionally, there are two further **R's** for local Home-Starts to consider:

- **Revisit** – once a concern has been raised, have you checked in or followed up to ensure progress, or any further information needed.
- **Reflect** – what learnings are there as an individual and as a team from individual and collective incidents? Ensuring there is time to discuss what happened and how things were handled to consider if anything different needed next time.





## Code of Conduct

It is the responsibility of all staff, trustees and volunteers to read and understand the [Safeguarding and Protecting Children Code of Conduct](#), and to seek guidance from line managers if further clarification is needed.

To support the safety and protection of children general principles of good practice include:

- Being aware of situations which may present risks to children. Regular safeguarding/protecting children training will support and enhance this knowledge.
- Assess, plan and organise work so as to minimise these risks.
- Ensure all record keeping is accurate, timely, clear and stored as per local procedures.
- Where practicable be visible to others when working with children. If working alone with children use the '[Looking After Children in the Absence of their Parents](#)' policy.
- Staff and volunteers watching out for each other.
- Not having or be perceived to have favourites.
- Not giving lifts to children outside agreed activities. Where it is necessary to take a child in your car ensure that your manager/colleague is aware of this ensure this activity has been considered in line with the 'Looking After Children in the Absence of Parents' policy.
- Not using physical punishments or any action that involves locking up a child/adult at risk.
- Not arranging meetings outside working hours. Do not develop social relationships with children using the service. If you come into contact with a family in a social setting, maintain a professional distance. Pay attention to your own behaviour in such a setting.
- Not buying goods or using the services of service users or their friends.
- Not accepting any money or gifts from service users.
- Not personally giving money or gifts to service users.
- Not borrowing money from service users.
- Using appropriate language, including not using foul, discriminatory or offensive language.
- Not 'friending' or 'following' or 'accepting' on any social media sites or give out your personal mobile or home telephone numbers. Adjust privacy settings on your own personal social networking sites.







## Professional Boundaries

A line manager/coordinator/supervisor should be informed if a volunteer/member of staff has had a previous professional or personal relationship with a service user in order to agree how best to manage confidentiality and risk, and ensure that Home-Start Policies and Procedures are followed.

Where staff/volunteers live and work/volunteer within their own community, be clear about professional boundaries when their family/children has friendships with service users' children or siblings, and ensure this is discussed with relevant line manager/coordinator/supervisor.

Bring any risk of potential breakdown of professional boundaries, however unintentional, to the attention of line manager/coordinator/supervisor immediately.

It is important that staff/volunteers do not approach service users in any social setting if they do not instigate the contact, especially where their behaviour indicates that they do not want to be recognised or indeed identified as a user of the service.

Staff/volunteers must not enter into a partner relationship with service users or members of their families. This constitutes a breach of professional boundaries and relevant codes of conduct/practice. Where staff/volunteers become aware that the above situation has occurred in relation to a colleague, it must be brought to the attention of their line manager/coordinator immediately.

The organisation recognises that it is possible that the friends and family of staff members may become service users and, indeed, that staff members themselves may in some circumstances become service users. It is incumbent on staff members to speak to their line manager about such situations to avoid any conflicts of interest, breaches of confidentiality or professional boundary issues.

It is inappropriate for Home-Start staff/volunteers to deliver a service or become the key workers to a friend, or family member. Arrangements will be made for another staff member/volunteer to take over the role. Any exceptions to this (for example, where a parent of a service user volunteers with group work for disabled children) and the decision made must be recorded on the staff/volunteer file.





## Disclosure of abuse, what to do (Respond) (including historical abuse)

Adults don't always recognise, understand or react appropriately when a child starts to tell them about experiences of abuse and that this can mean that they don't get the support they need. **If a child or adult discloses abuse, (or information is received through a third party) remember that this may be the beginning of a legal process, as well as of a process of recovery. Legal action against a perpetrator can be seriously damaged by any suggestion that the child/adult has been led in any way.**

The following guidance should be followed as far as possible:

- Show care, help them OPEN UP. Provide full attention and keep body language open and encouraging. Be compassionate, be understanding and reassure them their feelings are important. Phrases like "you've shown such courage today" help.
- Take time SLOW DOWN. Respect pauses and don't interrupt them – let them go at their own pace. Recognise and respond to their body language. And remember that it may take several conversations with various agencies and personnel (outside of Home-Start) for them to share what's happened to them. Your role in this instance is to listen and to note what you hear, exactly as you hear it, and to refer to your point of contact as per local procedure.
- Show understanding REFLECT BACK. Demonstrate interest in what they're telling you. Reflect back what they've said to check understanding – and use their language to show it's their experience.

