

**2.07 | SAFEGUARDING POLICY SECTION GUIDE**

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**2.07 CHILD PROTECTION / SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

This policy is written in line with the “Working together To Safeguard Children” Guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Published July 2018 updated February 2019. Nothing is more important than children’s welfare. Children who need help and protection deserve high quality and effective support as soon as a need is identified. We want a system that responds to the needs and interests of children and families and not the other way around. In such a system, practitioners will be clear about what is required of them individually, and how they need to work together in partnership with others.

Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

This guidance applies to all organisations and agencies who have functions relating to children. Specifically, this guidance applies to all local authorities, clinical commissioning groups, police and all other organisations and agencies. It applies, in its entirety, to all schools. It applies to all children up to the age of 18 years whether living with their families, in state care, or living independently. This document should be complied with unless exceptional circumstances arise.

This child centred approach is fundamental to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child. A child centred approach means keeping the child in focus when making decisions about their lives and working in partnership with them and their families.

This policy applies to all children in our care and all employees of North Lakes Children’s Services and is mandatory for all agency staff and volunteers. This policy is reviewed annually.

This policy is written in conjunction with the relevant Safeguarding partners in the homes geographical area, Safeguarding partners are: Local Authorities, Clinical commissioning Groups and Chief Officers of The Police. If any amendments are requested by the placing authority these will be reviewed and amended to ensure that the children within our care have clear agreed procedures and communication between professional services, to ensure the highest level of safeguarding possible.

The policy makes reference to the Sexual offences act 2003 and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups act 2006 these are brief summary explanations, each home has the full acts available for reference for all staff. There has been amendments to these acts however these are to highlight intended governmental changes that are not currently law. All information is subject to the GPDR and the Data Protection **Act 2018**.

North Lakes Children’s Services comply with the freedom of information act 2000 a request for specific information can be made to us which will be acknowledged in writing and a response will be provided within the statutory timescale of 20 working days as defined by the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Act defines a number of exemptions, which may

prevent release of the information you have requested. This will include information which is child specific and confidential. There will be an assessment, however if any of the exemption categories apply then the information will not be released. You will be informed if this is the case, including your rights of appeal. If the information you request contains reference to a third party then they may be consulted prior to decision being taken on whether or not to release the information.

North Lakes Children's Services are committed to safeguarding the welfare of children in its care and fully recognises the need to respond to Child Protection/ Safeguarding concerns in a way that allows the children's needs to be met in a sensitive and supportive manner. This policy applies to ALL children in the care of North Lakes Children's Services. Every child has equal rights for upholding their personal safety and protection. This Policy is mandatory for all staff employed by North Lakes Children's Services. All children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, beliefs, social background or culture.

This policy is written in conjunction with NLCS Complaints policy, missing from Care policy, Staffing Policy, Safer recruitment, Whistle-blowing, E-Safety Policy, DBS Policy, equality and diversity policy, equal opportunities. Also demonstrated through staff induction – internally and externally – CWDC Induction training. VIA training offers our safeguarding training, Prevent training and this has informed this policy as has children's rights training.

#### **CHILDREN HAVE SAID WHAT THEY NEED:**

Children are clear about what they want from an effective safeguarding system. These asks from children should guide the behaviour of practitioners.

- vigilance: to have adults notice when things are troubling them
- understanding and action: to understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon
- stability: to be able to develop an ongoing stable relationship of trust with those helping them
- respect: to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not
- information and engagement: to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans
- explanation: to be informed of the outcome of assessments and decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response
- support: to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family
- advocacy: to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views
- protection: to be protected against all forms of abuse and discrimination and the right to special protection and help if a refugee. Anyone working with children should see and speak

#### **2.07.1. Aims and Objectives**

**Protecting children is everyone's business. The New guidance sets out a Co-ordinated Approach, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.**

Anyone working with children should see and speak to the child; listen to what they say; take their views seriously; and work with them and their families collaboratively when deciding how to support their needs. Special provision should be put in place to support dialogue with children who have communication difficulties, unaccompanied asylum seeking

children, refugees and those children who are victims of modern slavery and/or trafficking. This child-centred approach is supported by:

- the Children Act 1989. This Act requires local authorities to give due regard to a child's wishes when determining what services to provide under section 17 and before making decisions about action to be taken to protect individual children under section 47. These duties complement requirements relating to the wishes and feelings of children who are, or may be, looked-after (section 22(4)), including those who are provided with accommodation under section 20 and children taken into police protection (section 46(3)(d))
- the Equality Act 2010, which puts a responsibility on public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. This applies to the process of identification of need and risk faced by the individual child and the process of assessment. No child or group of children must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access effective services which meet their particular needs
- the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)<sup>3</sup>. This is an international agreement that protects the rights of children and provides a child centred framework for the development of services to children. The UK Government ratified the UNCRC in 1991 and, by doing so, recognises children's rights to expression and receiving information

Everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe. 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.

In order that organisations, agencies and practitioners collaborate effectively, it is vital that everyone working with children and families, including those who work with parents/carers, understands the role they should play and the role of other practitioners. They should be aware of, and comply with, the published arrangements set out by the local safeguarding partners.

Children have a right to protection from neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse. North Lakes Children's Services as a whole has a responsibility for the protection of children and for reporting any concerns about a child's welfare or safety. In particular, staff have an important role because of their regular contact with the children, and their concern for the welfare and development of the children at the home.

Dealing with suspected or actual child abuse is always stressful and upsetting. The Designated Child Protection Officer has lead responsibility within the home's to ensure that child protection concerns are taken forward to the appropriate agencies. All staff need to know how to recognise the indications of abuse and understand what action they should take and where to access support.

As an organisation it is paramount that we keep up to date with current practice and procedure. This is done by ensuring NLCS Ltd are members of organisations such as Social Care Association, SEBDA, Ofsted as well as being linked to the internet to access Cumbria Local Authority Policies and Procedures as well being part of the mailing system.

In addition to their operational roles, the Head of Care and Registered Managers have a key strategic role in the development, maintenance and monitoring of all North Lakes Children's Services policies and practice. They also ensure that all staff are aware of the indicators of abuse, are familiar with the policy and procedures and in providing information to, Social Services and other agencies in relation to child protection activity, as well as providing information to senior managers within the organisation.

All staff at North Lakes Children's Services are proactive in promoting the welfare of the children by working together to safeguard the children in their care. The home and school will always refer any suspicion of abuse or any children at risk of significant harm.

**IF YOU REQUIRE MORE INFORMATION ON WHO TO CONTACT, DISRIPTIONS OF CASE STUDIES AND NOTIFICATION PROFORMA CONTACT THE SAFEGUARDING HUB 03332401727**

### **2.07.2. Guidelines**

- All staff have a duty to report any suspicion of any child who may be at risk of significant harm or abuse.
- Any member of staff who receives a disclosure will record the facts as told to them on an information sheet, which should be kept confidential and should be given to named designated officer.
- No member of staff will ask leading questions.

Staff will note:-

- The requirement that they do not ask leading questions or give inappropriate guarantees of confidentiality as the information may need to be passed on.
- The requirement to report to the Police any evidence of children becoming involved in Prostitution, or of unauthorised persons picking children up, contacting children in the home, or people being observed trying to make contact outside the home.
- The instruction for action to be taken if an allegation of suspicion of abuse becomes known to them involving the Registered Manager or the designated person or the person at that time in day-to-day charge of the home.
- Staff will explain to the child that in matters of child protection, confidentiality cannot be upheld.
- All information will be passed on immediately to the senior on duty, unless to do so would put a child at risk of significant harm (see Whistle Blowing Policy).
- Senior staff to contact Designated Child Protection Officer
- All staff will receive training in Child Protection.
- All child Protection issues will be monitored by Section 33.
- All information and referral forms are available through the relevant local safeguarding partner for Cumbria: [www.cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk](http://www.cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk)
- Referrals should be made through customer advisers who are based at the Central Triage Team in Penrith which covers the whole of Cumbria.
- If you are uncertain whether to refer a child you can ask to speak to a duty social worker to discuss your concerns and provide you with advice.
- Referrals that suggest an immediate risk to a child will be taken by phone but professionals who wish to refer children should use the Children's Services Referral Form plus CAF pre-assessment checklist to make non-urgent referrals or confirm an urgent referral in writing. (Referral Flowchart for staff guidance)

- The Section 33 Care Advisor and Ofsted within 24 hours (in accordance with Schedule 5 notifications).
- Staff should also contact the police with their concern (ensure log number is recorded).
- All information will be dated and signed and kept in a locked drawer within the Registered Manager's Office.
- The home recognises the Charter of Children's Rights.

### 2.07.3. Who is Responsible?

All staff have a mandatory duty of care and duty to respond to any suspicion of abuse or any child at risk of any significant harm. Each home has a direct named person to contact at their work place.

The <b>Designated Child Protection Officer</b> should be appropriately qualified to local and national child protection training.	<b>Caroline Rae</b> <b>07879 083540</b> <a href="mailto:Caroline.Rae@nlcs.uk.com">Caroline.Rae@nlcs.uk.com</a>
<b>Deputy Officer</b> is named contacted for the individual home if unavailable the home should contact Designated child protection officer. The designated officer should also be contacted if home named person is absent i.e. holiday, illness	<b>Kirby Moor House:</b> <b>Kerry Friel</b> Registered Manager <b>01697 742598</b> <a href="mailto:Kerry.Friel@nlcs.uk.com">Kerry.Friel@nlcs.uk.com</a>
<b>Deputy Officer</b> is named contacted for the individual home if unavailable the home should contact Designated child protection officer. The designated officer should also be contacted if home named person is absent i.e. holiday, illness	<b>Woodend House:</b> <b>Jeanette Wilson</b> Registered Manager <b>01228 560629</b> <a href="mailto:Janette.wilson@nlcs.uk.com">Janette.wilson@nlcs.uk.com</a>
<b>Deputy Officer</b> is named contacted for the individual home if unavailable the home should contact Designated child protection officer. The designated officer should also be contacted if home named person is absent i.e. holiday, illness	<b>Warwick House:</b> <b>Matthew Graham</b> Registered Manger (in process of registration) <b>01228 631638</b> <a href="mailto:Matthew.Graham@nlcs.uk.com">Matthew.Graham@nlcs.uk.com</a>
<b>Deputy Officer</b> is named contacted for the individual home if unavailable the home should contact Designated child protection officer. The designated officer should also be contacted if home named person is absent i.e. holiday, illness	<b>Kenilworth House:</b> <b>Sandra Seggie</b> Registered Manager <b>01697 270775</b> <a href="mailto:Sandra.seggie@nlcs.uk.com">Sandra.seggie@nlcs.uk.com</a>

#### Myth-busting guide to information sharing

Sharing information enables practitioners and agencies to identify and provide appropriate services that safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Below are common myths that may hinder effective information sharing.

#### Data protection legislation is a barrier to sharing information

**No** – the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prohibit the collection and sharing of personal information, but rather provide a framework to ensure that personal information is shared appropriately. In particular, the Data Protection Act 2018 balances the rights of the information subject (the individual whom the information is about) and the possible need to share information about them.

#### Consent is always needed to share personal information

**No** – you do not necessarily need consent to share personal information. Wherever possible, you should seek consent and be open and honest with the individual from the outset as to why, what, how and with whom, their information will be shared. You should seek consent where an individual may not expect their information to be passed on. When you gain consent to share information, it must be explicit, and freely given. There may be some circumstances where it is not appropriate to seek consent, because the individual cannot give consent, or it is not reasonable to obtain consent, or because to gain consent would put a child's safety at risk.

**Personal information collected by one organisation/agency cannot be disclosed to another**

**No** – this is not the case, unless the information is to be used for a purpose incompatible with the purpose for which it was originally collected. In the case of children in need, or children at risk of significant harm, it is difficult to foresee circumstances where information law would be a barrier to sharing personal information with other practitioners.

**The common law duty of confidence and the Human Rights Act 1998 prevent the sharing of personal information**

**No** – this is not the case. In addition to the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR, practitioners need to balance the common law duty of confidence and the Human Rights Act 1998 against the effect on individuals or others of not sharing the information. #

**IT Systems are often a barrier to effective information sharing**

**No** – IT systems, such as the Child Protection Information Sharing project (CP-IS), can be useful for information sharing. IT systems are most valuable when practitioners use the shared data to make more informed decisions about how to support and safeguard a child.

**2.07.4. Important Telephone Numbers Check Numbers**

Early Help:	03003 033896
Children's Services Mon-thus9-5.00 Fri 9-430	03003 033896
Children's Services out of hours and weekend	03003 033896
LADO is the Local Authority designated officer who should be contacted if a child has made a complaint or disclosure against a member of staff.	03003 033892 or Email lado@cumbria.gov.uk
Carlisle Police None Emergency	101 state area
Carlisle Police Emergency	999
Police anti-terrorism hotline on	0800 789 321
NSPCC Radicalisation helpline	0808 800 5000

**ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

individual organisations and agencies working with children and families have specific statutory duties to promote the welfare of children and ensure they are protected from harm.