Staff, trustees and volunteers should be aware that:

- it is **not their responsibility to investigate** suspected cases of abuse
- they should not take any action beyond that in their organisations procedures **and**
- they cannot promise a child complete confidentiality – they must explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or others safe.

**If there is a concern, we MUST ACT** – it may be the final piece of the jigsaw that is needed to protect that child, or we may prevent other children/adults from being hurt.

If the child or adult decides to withdraw at this stage, it should be stressed that they can have further discussions in the future – that there will always be someone to listen to them. They should also be given alternative sources of support such as the telephone number of **ChildLine – 0800 11 11**. However, the child/adult should also be told that their current concerns will be passed on.

- **Affirm their feelings** as expressed by them (show empathy).





- **Ask open, non-leading questions only to gain clarity on what has been heard – Remember it is not an investigation** Keep questions to the absolute minimum necessary to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- **Re-assure** that they are being courageous in ‘telling’.
- **Do not make value judgements** about an alleged abuser/s and what has taken place.
- **Explain that information will be passed on** to another member of staff and explain why this is important.
- **Explain the next step, be open and honest**, reassure that they will be kept informed of what is happening and will be supported as appropriate. Any information subsequently shared with the child/adult should always be appropriate to their age and stage of development and should not breach the confidentiality of any other parties involved.
- **Treat the allegation very seriously** and report it immediately to the Home-Start designated safeguarding/child protection lead.
- **Write down** exactly what you have been told using the local Home-Start's record keeping tools. Always try to record what the child said (if a verbal allegation) and the words they used. If the allegation came to light through other sources (e.g. play etc.), include any original material (if available) with the completed record. A copy of the record may be required (at a later date) as part of the child protection process or as evidence for future criminal prosecution.
- **Remember that the child's welfare is paramount** even where the child's parents/carers are considered to the primary client(s) of the Home-Start service.
- **On no account speak with the parent/carer** about what has happened until the designated safeguarding/child protection lead has advised on the next step.
- **Where the need for urgent medical intervention** is indicated, the person at the scene should take appropriate action e.g. call an ambulance. First aid and urgent removal to hospital accompanied by an appropriate staff person will be a priority, followed by immediate notification to police, as appropriate.
- **Ask for support.** It is recognised that dealing with child protection concerns can have stressful consequences for workers so the provision of support is essential.

### **Escalation process – what to do if concerns are not being appropriately acted upon.**

Escalating is the course of action that should be taken when there are concerns that a child's/adult's safety is compromised and the current action of either Home-Start or other external agencies do not support the protection of a child. This also applies if Home-Start has concerns that an external agency is not acting on concerns appropriately.

If there are concerns about the safety or welfare of a child and a feeling they are not being acted upon, then escalate to the designated lead or Home-Start identified safeguarding/child



protection trustee. The aim should be to resolve the disagreement at the lowest level between those involved. If this fails, then concerns can be escalated to Home-Start UK, the NSPCC helpline or the local external safeguarding/child protection advisor. A record of all conversations and actions must be kept.

**Home-Start acknowledge that:**

- Problem resolution is an integral part of professional co-operation and joint working to protect children.
- Professional disagreement requires resolution in a constructive and timely fashion.
- At no time must professional disagreement distract from ensuring the child is safe.
- The aim must be to resolve a professional disagreement at the earliest possible stage.

**Patterns of concerns**

In some cases, it is ongoing events that give rise to concerns through observation which may include signs that a parent may not be complying, for whatever reason, may emerge over time. This can include a pattern of missed appointments, parents agreeing to take up services and then failing to attend, or parents agreeing to make changes but not following through.

Any ongoing concerns around the welfare or wellbeing of children and young people should be discussed within supervision in which cases the manager or designated safeguarding/child protection lead may ask for a chronology of concerns to be recorded which can support monitoring of patterns. A referral on the grounds of accumulation of patterns of concern should be discussed by the designated safeguarding lead and local authority social work service before parents/carers are informed.

A chronology is:

- a summary of events key to the understanding of need and risk, extracted from comprehensive case records and organised in date order
- a summary which reflects both strengths and concerns evidenced over time
- a summary which highlights patterns and incidents critical to understanding of need, risk and harm
- a tool which should be used to inform understanding of need and risk. In this context, this means risk of significant harm to a child.