**2.7.5. What is child abuse?**

Working together to safeguard children 2018 defines abuse as:

**Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, suffocating, poisoning burning, scalding or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Munchausen's Syndrome by proxy or

fabricated or induced illness may also constitute a physical abuse whereby a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health in, a child.

**Emotional Abuse** - Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse** - Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activity may involve physical contact, including penetration or non-penetration acts. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Neglect** - Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or a carer failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to the appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs.

**Bullying** - Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) and emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group).

The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, cause them significant harm (including self-harm). All settings in which children are provided with services or are living away from home should have in place rigorously enforced anti-bullying strategies.

**Child sexual exploitation** - Child sexual exploitation is when someone grooms and controls a child for a sexual purpose.

The terms 'child sexual exploitation' or the 'commercial sexual exploitation of children' are used to refer to a range of illegal and abusive activities. These activities can be broadly separated into two areas:

- sexual exploitation through street grooming
- Online sexual exploitation.

**Sexual exploitation through street grooming can include:**

- Grooming a child for a sexual purpose. This might involve befriending the child, gaining their trust, giving them drugs, alcohol or gifts, asking them to perform sexual acts as a favour or in exchange for something
- the movement of children within the UK for the purpose of sexually abusing them (also referred to as internal trafficking)
- the trafficking of children into the UK from other countries for the purpose of sexually abusing them

- controlling a child through physical or psychological means or through the use of drugs for a sexual purpose
- receiving money or goods in payment for someone to have sex with a child (also referred to as child prostitution)
- paying or exchanging goods for sex with a child.

**Online sexual exploitation can include:**

- Grooming child online for the purpose of sexually abusing them. This might involve an adult pretending to be a child, befriending the child through online chat rooms, social networking websites, email, mobile telephone messaging, gaining their trust, stalking their online activities
- asking children to participate in non-contact sexual activities such as engaging in sexual conversations online or via mobile telephone
- asking children to take and share indecent images of themselves online or through a mobile telephone
- asking children to display sexualized behaviours or perform sexual acts that are recorded or shared live via webcam
- the creation, storage and distribution of child abuse images (also referred to as child pornography or indecent images)
- Arranging to meet a child in person for the purpose of sexually abusing them.

**Internet safety: The Risks**

- Inappropriate contact: from people, who may wish to abuse, exploit or bully them.
- Inappropriate conduct: because of their own and others' online behaviour, such as the personal information they make public. They may also become either targets or perpetrators of cyberbullying.
- Inappropriate content: being able to access sexually explicit, racist, violent, extremist or other harmful material.
- Commercialism: directing aggressive advertising and marketing material at children.
- Children gaining access to your own personal information stored on your computer.
- Children enabling viruses and spyware by careless or misinformed use of your computer.

**Keeping children people Safe Online** - PLEASE REFER TO NLCS E-SAFETY POLICY

There are several ways to safeguard children. Undoubtedly the most effective is to educate them from an early age about the risks they may encounter when online. What these risks are, how to spot them and what action to take. There are a number of online age-appropriate educational resources available to parents / guardians and teachers, and children themselves, covering every aspect of online safety for children.

**SAFEGUARDING AGAINST RADICALISATION:**

Children can be exposed to different views and receive information from various sources. Some of these views may be considered radical or extreme. Radicalisation is the process through which a person comes to support or be involved in extremist ideologies. It can result in a person becoming drawn into terrorism and is in itself a form of harm. **Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. It includes calls for the death of members of the British armed forces** (HM Government, 2011). Challenging and tackling extremism needs to be a shared effort (HM Government, 2013). For this reason, the Government has given some types of organizations in England, Scotland and Wales a duty to identify vulnerable children and prevent them from being drawn into terrorism. North Lakes has a responsibility to protect

every child from harm. This includes becoming radicalized and/or being exposed to extreme views.

The process of radicalization may involve:

- Being groomed online or in person
- exploitation, including sexual exploitation
- psychological manipulation
- exposure to violent material and other inappropriate information
- the risk of physical harm or death through extremist acts.

It happens gradually so children who are affected may not realize what it is that they are being drawn into.

### **Vulnerability factors**

Anyone can be radicalized but there are some factors which may make a children more vulnerable. These include:

- being easily influenced or impressionable
- having low self-esteem or being isolated
- feeling that rejection/discrimination/injustice is taking place in society or their life
- experiencing community tension amongst different groups
- being disrespectful or angry towards family and peers
- having a strong need for acceptance or belonging
- experiencing grief such as loss of a loved one.

These factors will not always lead to radicalisation.

### **Indicators of radicalisation**

If a child is being radicalised their day-to-day behaviour may become increasingly centred around an extremist ideology/group/cause, they may:

- spend increasing amounts of time talking to people with extreme views (this includes online and offline communication)
- change their style of dress or personal appearance
- lose interest in friends and activities that are not associated with the extremist ideology, group or cause
- have material or symbols associated with an extreme cause
- try to recruit others to join the cause

(Home Office, 2015).

### **What to do if you think a child is being radicalised**

If you think a child or the people around them are involved in radicalisation **and there is an immediate risk of harm**, call 999 straight away.

If it isn't an emergency, then:

- contacting your nominated child protection lead – see table in this document
- calling the police anti-terrorism hotline on [0800 789 321](tel:0800789321)
- Police anti-terrorism hotline on 0800 789 321
- NSPCC Radicalisation helpline 0800 800 5000

The Department for Education has a dedicated telephone helpline for schools in England who have non-emergency concerns about extremism: [020 7340 7264](tel:02073407264).

### **Protecting children from radicalisation, what can North Lakes do?**

- include radicalisation in your safeguarding policies and procedures

- identify those at risk and make sure everyone in your organisation knows when to report a concern, consider where a child has come from and their chronology
- work in partnership with other organisations across the community – police, LA for contextual safeguarding
- promote positive messages of tolerance and community cohesion
- help parents and children get support.
- Have appropriate web filtering systems in place to protect children from extremist online content and terrorist content.
- UNDERGO PREVENT DUTY TRAINING.
- Build children’s resilience to radicalisation and extremism by: helping to improve their self-esteem and self-confidence. Promoting inclusivity and community cohesion. Providing a safe environment for debating a range of issues such as British values, recognising and managing risk, making safer choices and the impact of pressure from others. Helping children understand how they can influence and participate in decision making.

### **Supporting vulnerable children and families**

Getting early help to those at risk is vital. Work with other groups and agencies in the local community to provide children and families with appropriate support, welfare and pastoral care.

### **CHILD TRAFFICKING AND MODERN SLAVERY:**

**Child trafficking is child abuse.** It's defined as recruiting, moving, receiving and harbouring children for the purpose of exploitation (HM Department for Education (DfE) and Home Office, 2011; Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and Police Service of Northern Ireland, 2011; Scottish Government, 2013; Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board, 2020). Child trafficking is a form of modern slavery (HM Government, 2014).