## **Making a Child Protection Referral (see Appendix 2 for local procedure)**

Any concern should be notified to the relevant person in your local Home-Start (see Appendix 1 for all your local Home-Start contacts) as soon as possible. The nature of the concern will be assessed and a decision made as to the most appropriate course of action. In their absence, refer to your local procedures (see appendices to this policy).

### **Recording, Confidentiality and information sharing**

Sharing relevant information is an essential part of protecting children from harm. Home-Start staff should understand when and how they may share information and will be supported and guided within the law, these procedures and supervision.

Professional judgement must always be applied to the available evidence about each specific emerging concern, and about what is relevant, proportionate, and necessary to share. The concern must be placed in the context of available observed and recorded information about the particular child/adult, their needs and circumstances.

Home-Start Data Protection Leads/Officers should be able to advise where doubt about the appropriate lawful basis exists.

Home-Start staff with child protection concerns may share relevant information order to:

- clarify if there is a risk of harm to a child
- clarify the level of risk of harm to a child /adult
- safeguard a child at risk of harm
- clarify if a child is being harmed
- clarify the level of harm a child is experiencing
- safeguard a child who is being harmed

**Consent to share:** UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) sets a high standard for consent and, in most cases where there are child protection concerns, consent is unlikely to be an appropriate lawful basis to rely upon as it requires that individuals have real choice and control about the processing of their personal data. Relying on 'consent' as the lawful basis is not appropriate if, for example, refusal to give consent would prejudice a criminal investigation or might lead to serious harm to the child. Furthermore, due to the power imbalance between a child or families and the authorities, it would be difficult to demonstrate that consent was freely given. In matters of child protection, it is therefore likely that reliance on consent would be the exception and not the rule.

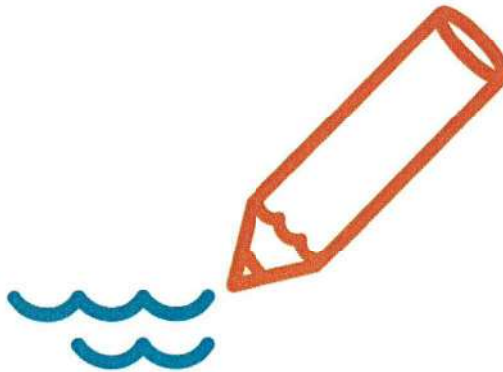
Records should only be retained for a period of **seven years** and destroyed in line with Home-Start [Data Protection Policy and Retention Schedule](#). Collection, sharing and any other processing of special categories data made under this policy are also covered. When information is requested by other organisations this must be passed to the Designated Safeguarding



Lead/Protection Officer and the Data Protection Officer for consideration. A decision to share information or not must be recorded and stored appropriately.

### **Recording**

Good child/adult protection practice depends on having sufficient, clear, succinct, accurate and accessible records. It is everyone's responsibility and duty to keep good records to safeguard and protect children.







## Managing Allegations against staff and volunteers

Any concerns about the welfare of a child from alleged poor practice, abuse or harassment by an employee or volunteer of Home-Start must be discussed with the designated safeguarding/child protection lead (or escalated up if it involves safeguarding/child protection staff) and reported immediately, this includes breach or potential breach of professional boundaries.

Concerns about a member of staff may fall into any of the following three categories where someone has;

- Behaved in a way that has harmed the child/adult, or may have harmed a child/adult
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child/adult
- Behaved towards a child/adult or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to as a member of staff s/he is unsuitable to work with children

If an allegation or concern about a staff member or volunteer is raised it is important to follow the local procedure as outlined by the LADO (England) or children's social care in the devolved nations.

## Whistleblowing

Home-Start understand that staff and volunteers will often be the first to know when someone inside or connected with the organisation is doing something illegal, dishonest, or improper, but may feel apprehensive about voicing their concerns. However, it is in the interest of everyone, and the organisation that individuals with knowledge of wrongdoing are supported in reporting such behaviour.

Any individual with knowledge of any such activities should inform their designated safeguarding lead /supervisor/manager who will take the matter further as appropriate and necessary or alternatively call NSPCC Whistleblowing advice line on 0808 028 0285.

Please see [Home-Start Whistleblowing policy and procedure](#).

## Recruitment and Employment

Home-Start will take all reasonable steps to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. (See [Safer Recruitment policy](#)). All staff and volunteers working with children, young people and vulnerable adults will be interviewed, require to have criminal records checks (through the DBS/PVG) where the role requires it, and have two suitable references of their suitability to work with children/young people. Please see the [Recruitment, Supervision and Management of Volunteers](#) policy for further guidance on the induction process for different role types.



## Contractors and Sub Contractors

- The responsibility for employees of contractors, and sub-contractors remain with the main contractor who must ensure that they are informed about their responsibility to report any concerns directly to them in the first instance and/or to an identified designated safeguarding/child protection lead in line with this policy and procedure.

Regulated activity providers (employers or volunteer managers of people working in regulated activity in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and personnel suppliers have a legal duty to refer to DBS/PVG where conditions are met. This applies even when a referral has also been made to a local authority safeguarding team or professional regulator.

For further guidance regarding DBS referrals (England, Wales and NI):

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-barring-referrals-to-the-dbs?>

For further guidance regarding PVG referrals (Scotland): <https://www.mygov.scot/pvg-referrals>

## Recruitment of Ex-offenders

Home-Start will treat any applicant for any position (paid or voluntary) within our organisation fairly, and not discriminate unfairly against the subject of criminal records checks on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

We will request the appropriate level of criminal records checks only where it is necessary and relevant to the position sought.

- Where a position requires a criminal record check we will make this clear on the application form, job advert and any other information provided about the post.
- At interview, we will ensure that open and measured discussions can take place about offences.
- Failure to reveal information at interview, that is directly relevant to the position sought, could lead to the withdrawal of an offer of employment.
- At interview, or when receiving a criminal record check which indicates a conviction, we will take into consideration the following: -
  - Whether the conviction is relevant to the position being offered
  - The seriousness of the offence revealed
  - The length of time since the offence took place
  - Whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour
  - Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since offending took place





We will ensure that our staff, trustees and volunteers involved in the recruitment process are aware of the example [Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy](#) and have received relevant training and support.

## Serious/Notable Incidents

It is a requirement of charity regulators that all charities inform them of serious/notable incidents that may occur (an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in or risks significant):

- Alleged or actual abuse or harm to a child or adult beneficiary
- loss of your charity's money or assets
- damage to your charity's property
- harm to your charity's work or reputation

It is the responsibility of the trustees to report a serious/notable incident to their relevant nation's regulator and to complete a [Reportable Incident](#) form for submission to Home-Start UK.

More details can be found at:

[the Charity Commission website](#) (England and Wales)

[the OSCR website](#) (Scotland)

[the Charity Commission NI](#) (Northern Ireland)

## Learning and development

Home-Start has a responsibility to ensure all new staff, trustees and volunteers undertake an induction programme. As part of this induction programme, Home-Start will ensure all staff, trustees and volunteers are made aware of and understand their responsibilities in respect of all policies relating to safeguarding and the protection of children and vulnerable adults, and understand the local procedure for reporting concerns.

Refresher training will occur annually, and any specific training by role will be updated as per guidance on @Home.

## Other sources for help

NSPCC <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/> – 0808 800 5000

Childline [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) - 0800 1111

CEOP – Child Exploitation Online Protection [www.ceop.police.uk/saety-crime](http://www.ceop.police.uk/saety-crime)

thinkyouknow - online safety education programme for CEOP [www.thinkyouknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkyouknow.co.uk)



## APPENDICES

### 1. Contact details

- a. Local Home-Start Strategic Safeguarding/Protection Lead role
- b. Local Home-Start Designated Safeguarding/Protection Lead role (s)
- c. Named Safeguarding/Child Protection Trustee
- d. LADO or Social Care contact for the area

Specific responsibilities of key safeguarding/child protection roles within local Home-Starts.