Many children are trafficked into the UK from overseas, but children can also be trafficked from one part of the UK to another.

Children are trafficked for:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- criminal activity, including: cannabis cultivation, street crime - such as pickpocketing, begging and bag theft, moving drugs, benefit fraud, immigration fraud, selling pirated goods, such as DVDs
- forced marriage
- domestic servitude, including: cleaning, childcare, cooking
- forced labour, including working in: restaurants, nail bars, factories, agriculture
- illegal adoption
- unreported private fostering arrangements (for any exploitative purpose).

This list is not exhaustive and children who are trafficked are often exploited in more than one way.

### **How child trafficking happens**

Traffickers may use grooming techniques to gain the trust of a child, family or community. They may trick, force or persuade children to leave their homes.

Child trafficking can involve a network of organised criminals who recruit, transport and exploit children within or across borders. Some people in the network might not be directly

involved in trafficking a child but play a part in other ways – such as falsifying documents, bribery, owning or renting premises, or money laundering (Europol, 2011). Child trafficking can also be organised by individuals and children's own families.

### **Impact of child trafficking - Effects on children**

Being trafficked is abuse in itself. But trafficked children may experience other forms of abuse and neglect that impact on their physical and mental health and social and emotional development. These include: sexual abuse and exploitation, physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect.

### **Impacts of child trafficking and exploitation include:**

- poor health and illness, which may be left untreated
- limited or no access to education
- physical and mental exhaustion.

Children may also experience emotional challenges, such as missing family, friends, communities and cultures. This can lead to: feeling isolated and lonely, disturbed sleep patterns, depression and/or anxiety, headaches, panic attacks, eating difficulties, self-harm and suicidal thoughts, drug and alcohol use as a means to escape from problems, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

### **Recognising child trafficking: Signs and indicators**

Children who are trafficked are intentionally hidden and isolated from the services and communities who can identify and protect them. While identification may be difficult, there will be signs that you can watch for.

### **Children who have been trafficked or are at risk of being trafficked may:**

- have to do excessive housework chores
- rarely leave the house and have limited freedom of movement
- not have any documents (or have falsified documents)
- give a prepared story which is very similar to stories given by other children
- be unable or reluctant to give details of accommodation or personal details
- not be registered with a school or a GP practice
- have a history with missing links and unexplained moves
- be cared for by adults who are not their parents or carers
- not have a good quality relationship with their adult carers
- be one among a number of unrelated children found at one address
- receive unexplained or unidentified phone calls whilst in a care placement or temporary accommodation

(Department for Education and Home Office, 2011).

### **Signs an adult may be trafficking a child include:**

- making multiple visa applications for different children
- acting as a guarantor for multiple visa applications for children
- having previously acted as the guarantor on visa applications for visitors who have not left the UK when the visa expired

(Department for Education and Home Office, 2011).

### **Risks and vulnerability factors**

Boys and girls of all ages can be victims of trafficking. Children who have been trafficked may be from the UK or another country.

**Children are particularly vulnerable to trafficking if they come from an area where:**

- there is poverty
  - there is or has recently been a war
  - education levels are low
  - there is discrimination or persecution
  - there is political conflict and economic uncertainty
- (Department for Education and Home Office, 2011; Europol, 2011).

Generally, human trafficking happens because of: demand for cheap or free labour; inequalities between countries – such as different education or employment opportunities and a lack of equal opportunities, discrimination or abuse.

**Responding to child trafficking**

Child trafficking is child abuse. It requires a child protection, multi-agency response in line with current legislation. Stop child trafficking and slavery in its tracks leaflets (NSPCC, 2015) provide detailed information about responding to the signs of child trafficking.

**Reporting**

If you think a child is in immediate danger, contact the police on 999. If you're worried about a child but they are not in immediate danger, you should share your concerns. Inform the designated safeguarding lead. Contact the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk). Where trained professionals will talk through your concerns with you and give you expert advice. Contact the police.

Services will risk assess the situation and take action to protect the child as appropriate either through statutory involvement or other support. This may include making a referral to the local authority.

**Assessment**

When speaking to a child who has been trafficked:

- offer reassurance, explain that you can help them and that it's safe for them to talk to you
- explain to the child that they've done nothing wrong
- remember that accompanying adults may not be parents or have the authority to care for the child
- speak with the child directly, without the accompanying adult present (this could put the child at further risk)
- If an interpreter is required, it's good practice to avoid using an interpreter from the same area in the country of origin as the victim. This reduces any perceived link the child may make between the interpreter and known people in their country of origin.

**Understanding child trafficking as abuse**

Children who have been trafficked may not see themselves as victims. They may find it hard to understand that what's happening is abuse - especially if they've been groomed. Children may think they played a part in their abuse or that they're guilty of breaking the law.

**Talking about their experiences**

Children who have been trafficked may find it difficult to tell anyone what's happened to them. They may also tell their stories with obvious errors, inconsistencies or a lack of reality. Some traffickers compose stories for victims to learn in case they are approached by the

authorities. Children may feel guilty or ashamed about the abuse they've suffered. They may also be too scared to speak out, frightened of:

- all adults and authorities
- what will happen to themselves, their friends and their family
- judgement from their community and families
- being prosecuted for a crime
- being returned to their home country, where their situation may be even worse
- the effects of Juju or witchcraft rituals that were performed during their experiences.
- If a child is suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), they may have difficulty recalling details or have blanks in their memory.

### **Training for professionals who work with children**

To identify and support children who have come to the UK from overseas, professionals need training and professional development which covers:

- the impact of migration and displacement on children
- approaches to working with migrant and asylum seeking children, and children who have been trafficked
- information on safeguarding and child protection issues in other parts of the world
- up-to-date information on legislation, policy and guidance on trafficking and modern slavery.

### **When a child has been identified as a victim of trafficking they need to be appropriately protected and supported.**

If a child who has been trafficked is placed in local authority care, there is a strong possibility they may go missing. It's vital to plan for this in advance – make sure you have details that can be quickly circulated to highlight that a vulnerable child at risk of further abuse is missing.

### **WHAT IS COUNTY LINES?**

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation where urban gangs persuade, coerce or force children to store drugs and money and/or transport them to suburban areas, market towns and coastal towns (Home Office, 2018). It can happen in any part of the UK and is against the law and **a form of child abuse.**

Children may be criminally exploited in multiple ways. Other forms of criminal exploitation include child sexual exploitation, trafficking, gang and knife crime. County lines gangs are highly organised criminal networks that use sophisticated, frequently evolving techniques to groom children and evade capture by the police. Perpetrators use children to maximise profits and distance themselves from the criminal act of physically dealing drugs (National Crime agency, 2018). Children do the majority of the work and take the most risk.

Dedicated mobile phone lines or “deal lines” are used to help facilitate county lines drug deals. Phones are usually cheap, disposable and old fashioned, because they are changed frequently to avoid detection by the police. Gangs use the phones to receive orders and contact children to instruct them where to deliver drugs. This may be to a local dealer or drug user, or a dealer or drug user in another county.

Phrases that children may use to refer to county lines include:

- 'running a line'
- 'going OT/out there'
- 'going country'

'going cunch'.

These all refer to going out of town to deliver drugs or money (Thurrock Council, 2020).

### **Risks**

County lines is a cross-cutting issue that often overlaps with other forms of abuse and criminal exploitation. It can lead to serious physical and emotional harm to children (Home Office, 2020a).

### **Criminalisation**

If adults who work with children don't understand that county lines is a form of abuse, they may see children involved in county lines activity as criminals rather than as victims of criminal exploitation (Children's Society, 2019). This can lead to children not getting the safeguarding support and protection they need.

### **Drugs**

Perpetrators may use drugs and alcohol to entice children into the gang lifestyle. In some cases gangs trick children into incurring drug debts that they then have to pay off through county lines activity. This is often referred to as 'debt bondage'.

### **Physical violence**

There is a strong link between county lines activity and: serious violence such as knife and gun crime, the use of substances such as acid as a weapon, homicide (Home Office, 2018).

Conflict between rival gangs that are in dispute over who controls an area can lead to serious injury or death for children who get caught in the wrong place.

The fear of serious physical violence as revenge for disrespecting, 'snitching' or 'grassing' is one of the things that prevents children from leaving gangs or seeking help from the police and other agencies.

### **Sexual abuse and exploitation**

As well as being used to transport drugs, county lines gangs may sexually abuse and exploit children of any gender (National Crime Agency, 2018). This can happen through: children being forced into sexual activity with gang members or for the gang's financial gain.

Vulnerable children being made to work off drug debts through sexual exploitation as 'payment' (this might happen after the child has been coerced into becoming dependent on drugs by the gang). Children being groomed into what they believe is a romantic relationship with a gang member which then leads to exploitation (National Crime Agency, 2018).

Some children are forced to transport drugs in ways that are invasive and harmful to their bodies. Children may be forced to swallow bags of drugs to transport them, which could potentially be life threatening. The practice of 'plugging' is also common, whereby drugs are inserted into a child's rectum or vagina. This is a form of sexual abuse and in some cases it can cause a child's death (Ofsted et al, 2018).

### **Trafficking and missing children**

Children can be trafficked to locations far away from where they live for long periods of time by a county lines gang. They may end up staying in unsuitable accommodation in an area that is unknown to them. This might include short term holiday lets or budget hotels.

### **Cuckooing**

Cuckooing happens when a county lines gang takes over the home of a vulnerable adult by coercion or force, and use it as a base to deal drugs from. The vulnerable adult may have issues with substance misuse or mental health problems, be elderly or disabled or be in debt to the gang. These factors can make it easier for the gang to exploit and control them. Children can be forced or coerced to stay at cuckooed addresses for long periods of time to deal drugs. They may be on call for the gang 24 hours a day (National Crime Agency, 2018). A cuckooed address is sometimes referred to as a 'bando' or a 'spot' by county lines gangs (Thurrock Council, 2020).

### **Financial exploitation and abuse**

Gangs are known to launder money from drug sales through children's bank accounts, either by using an existing account or forcing or persuading the child to open a new one (Children's Society, 2019). County lines gangs might refer to 'squares' - meaning cash cards, and 'deets' - meaning bank details (Safe4Me, 2019).

### **Grooming**

The grooming process involves the gang: seeking out a child to exploit, observing the child for vulnerabilities, finding out what the child's needs and wants are and manipulating the child into believing that being in the gang can fulfil these needs. Once they have identified a child, the gang will make some form of contact and the grooming process will begin. This could be in person or via mobile phone. Social media profiles may also be used to glamourise gang life and entice children. Some children are groomed through family members, for instance if they have a sibling or relative who is already involved with a county lines gang. County lines gangs offer money and status to attract children. Children may also be attracted to joining a gang by the prospect of belonging to a 'family' that will protect them if their own family feels unstable or unsafe.

The following have been identified as key places where county lines gangs target and approach vulnerable children:

- schools and further and higher educational institutions
- special educational needs schools
- places for alternative provision outside of mainstream education
- foster homes
- homeless shelters.

Once a child is part of a county lines gang their loyalty and commitment will be tested. The gang will begin to trap the child by making them feel powerless to leave. This might include threats of violence if they leave, making the child feel like they are betraying their new 'family', or telling the child they will get in trouble if they seek help because they have committed a criminal offence (Children's Society, 2019).

### **Who is vulnerable to county lines exploitation?**

Any child could potentially be at risk of criminal exploitation by a county lines gang. Factors that make a county lines gang more likely to target, groom and exploit a child include: the child having experienced neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse in the past, social isolation or social difficulties, poverty, homelessness or insecure accommodation status, connections with other people involved in gangs, having a learning disability, having mental health problems, having substance misuse issues, being in care or having a history of being in care, being excluded from mainstream education (Home Office, 2020a).

Permanent exclusion from mainstream education has been identified as a critical event that can lead to children becoming vulnerable to criminal exploitation (Child Safeguarding

Practice Review Panel, 2020). County lines gangs can take advantage of the lack of structure, loss of a sense of belonging and feeling of rejection that exclusion can elicit in a children. The average age of children who are exploited through county lines activity is 15-16 years old, but children as young as 12 have also been reported to have been involved (Home Office, 2020a).

### **Signs that a children may be involved in criminal exploitation**

The following signs may indicate that a child is being exploited by a county lines gang:

- frequently going missing from school, home or care
- travelling to locations, or being found in areas they have no obvious connections with, including seaside or market towns
- unwillingness to explain their whereabouts
- acquiring money, clothes, accessories or mobile phones which they seem unable to account for
- receiving excessive texts or phone calls at all hours of the day
- having multiple mobile phone handsets or sim cards
- withdrawing or having sudden changes in personality, behaviour or the language they use
- having relationships with controlling or older individuals and groups
- unexplained injuries
- carrying weapons
- significant decline in school results or performance
- being isolated from peers or social networks
- associating with or being interested in gang culture
- self-harming or having significant changes in mental health

### **The concept of significant harm**

The children act 1989 and 2004 introduced the concept of significant harm that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interest of the child. Significant harm is measured against the severity, extent, duration, frequency, extent of premeditated and the degree of the threat and coercion involved. It also takes account of the effect on the child and the degree of difficulty in helping the child overcome the adverse impact of the ill treatment.

## **Female genital mutilation (FGM),**

Female genital mutilation (FGM), also known as 'female genital cutting', 'female genital mutilation/cutting' or 'cutting', refers to 'all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons'. FGM is practiced for a variety of complex reasons, usually in the belief that it is beneficial for the girl. It has no health benefits and harms girls and women in many ways. FGM is a human rights violation and a form of child abuse, breaching the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and is a severe form of violence against women and girls.

### **Prevalence**

FGM is practiced in at least 28 African countries. The single most important risk factor determining whether a woman undergoes a ritual procedure is her country of origin. Any

woman who comes from an FGM practicing country falls within the at risk group, especially if the prevalence is high e.g. Somalia, Egypt, Sudan.

FGM is practised mainly in Africa (about 30 countries) - the majority of women from Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone will have had some form of FGM, but it is also practised, though to a lesser extent, in the Middle East, India and Indonesia. The global incidence is 130 million with 2 million experiencing a procedure annually.

It is estimated that over 20,000 girls under the age of 15 are at risk of FGM in the UK each year, and that 66,000 women in the UK are living with the consequences of FGM.

Types of FGM (World Health Organisation Classification)

Type 1: Clitoridectomy – partial or total removal of the clitoris. Occasionally only the prepuce (clitoral foreskin) is removed;

Type 2: Partial or total removal of the clitoris and labia minora with or without excision of the labia majora;

Type 3: Infibulation – removal of the labia minora or labia majora with a seal being formed through healing of opposing wound edges. The clitoris may or may not be removed. A small hole is left to allow the passage of menstrual flow and urine;

Type 4: Any other harmful procedure on the female genitalia for non-medical purposes including piercing, scraping, pricking and cauterising.

FGM is performed at different ages and can occur in early childhood (often between the ages of five and eight years), during adolescence, before marriage or during the first pregnancy.

FGM is considered to be a form of child abuse (it is categorised under the headings of both physical abuse and emotional abuse) as it is illegal and is performed on a child who is unable to resist or give informed consent therefore it is essential that a referral into Cumbria Safeguarding Hub is made in accordance with the Multi-agency Threshold Guidance (including Referrals) when a practitioner suspects FGM; where the situation is an emergency, the local police should be contacted immediately.

Please see Cumbria Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships Procedures:

<http://cumbrialscb.proceduresonline.com/>

### **2.07.6. Recognition of Different Types of Abuse – Signs and Symptoms**

#### **Physical abuse**

- Injuries to any part of the body
- Children, who find it painful to walk, sit down, to move their jaws or are in
- some other kind of pain
- Injuries, which are not typical of the bumps and scrapes, associated with
- Children's activities.
- The regular occurrence of unexpected injuries
- The child who is frequently injured, where apparently reasonable
- explanations are given
- Confused or conflicting explanations of how injuries were sustained

Reviewed 28.04.22

Review by 27.04.23

by Head of Care

### **Behavioural Signs**

- Furtive, secretive behaviour
- Uncharacteristic aggression or withdrawn behaviour
- Compulsive eating or sudden loss of appetite
- The child who suddenly becomes less co-ordinated
- The child who finds it hard to stay awake
- The child who is repeatedly absent.

In addition – consider what is known about the family or the child – do you or other colleagues have concerns?

### **Emotional Abuse**

The recognition of emotional abuse is based on observation over time. The quality of the relationship is an important factor. In children with severe autism this may be particularly difficult to detect.

- Poor attachment relationships with the child
- Unresponsive or neglectful behaviour towards the child's emotional or psychological needs
- Persistent negative comments about the child
- Inappropriate or inconsistent development expectations of the child
- Dysfunctional family relationships including domestic violence

### **Behavioural signs**

- Emotional indicators such as low self-esteem, unhappiness, fear, distress or anxiety
- Behaviour indicators such as attention seeking, opposing, withdrawn, insecure
- Physical indicators such as failure to thrive/faltering growth, delay in achieving developmental, cognitive or educational milestones

### **Sexual Abuse**

There may be no recognisable signs of sexual abuse but the following indicators may be signs that a child is or has been sexually abused. Remember this can happen to both boys and girls.

### **Physical Signs**

- Sign of blood or other discharge on the child's underclothes
- Awkwardness in walking or sitting down
- Tummy pains
- Regression into enuresis

### **Behavioural Signs**

- Extreme variations in behaviour such as anxiety, aggression or withdrawal
- Sexually provocative behaviour or knowledge that is incompatible with the child's age or understanding
- Drawings or actions or written work of a sexually explicit nature (indirect disclosure)
- Direct disclosure; it is important to recognise that children have neither the experience nor the understanding to be able to make up stories about sexual assault

### **Neglect**

Indicators of neglect are recognisable in the child, in the parents' / carers' behaviour and within the home or school environment.

### **Physical signs**

- Abnormal growth, including failure to thrive
- Underweight or obesity
- Recurrent infection
- Unkempt dirty appearance
- Smelly bodies
- Inadequate/unwashed clothes
- Hunger
- Listlessness

### **Behavioural Signs**

- Attachment disorders
- Indiscriminate friendliness
- Poor social relationships
- Poor concentration
- Development delays
- Low self esteem

### **Environmental signs**

- Insufficient food, heating and ventilation in the home
- Risk from animals in the household
- Inappropriate sleeping arrangements and inadequate bedding
- Dangerous or hazardous environments

### **Direct Disclosure – What To Do:**

Children do sometimes choose a member of staff to disclose abuse. When a child does so, staff need to be aware that they have a duty to pass on the disclosure, and must not promise the child to keep information secret.

If a child discloses, the recipient of the information should listen carefully to the child, and should avoid interruption or questioning. Any questions that may be necessary to clarify the information should be framed in an open manner so as not to lead the child in any way. Staff should evaluate carefully what is said and document it verbatim (written / dictated and signed / dated), reporting immediately to the senior on duty. No further interviews of the child should be undertaken in the home and the Child Protection Officer should refer the matter immediately to Social Services who along with the police have specialist trained workers skilled in interview techniques. Both the staff and children will be supported throughout any investigation and a debriefing session should be offered to staff receiving disclosures of abuse as they may need support through the process this should be recorded through the supervision process.

### **2.07.7.0. Sexual Offences Act 2003**

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 governs sex laws in the UK. Here are the main points:

**Rape** - Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for any male to penetrate with his penis the vagina, anus or mouth of a female or male without their consent. A person found guilty of this offence could be sent to prison for life.

**Assault by Penetration** - The Act makes it an offence for any male or female to penetrate the vagina or anus of another person without their consent. The offence is committed where the penetration is by a part of the body (for example, a finger) or anything else (for example, a bottle) for sexual intent.

**Sexual Assault** - Section 3 of the Act makes it an offence for any male or female to intentionally touch another person sexually without his or her consent. A person found guilty of this offence could be sent to prison for a maximum of ten years.

**Causing sexual activity without consent** - It is an offence to cause or encourage another person to engage in sexual activity without his or her consent. If penetration is involved then a person found guilty of this offence could be sent to prison for life. If no penetration is involved then a person found guilty of this offence could be sent to prison for up to ten years.

**What does 'consent' mean?** The definition of a sexual offence often revolves around consent. In simple terms, it's all about permission (or agreement). This is something that must be clearly established between two people before any kind of sexual act or behaviour. If an individual is accused of a sex offence, they must show that they reasonably believed consent had been given by the other person.

### **Reporting sexual abuse**

Many cases of sexual abuse never come to light. Victims can often feel ashamed and too scared to report it, fearing it could make a situation worse. Any form of sexual activity that's against your will constitutes as sexual abuse. This includes bodily contact (such as sexual kissing, touching, fondling of genitals or penetration - oral, anal, or vaginal) and genital exposure (flashing), verbal pressure for sex and sexual exploitation through pornography or prostitution.

#### **2.07.7.1 Who & what to tell them if you think a Colleague is abusing a child**

There is a requirement upon all staff and others working at North Lakes Children's Services (including agency staff) to report to the Senior on duty, any concerns they may have about practices in the home or the behaviour of colleagues, which they consider are likely to put children at risk of abuse or other serious harm.

It is a duty to report concerns, any staff following this procedure can be confident that they can do so without prejudicing their own position and prospects.

If any member of staff has any concerns about any aspect of child protection in relation to a children they have a duty to make a referral. **Refer to Whistleblowing Policy**

#### **2.07.7.2. Referral procedures**

- Staff must report any concerns about any aspect of child protection to the senior on duty or the home manager who is the named deputy Designated Child Protection Officer if they unavailable then contact the Designated Child Protection Officer immediately.
- The senior on duty, registered manager or designated named officer must consider what may be necessary to protect individual children following an allegation or suspicion of abuse being made.
- The homes manager or named designated child protection officer can ask to speak to a duty social worker to discuss the concerns and access advice by contacting Cumbria safeguarding team to discuss referral
- Referrals should be made through safeguarding board who are based at the which covers the whole of Cumbria

- Referrals that have an immediate risk to a child should be made by telephone and single contact form completed writing within 48 hours
- Contact the police
- Non-urgent referrals should be made using the Children's single referral form plus CAF pre-assessment checklist. All forms can be accessed on line, the local relevant safeguarding remains the Cumbria safeguarding Children site (previously Cumbria safeguarding board @ [www.cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk](http://www.cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk) and going to **How to refer Children.**
- Guidance will be given by the local safeguarding team on duty officer.
- During weekends and out of hour's times, the home staff or manager should contact Cumbria EDT, who will record the concern and give guidance i.e. contact the police.
- The child's placing authority to be contacted and should be provided with the disclosure or complaint.
- If the placing authority wishes to investigate the incident then they should contact the named person spoken to at our relevant local safeguarding partner this is currently still Cumbria CSCP and request them to investigate the referral
- The police will be contacted as part of the investigation by the external safeguarding team as part of the referral system.
- Notification must also be sent to Ofsted (HMI) in accordance with Schedule 5 of the National Minimum Standards with 24 hours of the referral.
- The child's Family should be informed of the referral and the investigation only if guided by the safeguarding team (the disclosure could be about them).
- The referral forms and contact details will be located in a staff care offices and located on each home computer to enable employees to have access in case the named officers are not available (referenced in the Staff Induction).
- All staff have a right to contact Cumbria Local Safeguarding partnership, this website remains live and is still the relevant local safeguarding partner for North Lakes or Ofsted directly to raise any concerns they might have about practices in the home which put children at risk of abuse or serious harm see (whistle blowing policy).
- Notification of any allegation or suspicion of abuse, and the intention and outcome of any child protection enquiries (under section 47 of the children act 1989) involving the organisation must also be sent to any placing authorities of the child involved

**When making a referral to social services what should be available?**

- The child's name, date of birth, address, race, religion, language and any known special needs
- The name and address of parents/carers
- The reason for the concern
- Any other known factors within the family / home / school which may be contributing to the problem.

Lack of any elements of the above information should not deter staff from contacting Social Services, as these records should be available in each child's file, any problems in accessing the necessary information should be reported to the Senior on duty or the Designated safeguarding officer.

All information should be recorded and notes kept of significant events or conversations. All records should be kept in the locked filing cabinet in the Residential Office. Parents should be notified, unless to do so would harm the child. There is a requirement for joint consideration between NLCS and the local Social Services of any subsequent actions,

including continuing protection of children in the light of the allegations or suspicion, and when and how to inform any person who is the subject of the allegation or suspicion, and the parents of each child involved.

### **2.07.8 Child Protection Investigation**

Social Services and the Police are responsible for establishing the facts and clarifying the grounds for concern. The initial investigation seeks to identify the sources and levels of risk and to agree what protective action may be necessary. If the investigation finds sufficient cause for concern, a child protection conference will be called within fifteen working days.

#### **2.7.8.1 Child Protection Conference**

This is a meeting convened by Social Services, involving the professionals who know the family or the organisations staff involved in the allegations. Also involved will be the parents, the investigators, and others who can contribute to the decision making process. Depending on the age and understanding, the child in question may be invited. The person who raised the concern and the Designated Child Protection person may be invited to attend the conference.

The purpose of the conference is to establish whether or not the children is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, to agree an action plan (called a child protection plan) to protect the child and support the family. If the child is considered to be suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, then his or her name will be placed on the Child Protection Register. Any child who is in our care who is on the Register who has unexplained absences from the home appropriate parties will be contacted e.g. Cumbria Local Safeguarding Team as well as the placing authorities.

When a child's name is placed on the Register he or she will be seen regularly and the situation kept under review. A small group called a 'core group' will then be identified by the conference to ensure the protection plan is carried out.

A name can only be removed from the Child Protection Register following a multi-agency agreement at a review meeting.

#### **2.07.8.2 Working with Parents**

The well-being of the child is the paramount consideration in all child protection work. In any conflict between the needs of the child and those of the parents/carers, or staff working with the child, the needs of the child must be put first.

Parents will be made aware of the source of referrals (e.g. the schools). Usually parents/carers wish to co-operate with all parties. However, should a parent act in an intimidatory manner as a result of the referral being made, staff should seek advice from Social Services and the Police.

We work with families and significant others to further understand global values and beliefs and how issues of diversity impact on safeguarding within family groups, society and the care environment.

### **2.07.8.3 Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups act 2006**

The purpose of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 is to restrict contact between children and vulnerable adults and those who might do them harm. The barring aspects of the Act came into force in October 2009.

While the 2006 Act itself is very complex, its key principles are straightforward. They are as follows:

- Unsuitable persons should be barred from working with children (or vulnerable adults);
- Employers should have a straightforward means of checking that a person is not barred from working with children (or vulnerable adults);
- Suitability checks should not be one-offs: they should be an element of on-going assessment of suitability to catch those who commit wrongs following a suitability check.

The regulatory requirements for various types of work with children require enhanced or, in some cases, standard DBS certificates to be produced in respect of certain employees, for example, the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 require providers of homes to ensure that such certificates have been provided in respect of new care workers.

The checking of staff suitability to work with children placed with our services is clearly set out in the Staffing Policy and DBS policy.

Using the Children, Families, local authorities and other partners helps North Lakes Children's Services to better uphold and safeguard of all children in our care. Staff learn and can best promote welfare of vulnerable children in safeguarding. Regardless of ethnicity, gender, cultural background, sexual orientation or disability North Lakes Children's Services employees will safeguard every child. Information and advice will be taken on any specific issue and extra training undertaken to ensure safety and best practice.

### **2.07.9 Children in Need but Not in Need of Protection**

Where there are concerns that a child is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services by the local authority, but where the child in question is not suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, it is appropriate to discuss with the parent, placing authority whether or not a referral to Social Services may be helpful. As such referrals are more likely to be considered by staff that have a direct involvement with the child and their family. Where such referrals are made an assessment of the child's needs will be undertaken to determine whether future services would be helpful to the child and family. Such referrals are not a judgement of failure on a part of parents/carers, some of whom find themselves in circumstances that are very difficult indeed and where it is only reasonable to seek professional assistance and help. Regardless of whether a referral is made under Child Protection, or Child in Need categories, Social Services will make the assessment of the nature of the concern and investigate accordingly.

### **2.07.10. The Written Report/Log**

Clear, accurate and chronological records ensure that there are documented accounts of the events and concerns that have led to a referral being made. Records can be an essential source of evidence for enquiries and investigations and a validation of the provider's decision to refer:

Reviewed 28.04.22  
Review by 27.04.23

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- All records must be kept in a lockable draw in the Registered Managers Office (together with Complaints Book).
- An information sheet marked Confidential is used to pass on information and should be filled in by any staff that have a child protection concern about a child, following the Confidentiality Policy.

### **2.07.11 Managing Allegations against Staff**

We follow the frame work for managing cases of allegations of abuse against people who work with children as set out Working Together to Safeguard Children (revised in September 2019 and guidance from Cumbria’s relevant safeguarding partner Cumbria safeguarding children’s partnership.)

All allegations against people who work with children must be reported by the employer within one working day to the responsible Cumbria Local Authority Designated Officer (‘LADO’).

#### **What must be reported:**

The Senior Manager within the Organisation (SMO) must report any of the following to the LADO. Any allegation that someone who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence related to a child
- behaved in a way that indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children

#### **What will happen next?**

The LADO will take information and provide advice as to what should be done next. They will advise if the police or children’s social care need to be involved and make sure this happens. Allegations are managed according to Chapter 7 of Cumbria’s Safeguarding Procedures, which can be accessed via [www.cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk](http://www.cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk) .

#### **Information for those subject to allegations**

Any person/Member of Staff may be suspended during an investigation. North Lakes Children’s Services acknowledges this is often distressing for those involved and will provide staff with the Cumbria CSCP information Leaflet for staff subject to allegations which explains the procedures which are followed and the various avenues of support which may be available.

### **2.07.12. Child Protection Procedures and Training Policy**

The registered person will ensure that all staff work in line with North Lakes Children’s Services Policies and Procedures, and read all relevant documentation to ensure they understood how to implement the Guidance in line with current relevant safeguarding partner this is Cumbria Safeguarding children Partnership practices and legislation. The child protection procedures are consistent with local policies and procedures relevant to the geographical area where the home is situated Cumbria CSCP. The designated officer will ensure that any change to local procedures or legislation will be monitored / reviewed through Cumbria CSCP.

**Responding to allegations, suspicions of abuse, methods of control and risk taking.**

Following the Child Protection Induction Training there will be written guidance for staff which makes clear how the Registered Person will ensure that members of staff subject to allegations against them will have access to information and support whilst an investigation ensues. This will be in the form of a named person who will continue to keep the staff member fully informed as to the procedural stages that the investigation is pursuing. Procedural guidance for staff clearly demonstrates the systems required in order to protect children, and minimise the risk of abuse whilst the child is living in the home.

These include:-

- Making a full assessment of children's histories and any experience of abuse.
- Observing contacts between children.
- Supervision of children.
- Supervision and support of staff.
- Recognition and possible involvement of children in Prostitution.
- Confidentiality.
- Physical contact between staff and children.
- One to one time alone by staff with children.
- Intimate care and invasive procedures.
- Administering medication.

The Registered Manager oversees all these issues. The registered manager ensures the provision of training for all staff. This training includes a certificated course, Level 2 Child Protection for care staff and NSPCC Designated Safeguarding Officer as well as the CWDC Induction and the Homes Programme, this training is for all staff regardless of job description and refreshed every two years. The training provided by external professional ensures that staff are trained and supported to recognise the additional vulnerability of some children due to race, gender, age, religion, disability and sexual orientation as well as social back ground. Our external professional training for all staff continues to be developed to meet child's specific needs / behaviours shown including upcoming research to provide gender identity disorder training. We take children from all areas of the UK and Cumbria is not ethnically diverse so staff do pay extra attention to the needs of children from differing ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. Staff will source extra specific information to support specific needs. Our equality and diversity policy and children's rights policy also covers information all staff must read to ensure all children are treated fairly, equally and to support their needs and interests. Local authorities, families and significant others can really help inform our practice and we welcome shared working to best meets the needs or every child in our care.

The Registered Person follows any local interagency protocols on prevention and investigation of child Prostitution.

This policy is on-going and will be continually reviewed in accordance with the guidance from the CSCP, the relevant local safeguarding partner, other partners by definition are, clinical commissioning groups and chiefs of police for Cumbria. This policy is reviewed annually and / or when any new legislation and best practice is published. This ensures all children in the care of North Lakes Children's Services receive the very best care in a safe environment. It also means all staff receive regular training and all amendments to the safeguarding policy are mandatory for all staff to read and sign that they have been read.