### 2. Local Home-Start safeguarding/child protection reporting procedure

### 3. Nation specific legislation and definitions

- a. Scotland
- b. England
- c. Wales
- d. Northern Ireland



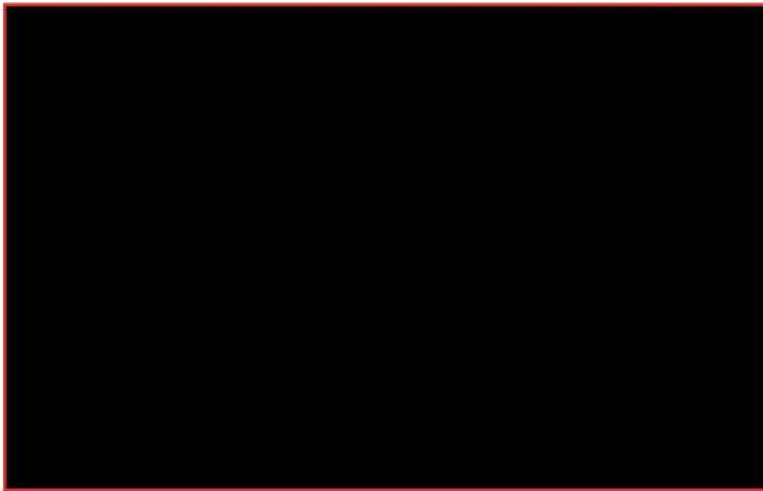


## **APPENDIX 1 - Local Contact Details for Home-Start in Suffolk**

**Strategic Safeguarding/Protection role:**



**Designated Safeguarding Protection role:**



**Trustee with Safeguarding/Protection responsibility:**



**Local External Contacts relevant to locality/nation:**

**i.e. Local Safeguarding Board (England, Wales, NI), Local Social Care (Scotland)**

Name: Customer First

Contact information: 0808 8004005 or email [customer.first@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:customer.first@suffolk.gov.uk)



## Roles and Responsibilities within Home-Start

The trustees retain ultimate responsibility for promoting the welfare of children supported by Home-Start. They should agree:

- the member of staff with responsibility for undertaking the **Strategic Safeguarding/Child Protection Person/Lead/Officer**. This is normally the senior staff member.
- It is recommended that each organiser/co-ordinator responsible for managing staff or volunteers supporting families should be a **Designated Safeguarding/Child Protection Person/Officer/Lead**.

### Note:

In some smaller Home-Starts both roles may be carried out by one person. Although there should always be a deputy able to undertake the same level of responsibilities when the senior role is absent. This may, in some Home-Starts, be a trustee rather than a member of staff.

In each of the four nations the role will be referred to differently. This is typically, but not exclusively, as follows:

- Designated Safeguarding Officer/Lead (England)
- Designated Safeguarding Person (Wales)
- Designated Safeguarding Children Officer (NI)
- Designated Protection Officer (Scotland)

### The role of the Home-Start Strategic role is to:

- Model and promote Home-Start's commitment to safeguarding children/child protection in all aspects of their work and conduct
- Ensure that the safeguarding policy and procedures and code of conduct are available and understood by all trustees, staff and volunteers, and that these are integrated into practice
- Ensure the scheme's Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding and Protecting Children are updated and reviewed annually in line with Home-Start, national and local guidance
- Ensure appropriate training provision and dissemination of information for trustees, staff and volunteers on safeguarding and child protection issues on an annual basis
- Collect monitoring data on all welfare, wellbeing and protection activities across Home-Start and evaluate their effectiveness.
- Take lead responsibility for dealing with safeguarding issues and providing information, advice and support to trustees, staff and volunteers





- Support the Designated Safeguarding/Child Protection People with their responsibilities in keeping children safe, by:
  - ensuring the provision of regular, recorded supervision
  - maintaining an overview of records of concern and action (ROCA) and referrals to children’s social care and collate safeguarding/child protection concerns raised by the Home-Start to identify patterns
  - ensuring that the Safeguarding Adviser or nominated trustee contribute to this overview, in particular where the Strategic Lead is a lone organiser
  - ensuring records are kept appropriately, in line with policy and practice.
  
- Maintain up to date knowledge of national and local safeguarding/child protection procedures and liaise appropriately with local agencies with regard to any issues
- Notify and liaise with trustees and Home-Start UK and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)/ Social Care and/or Police around any allegations of harm or inappropriate behaviour made against staff, volunteers and trustees
- Immediately inform the Chair of Trustees and Home-Start UK in the event of the serious harm or death of a child ([see guidance](#))
- Where possible identify and liaise with a local Specialist Safeguarding/Child Protection Adviser
- Supporting staff and volunteers when an incident has occurred.

**The role of the Home-Start Designated role is to:**

Model and promote Home-Start’s commitment to safeguarding children in all aspects of their work and conduct

- Take responsibility for dealing with concerns about the safety of children raised by staff or volunteers who they supervise, following the local Home-Start’s policies and procedures
- Maintain a clear, factual, dated and signed/initialled record of contact with each supported family, in accordance with Home-Start guidance on record keeping
- Inform the Home-Start’s Strategic Lead of concerns raised and processes followed; ensuring records of concern and action (ROCA) are discussed, signed off and actioned appropriately
- Liaise with relevant agencies and the Local Safeguarding Children Board/Social Care where appropriate about concerns, in accordance with Home-Start’s confidentiality policy
- Ensure the Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy is available to families, including parents/carers and children and young people in Home-Start



- Liaise with Home-Start's Strategic Lead about any concerns, including where there are allegations against trustees, staff and volunteers; in accordance with Home-Start and local child protection policies and procedures
- Immediately inform the Home-Start's Strategic Lead and Home-Start UK in the event of the serious harm or death of a child ([see guidance](#)) and liaise with other agencies as appropriate
- Supporting staff and volunteers when an incident has occurred.

### **Trustee with responsibility for safeguarding/child protection**

Each scheme nominates a trustee who has a working knowledge of safeguarding/child protection or who undertakes local training in order to fulfil that role.

The role of the trustee is to:

- provide a sounding board for staff with a Strategic role or Designated Persons role in order to consider the most appropriate course of action to take where there is a safeguarding/child protection concern in a family
- support the Strategic role to use local procedures appropriately (e.g. for referral, for escalation or dispute resolution)
- contribute to Board discussions about the Home-Start's capacity in working with more complex families, including those where there are child protection concerns
- sign off any Record of Concern & Action forms completed by the Safeguarding/Child Protection Lead where there is a lone organiser
- support the Board and Strategic Lead to monitor and review systems, policy and procedures to ensure good safeguarding/child protection practice within the Home-Start and compliance with the Home-Start Quality Assurance Standards
- undertake spot checks of family and volunteer files
- In some Home-Starts, the Specialist Adviser may agree to undertake 'case load' supervision of the senior worker, at the request of the trustee
- Supporting staff and volunteers when an incident has occurred.

Broader information on a trustee role can be [found here](#) and [here](#).

### **External Local Specialist Safeguarding Adviser to the trustees and staff**

Wherever possible each Home-Start identifies a practicing local safeguarding/child protection adviser to support and advise the local Home-Start with regard to local issues and procedures.

The local specialist adviser is available to the trustees, Strategic Lead role and designated people as appropriate within the Home-Start and may:

- provide a confidential sounding board where there is a safeguarding/child protection concern in a family





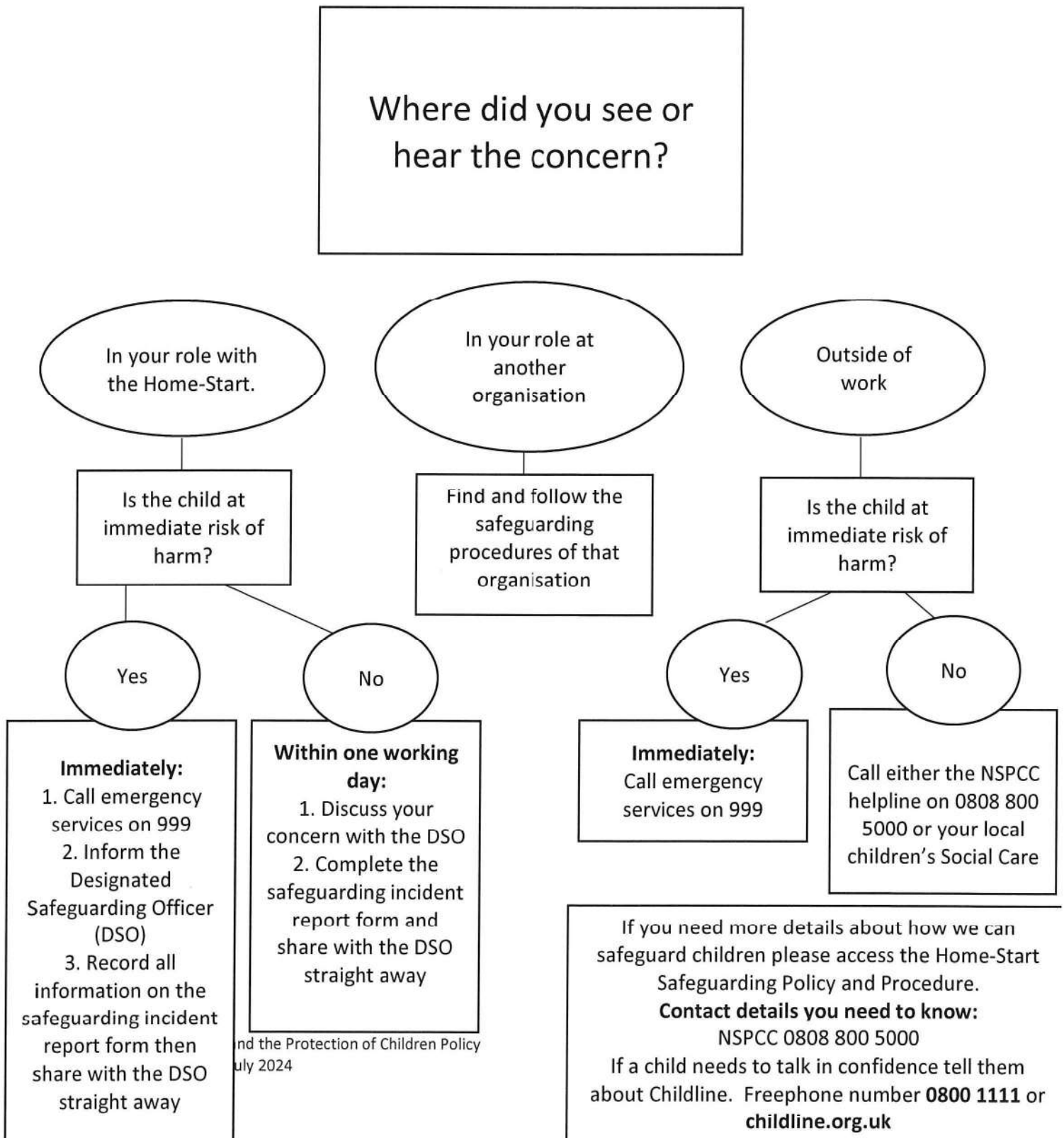
- support the use of local procedures appropriately (e.g. for referral, for escalation or dispute resolution)
- update trustees and the Strategic Lead role about local safeguarding/child protection developments and changes to procedures, policies and agencies
- contribute to Board discussions about local Home-Start capacity in working with more complex families, including those where there are child protection concerns
- support the Board and strategic lead to monitor and review systems, policy and procedures to ensure good practice within the Home-Start and compliance with the Home-Start Quality Assurance Standards
- In some Home-Starts, the Specialist Adviser may agree to undertake 'case load' supervision of the senior worker, at the request of the trustees.



APPENDIX 2 -Local Home-Start safeguarding/child protection reporting procedure

Link for reporting safeguarding concerns <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/keeping-children-safe/reporting-a-child-at-risk-of-harm-abuse-or-neglect-safeguarding/>

EXAMPLE - Simple steps: What to do if you have concerns about a child

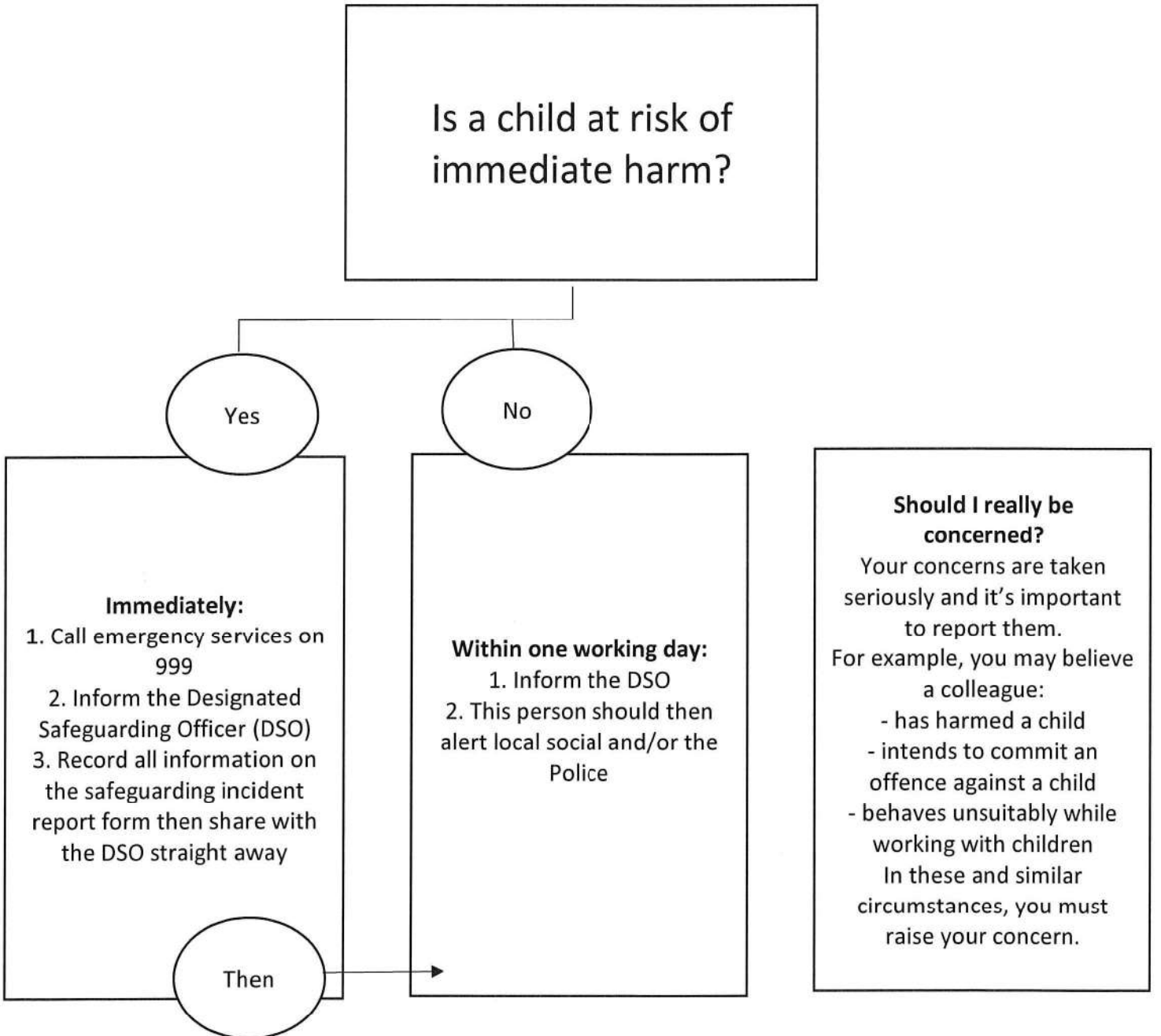






**EXAMPLE –**

**Simple Steps: Concern that a colleague poses a risk to children**



**DO NOT** approach the person who is being accused or discuss the matter with other colleagues, other than the DSO. If the allegation relates to the DSO then the deputy DSO must be informed. In the event that the allegation relates to all of these individuals then you should contact local children's

**Contact details you need to know:**  
NSPCC 0808 800 5000

If a child needs to talk in confidence tell them about Childline. Freephone number **0800 1111** or [childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk)







## APPENDIX 3 – Nation specific legislation

### England:

#### Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England, including (and in no particular order):

- [Children Act 1989](#);
- [Children Act 2004](#);
- [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#);
- [Working together to safeguard children \(Department for Education, 2018\)](#);
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners \(Department of Education, 2015\)](#)
- [Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation \(FGM\) \(Home Office, 2016\)](#);
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989](#);
- [Children \(Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment\) \(Wales\) Act 2020](#)
- [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#).

## DEFINITIONS

### Who is a 'child'?

[Working together to safeguard children \(Department for Education, 2018\)](#) defines a 'child' as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.

### What is Abuse?

To inform this protecting children policy and procedure Home-Start have adopted the categories and definitions of abuse and neglect set out in the [Working together to safeguard children \(Department for Education, 2018\)](#).

#### Abuse

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

#### Physical Abuse



A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

### **Emotional Abuse**

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation is 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 (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) 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.

### **Neglect**

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: a. provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion





from home or abandonment) b. protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger c. ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers) d. ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Where there are concerns about a child, but uncertainty as to whether there is a risk of abuse or actual abuse, advice and guidance from the DSO should always be sought. It is always better to err on the side of caution rather than take no action at all. If in doubt always first contact the DSO or their deputy; if unavailable advice can be sought from the local Social Care, the Police and the NSPCC Helpline.

**Other areas of concern include:**

**Female genital mutilation:** an extreme form of physical, sexual and emotional assault.

**Honour-based abuse and forced marriage:** A marriage conducted without the full and free consent of both parties

**Child trafficking:** Involves recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt, exchange or transfer of control of a child under the age of 18 years.

**Criminal exploitation:** the action of an individual or group to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child under the age of 18 into any criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator



