



# **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH NETWORK (NWN)**

## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

**Author:** CEO

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### **1. Statement**

It is the responsibility of all Neighbourhood Watch members of staff, and all volunteers including trustees, to seek to prevent the physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect of children and young people (CYP) and vulnerable adults (VA). All have a duty and must report any incident or behaviour that causes concern with regard to the welfare of a CYP or VA. The appendices that accompany this policy provide further information and actions to take regarding our responsibilities to safeguard CYP and VA.

### **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This policy and procedure outlines the specific responsibilities of NWN staff members, Trustees, and volunteers to safeguard CYP and VA and promote their welfare.
- 2.2 Any reference to volunteers includes NW Association members, NW area and street coordinators, and any other persons aligned to Neighbourhood Watch Network, or having a role supporting Neighbourhood Watch activity, in a voluntary capacity.
- 2.3 Any reference to NWN staff members also includes Associated Personnel whilst engaged with work related to NWN, including but not limited to the following: consultants; contractors. It also includes visitors to NWN premises including journalists, celebrities, and politicians.

### **3. Safeguarding Lead**

- 3.1 There is a Trustee Safeguarding Lead who supports safeguarding across the organisation.
- 3.2 The Safeguarding lead for NWN is the CEO. NWN staff members must immediately report any issue arising from this policy to the CEO who will ensure the issue is or has been reported to the relevant statutory authorities, and report the issue to the NWN Board of Trustees as soon as is practical.

### **4. Neighbourhood Watch Associations**

- 4.1 Neighbourhood Watch Associations that are not charities in their own right must abide by this policy and procedures, and advise the NWN Safeguarding Lead when they have reported safeguarding concerns about a CYP or a VA to their local Children's or Adult Social Care Team or the local police.

- 4.2 Neighbourhood Watch Associations that are registered charities are expected to adopt this policy and have their own Safeguarding Lead and procedures in place to safeguard CYP and VA.

## **5. Safeguarding Children and Young People (CYP)**

### **5.1 Neighbourhood Watch Supporters, Members, and Coordinators under 18 years old**

- 5.1.1 Neighbourhood Watch is open to people of all ages. To become a supporter or a member of Neighbourhood Watch it is necessary to join the online Alert System. This will ensure that the person receives non-personal information from the police, Neighbourhood Watch, and other approved organisations on the Alert System relating to crime prevention and their local community.
- 5.1.2 Any communication from a coordinator to a member/supporter in their scheme who is under 18 can only be via the Alert System. Any direct communication via email/phone/text etc to a supporter/member who is under 18 will result in suspension of the coordinator pending an investigation by the Association or Neighbourhood Watch Network.
- 5.1.3 Any Neighbourhood Watch coordinator communicating to their local members and supporters via the Alert System must ensure all messages are general and non-personal. All Alert System messages are recorded on the system.
- 5.1.4 Where a CYP under 18 wants to become a local coordinator, they must have an active joint Coordinator who is their parent or carer. Without this support and joint responsibility, the CYP cannot be a local coordinator. This joint coordination of a local group must be approved by the local Membership Support Administrator (MSA).
- 5.1.5 All the activities of a local coordinator under 18 must be overseen by their parent and carer who is the joint coordinator.

### **5.2 Neighbourhood Watch and Working with CYP under 16 years old**

- 5.2.1 Neighbourhood Watch does not undertake any direct work with anyone under 16 years of age. This includes any 1-2-1 work or group work where the CYP is not accompanied by a parent or carer.
- 5.2.2 There may be particular projects where a Neighbourhood Watch volunteer presents to a group of CYP as part of a school/guide/scout/cadet etc group. In these circumstances the presentation and work will fall under the safeguarding policies and procedures of the school or youth group, and must be followed.
- 5.2.3 Where CYP are under 16 and wish to take part in a local Neighbourhood Watch activity such as litter picking etc they must be accompanied by a parent or carer.

### **5.3 Neighbourhood Watch and Working with CYP aged 16 and 17 years old**

- 5.3.1 Neighbourhood Watch does not undertake any direct work with 16 and 17 year olds, unless part of a specific youth project.
- 5.3.2 Any specific youth project working directly with CYP aged 16 and 17 must be approved by both the Neighbourhood Watch Network and the local Neighbourhood Watch Police Force Area Association.
- 5.3.3 Any staff member or volunteer working on a specific youth project must have, i) an enhanced DBS check and ii) undertaken the Neighbourhood Watch Network's Safeguarding Training or their Local Authority's

safeguarding training before working on the project. These criteria must be checked and recorded by the Project Lead.

- 5.3.4 Almost all direct work, as part of a specific youth project, will be group work and must be undertaken with at least two staff members and or volunteers present. This includes in-person and online sessions.
- 5.3.5 Under normal, planned circumstances, there should never be instances where a staff member or volunteer is in a 1-2-1 situation with a CYP without other adults being present. In a medical or other emergency (such as a CYP having an accident and requiring medical help outside a group session or a CYP needing medical help during a session and the other CYP have been moved to another room) then there may be a short period of 1-2-1 until help arrives. In these circumstances, a record of the event must be made as soon as possible after the event detailing what happened.
- 5.3.6 A risk assessment will be undertaken prior to any in-person session with CYP which will include the venue, the session plan, staff/volunteer ratio, and local support contacts.
- 5.3.7 Any Neighbourhood Watch online messaging group (chat) created as part of the youth project must be open to all members of the group and have agreed guidelines agreed by all members of the group including Equality, Diversity and Inclusion principals, and that the chat is only monitored by staff/volunteers at certain times. Anyone not adhering to the guidelines will be removed from the group. This removal can be reviewed if the group leader agrees.
- 5.3.8 It will be necessary for staff/volunteers to make direct contact via email/phone/text etc with individual CYP for administrative and support purposes during the course of a youth project. All such contact should be through Neighbourhood Watch email addresses, phone numbers, phones etc and under no circumstances should any messages/emails/texts be deleted. The basis and content of any phone call should be recorded as soon as possible after the call including time/date.
- 5.3.9 Any staff/volunteer making any contact with CYP via their own personal addresses or devices will be suspended pending an investigation. If this is required due to an emergency, then it should be reported as soon as possible to the Neighbourhood Watch Network Safeguarding Lead.
- 5.3.10 The above working procedures must be shared and explained to all youth project group members (staff, volunteers and CYP) at the beginning of the project as part of the project procedures. Any staff member or volunteer seen to be or suspected of breaking these procedures must be reported to the Project Lead. If the concerns are about the Project Lead, then the concerns must be reported to the Project Lead's Line Manager and/or the Neighbourhood Watch Network Safeguarding Lead.
- 5.3.11 Any staff member or volunteer (including Association Committee members and trustees) making any direct contact with CYP outside the procedures detailed above must be reported to the Project Lead and the Neighbourhood Watch Network Safeguarding Lead.
- 5.3.12 Any investigation into a potential breach of these procedures must be undertaken immediately by i) the local Association (If the Association is an independent charity) or ii) Neighbourhood Watch Network. The investigation is only to establish if the breach was justified in response to an emergency or a one-off mistake. Any other reasons for the concerns being raised or if there is any doubt then the concerns must be reported to the local Children's Social Care and / or the local police force **as soon as** they become aware of the concerns or as soon as practically possible.
- 5.3.13 While parental consent is not required for a 16 or 17 year old to participate in a specific youth project Neighbourhood Watch Network strongly suggest participants inform their parents or carers.

## **5.4 Reporting Concerns to Children's Social Care**

- 5.4.1 It is important that NWN staff members, Trustees and volunteers report safeguarding concerns to the local Children's Social Care and / or their local police force **as soon as** they become aware of the concerns.
- 5.4.2 This is because safeguarding and promoting the welfare of CYP and, in particular, protecting them from significant harm, depends upon effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise. For example, individual children, especially some of the most vulnerable children and those at greatest risk, will need coordinated help from health, education, children's social care, and quite possibly the voluntary sector and other agencies, including youth justice services.
- 5.4.3 For those CYP who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, joint working is essential, to safeguard and promote welfare of the child(ren) or vulnerable adult(s) and – where necessary – to help bring the perpetrators of crimes to justice.

## **5.5 Recognising Signs of Abuse or Neglect**

- 5.5.1 All NWN staff, Trustees and volunteers should:
- be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect
  - be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children
  - share information so that an assessment can be made by Social Care Teams of the needs and circumstances of the child
  - contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

## **5.6 Definitions of abuse and neglect**

- 5.6.1 Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children or vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.
- 5.6.2 Additional definitions and information on CYP safeguarding can be found in Appendix 1

# **6. Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults (VA)**

## **6.1 Working with adults**

- 6.1.1 Neighbourhood Watch is a grass roots, hyper-local, volunteer led movement, which works within communities to prevent crime, improve communities, and reduce loneliness and isolation. This includes a huge range of activities including litter picks, community events, phone trees, street parties, flood diversion, putting up signs, crime prevention events and advice, signposting, reporting crime and criminal activity, presenting to other local groups, passing local information to supporters and members, and working closely with the police etc.
- 6.1.2 Neighbourhood Watch does not generally undertake any specific 1-2-1 work with adults. There may be specific local Neighbourhood Watch projects (e.g. volunteers visiting neighbours of a burgled house as part of a cuckooing project with the local police, or developing a phone tree etc) that work directly with

adults, but this work would not normally be undertaken 1-2-1, only with another volunteer or worker. The exception would be if the visiting volunteer has been police checked and approved locally or has completed a DBS check.

- 6.1.3 Any specific Neighbourhood Watch project working directly with adults must be approved by either the local Neighbourhood Watch Police Force Area Association or Neighbourhood Watch Network, and have specific guidelines and procedures.
- 6.1.4 Some Associations have an arrangement with their local police force that any Neighbourhood Watch coordinators must undertake and pass a police check before they are approved as a coordinator. Where this is the case these approved coordinators can provide proactive support to local members and neighbours including visiting adults at home.
- 6.1.5 Neighbourhood Watch coordinators will both know and have contact with their neighbours, some of whom will be members and supporters of their local Neighbourhood Watch scheme or schemes and others may be friends. This contact may well involve visiting neighbours to inform them of local activities, providing information on crime prevention and wellbeing, supporting neighbours to report criminal activity, or providing general neighbourly support and checking in that more vulnerable neighbours are safe and well. While this work would usually take place on the doorstep there may be circumstances where the Neighbourhood Watch coordinator might enter a neighbour's home on Neighbourhood Watch related business (a more infirm or injured neighbour).
- 6.1.6 When a Neighbourhood Watch coordinator is undertaking this type of pro-active Neighbourhood Watch support and enters the person's home the coordinator must: i) inform their local Association that they are undertaking this type of work and ii) keep a record of all visits when they have entered a neighbour's home and share this with the local Association on a monthly basis.
- 6.1.7 Where help has been requested or concerns raised by a neighbour that the coordinator is visiting, a local volunteer will provide information on signposting to the most appropriate service locally/nationally, or refer the person to a local agency - with that person's permission.

## **6.2 Working with Vulnerable Adults (VA)**

- 6.2.1 Neighbourhood Watch recognises that there will be members of all communities that are more vulnerable than others. This may be through age, disability, trauma or other reason, and vulnerability may be short term or ongoing.
- 6.2.2 Neighbourhood Watch is open to all adults and every effort should be made to be inclusive and open to all and amend activities, events to ensure equality of access wherever possible. An adult's *right* to make choices about their own safety has to be balanced with the rights of others to be safe.
- 6.2.3 If a Neighbourhood Watch volunteer or coordinator is concerned about the safety or wellbeing of an adult in their scheme, they should bear in mind that the identification of risk should be taken with the adult who has been, or appears to be, harmed - unless doing so increases their risk of harm or puts others at risk. As a result, if a Neighbourhood Watch volunteer or coordinator is concerned about the safety or wellbeing of an adult in their scheme, they should take the following action:
  - If it is safe to do so, discuss any concerns with the adult in question, provide signposting information to support them and/or agree a way forward with their consent and follow that agreement
  - If it is not safe then speak with the local Association Lead or Neighbourhood Watch Network or another appropriate agency (Local Adult Social Care etc) for advice and support
  - If you have concerns about possible abuse/harm then this may override the person's wishes and should be reported to Local Adult Social Care

- If you are concerned about the persons immediate safety then report this immediately to the local police

6.2.4 In order to protect staff, volunteers and VA, staff and volunteers should never be in 1-2-1 situations with VA unless in response to a clear emergency.

6.2.5 If any staff member, volunteer or coordinator is suspected of, or engaged in, 1-2-1 communication or contact with VA as part of their Neighbourhood Watch role, this must be raised with the Local Neighbourhood Watch Police Force Association Safeguarding Lead or with Neighbourhood Watch Network for investigation.

6.2.6 The investigation must be undertaken with all possible speed and balance take into account that the identification of risk should be taken with the adult who has been, or appears to be, harmed - unless doing so increases their risk of harm or puts others at risk. If there are any concerns that the VA may be at possible risk of abuse/harm then this may override the persons wishes and should be reported to Local Adult Social Care.

### **6.3 Reporting Concerns to Adult Social Care**

6.3.1 It is important that NWN staff members, Trustees and volunteers report safeguarding concerns to the local Adult Social Care and / or their local police force **as soon as** they become aware of the concerns.

6.3.2 This is because safeguarding and promoting the welfare of VA and in particular, protecting them from significant harm - depends upon effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise.

6.3.3 For those VA who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, joint working is essential, to safeguard and promote welfare of VA and – where necessary – to help bring the perpetrators of crimes to justice.

### **6.4 Recognising Signs of Abuse or Neglect**

6.4.1 All NWN staff, Trustees and volunteers should:

- be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect
- be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to VA
- share information so that an assessment can be made by Social Care Teams of the needs and circumstances of the VA
- contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the VA welfare.

### **6.5 Definitions of abuse and neglect**

6.5.1 Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. Adults may be abused by another adult or adults or by a child or young person.

6.5.2 Additional definitions and information on adult safeguarding can be found in Appendix 2

## **7. Staff, Trustee and Volunteer awareness**

- 7.1 All NWN staff and Trustees will be made aware of this policy as part of their initial induction process, and there will be regular briefings and updates for all staff. Where necessary or possible, staff will be encouraged to attend appropriate training courses.
- 7.2 Volunteers who work on Neighbourhood Watch Network led projects with CYP or VA will be made aware of this policy by the Project Lead and where necessary or possible, will also be encouraged to attend appropriate training courses.

## **8. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks**

- 8.1 Where Neighbourhood Watch Network staff members or volunteers are involved in Regulated Activity with CYP or VA, Neighbourhood Watch Network will ensure that all staff members and volunteers involved have had a satisfactory Enhanced DBS check before allowing them to undertake any work on the project. A 'satisfactory' check is defined as having no criminal convictions (including cautions, reprimands and final warnings) relevant to the role.
- 8.2 Force Area or Borough Associations are responsible for ensuring that volunteers who work on local Association led projects with young people are also DBS checked as above before undertaking any work on the project.
- 8.3 All NWN staff and volunteers involved in Regulated Activity with children or adults must report any subsequent criminal convictions to the Neighbourhood Watch Network Safeguarding Lead or the local Association Safeguarding Lead as relevant.

## **9. NWN Safeguarding Procedures**

- 9.1 NWN recognises its responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review procedures, which are designed to prevent and to be alert to the abuse of children and vulnerable adults.
- 9.2 NWN is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children and vulnerable adults and to providing supervision and maintaining and promoting good links with relevant statutory services and encouraging our Neighbourhood Watch Associations to do likewise.

## **10. What to do if you have concerns about a child or vulnerable adult**

- 10.1 You may have concerns about a CYP or VA because of something you have seen or heard, or a CYP or VA may choose to disclose something to you. If a CYP or VA discloses information to you:
- Do not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to share this information and refer to Children's or Adult Social Care and or the police.
  - Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
  - Accept what is said.
  - Reassure the CYP or VA, but only as far as is honest, don't make promises you may not be able to keep e.g. 'Everything will be alright now', 'You'll never have to see that person again'.
  - Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the CYP or VA refers to it. For example, you could say, 'You're not to blame'.
  - Do not interrogate the CYP or VA; it is not your responsibility to investigate.
  - Do not ask any questions relating to the disclosure except, 'Is there anything else you would like to tell me?'

- Do not ask the child or vulnerable adult to repeat the information for another member of staff or volunteer.
- Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.
- Take notes if possible or write up your conversation as soon as possible afterwards.
- Record the date, time, place, as well as any non-verbal behaviour, and the words used by the CYP or VA (do not paraphrase).
- Record statements, facts and observable things rather than any interpretations or assumptions. Whatever the nature of your concerns, discuss them with your manager or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

10.2 You, your manager, or the Safeguarding Lead should ***immediately*** refer the matter to the appropriate safeguarding organisation (e.g. Local Authority Child or Adult Social Care and/or your local police).

## **11. What information will you need when making a referral?**

11.1 You will be asked to provide as much information as possible. This will include the CYP or VA's full name, date of birth, address, languages spoken, any disabilities they may have, including school and details of the parents of a child. Do not be concerned if you do not have all these details, you should still make the call or referral. You should follow up the verbal referral in writing, within 48 hours.

## **12. Allegations involving a Neighbourhood Watch staff member, Trustee, or Volunteer**

- 12.1 NWN is committed to having effective recruitment and human resources procedures, including DBS checking all staff and volunteers who may be involved in Regulated Activity with CYP or VA. However, there may still be occasions when there is an allegation against a member of staff, a Trustee or a volunteer.
- 12.2 Allegations against those who engage with or work with or care for children or vulnerable adults, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, cover a wide range of circumstances. All allegations of abuse or suspicions of abuse of CYP or VA by Neighbourhood Watch staff, Trustees or volunteers must be taken seriously. It is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are followed up and examined objectively by safeguarding experts.
- 12.3 The following procedure should be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a Neighbourhood Watch staff member, Trustee or volunteer has:
- Behaved in a way which has, or may have harmed a child or vulnerable adult
  - Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or vulnerable adult
  - Behaved towards a child, children or vulnerable adult(s) in a way which indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults. The allegations may relate to the person's behaviour at work, at home, as a volunteer or in another setting.
- 12.4 All reports of allegations must be submitted within one working day to the local Child or Adult Social Care and/or local police force and the NWN or your own Safeguarding Lead.
- 12.5 The Safeguarding Lead, or their designated representative, will immediately refer the matter to the relevant Children's or Adult Social Care and/or the local police force, unless there is clear evidence that

the matter has already been referred to Children's or Adult Social Care and/or the local police by the local NW Association or volunteer.

12.6 Such allegations may result in:

- 1) A police investigation of a possible criminal offence and / or
- 2) Enquiries and assessment by Children's or Adult Social Care as to whether the CYP or VA is need of protection or in need of services

12.7 An NWN staff member, Trustee, or volunteer who is subject of a safeguarding allegation that is being investigated by the police or being dealt with by Social Care Services, shall be suspended from their paid or unpaid role with Neighbourhood Watch until the outcome of the investigation is complete.

12.8 Should the outcome of the investigation indicate that the staff member, Trustee, or volunteer is guilty of abuse of a CYP or VA, then disciplinary action will be taken by NWN or the local Neighbourhood Watch Association. Disciplinary action will in all likelihood result in dismissal from their paid or unpaid role with Neighbourhood Watch.

(Please also refer to the ***NWN Guidance on Managing Concerns about Volunteer Behaviour*** and ***NWN Disciplinary Procedure***)

### **13. Reviewing the Policy and Procedure**

13.1 This policy and procedure will be reviewed 12 months, this will include checking information, accuracy of any personnel details or roles, and any updates required by a change in law or local or national policy.

## **Appendix 1: Children's Safeguarding: Categories And Definitions**

If you come into contact with a person whom you are concerned may be at risk from any of these concerns listed, you must discuss with your line manager/supervisor or Safeguarding Lead urgently.

Your concerns maybe a statutory safeguarding/child protection risk which may need referral to Children's Social Care/Police without delay. If urgent then you must call the Local Authority, and/or the Police 999.

### **1. Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is 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. Recognising child abuse is not easy and it is not your responsibility to decide whether child abuse has taken place or if a child is at risk of significant harm. You do however have a duty to act if you have a concern about a child's welfare or safety.

#### **Physical signs of abuse (non-comprehensive):**

- bruising in children who are not independently mobile or bruising in babies
- bruises that are seen away from bony prominences
- bruises to the face, back, stomach, arms, buttocks, ears and hands, bottom of feet
- multiple bruises in clusters
- bruises that carry the imprint of an implement used, hand marks or fingertips
- cigarette burns or scalds
- adult bite marks or animal bite marks
- broken bones
- changes in account of injury or condition should be carefully noted

**Changes in behaviour which may indicate physical abuse (non-comprehensive):**

- a fear of parent/s, People in a Position of Trust (PPOT), person in authority, being approached for an explanation
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- flinching when approached or touched
- reluctance to get changed, for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- depression / low mood and / or anxiety or withdrawn behaviour
- running away from home

**2. Emotional/Psychological Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent negative impact on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate etc. It may include 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 over-protection 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, although it may occur alone.

**Physical signs of emotional abuse (non-comprehensive):**

- a failure to thrive or grow, particularly and/or, if the child puts on weight within other
- circumstances; for example, during breaks away from home or away from their parent's care
- sudden speech disorders
- development delay either in terms of physical or emotional progress

**Changes in behaviour which may indicate emotional abuse (non-comprehensive):**

- neurotic behaviour, for example, sulking, hair twisting or rocking
- fear of making mistakes
- self-harm
- fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour

**3. Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing, grooming or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, digital/object penetration or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. This may also include noncontact 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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Physical signs of sexual abuse (non-comprehensive):**

- pain or itching in the genital/anal areas
- bruising or bleeding near the genital/anal areas
- sexually transmitted disease
- vaginal discharge or infection

- stomach pains
- discomfort when walking or sitting down
- pregnancy or miscarriage

**Changes in behaviour which may indicate sexual abuse (non-comprehensive):**

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour for example becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- having nightmares
- running away from home
- sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or development level, or sexual drawings or language
- bedwetting
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- self-harm or mutilation sometimes leading to suicide ideation/attempts
- saying they have 'secrets' they cannot tell anyone about
- substance or drug abuse
- suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults

#### **4. Neglect**

Neglect is 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:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers) or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

**Physical signs of neglect (non-comprehensive):**

- constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- regularly dirty or smelly
- loss of weight or being constantly under weight
- inappropriate dress for the conditions
- death

**Changes in behaviour which may indicate neglect (non-comprehensive):**

- complaining of being tired all the time
- not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- having few friends
- mentioning their being left alone or unsupervised

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

#### **5. Domestic Violence/Abuse**

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

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

This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes honour-based violence, female genital mutilation, breast ironing, and forced marriage.

**Behaviours associated with a coercive or controlling relationship include:**

- isolating a person from their friends and family
- depriving them of their basic needs and taking control of everyday life (e.g. where a person can go, who they can spend time with, where they can work, travel)
- repeatedly putting a person down, e.g. telling them that they are worthless
- enforcing rules and activity which humiliate, degrade or dehumanise the victim
- monitoring a person via online communication tools or using spyware
- depriving or restricting access to support services, e.g. GP/medical services
- financial abuse including control of finances
- threats to hurt or kill
- threats to a child
- assault
- criminal damage (such as destruction of household goods)
- rape/sexual assault

It is important to note that some of the above may constitute criminal offences.

## **6. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or sometimes called female circumcision**

FGM is a collective term for procedures which include the removal of part or all the external female genitalia for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious long term health consequences. The procedure is typically performed on girls aged between 4 and 13, and in some cases, it is performed on young women before marriage or pregnancy.

FGM is a criminal offence in the UK; under the FGM ACT 2003 it is also an offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to carry out FGM abroad, or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad, even in countries where the practice is legal. As such you have a duty to report 'known' cases of FGM in Under 18's to the police.

## **7. Male circumcision**

Male circumcision is the surgical removal of the foreskin of the penis. The procedure is usually requested for social, cultural or religious reasons (e.g. by families who practice Judaism or Islam). There are also parents who request circumcision for assumed medical benefits.

There is no requirement in law for professionals undertaking male circumcision to be medically trained or to have proven expertise. Traditionally, religious leaders or respected elders may conduct this practice.

Male circumcision may constitute significant harm to a child if the procedure was undertaken in such a way that he:

- acquires an infection as a result of neglect
- sustains physical functional or cosmetic damage
- suffers emotional, physical or sexual harm from the way in which the procedure was carried out
- suffers emotional harm from not having been sufficiently informed and consulted, or not having his wishes taken into account

## **8. Forced Marriage**

**Forced marriage is illegal in England and Wales. This includes:**

- taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether the forced marriage takes place)

- marrying someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they're pressured to or not)

Forced marriages of children may involve non-consensual and / or underage sex, emotional and possibly physical abuse and should be regarded as a Child Protection matter and referred to Children's Social Care. Please see Forced marriage - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)) for more information on forced marriage.

Victims of existing or prospective forced marriages may be fearful of discussing their worries with friends and teachers but may come to your attention due to various behaviours or circumstances consistent with distress.

**These may include:**

- a family history of siblings being forced to marry or to marry early
- a sibling who suddenly disappeared or went abroad
- frequent authorised school absences or truancy from school/lessons
- unreasonable restrictions on the child's liberty e.g. accompanied to / from school, not allowed to attend extra-curricular activities
- depression, self-harming behaviour, eating disorders
- reported to have left the country suddenly or on an extended family holiday

## **9. Honour Based Violence (HBV)**

Honour based violence is a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour and exert power within families to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that an individual has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.

It can also be used to describe murders in the name of so-called honour, sometimes called 'honour killings'. These are murders in which predominantly women are killed for perceived immoral behaviour, which is deemed to have breached the honour code of a family or community, causing shame.

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

**Abuse which may precede a murder includes:**

- physical abuse
- emotional abuse, including 'house arrest' and excessive restrictions; denial of access to the telephone, internet, passport and friends; threats to kill
- pressure to go abroad. Victims are sometimes persuaded to go to another country under false pretences, when in fact the intention could be to kill them

Children sometimes truant from school to obtain relief from being policed at home by relatives. They can feel isolated from their family and social networks and become depressed, which can on some occasions lead to self-harm or suicide.

## **10. Child Sexual Exploitation/Sexual Exploitation (CSE/SE)**

**Like all forms of child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation:**

- CSE can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex

- It is not limited to those under 18 and can impact adults as well. For young people aged 18 and over the term child sexual exploitation is reduced to sexual exploitation as they are no longer legally a child
- can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual
- can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity
- can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence
- may occur without the person's immediate knowledge (e.g. copying videos or images they have created and posting on social media)
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults
- can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse

**signs of this type of abuse include:**

- acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc. without plausible explanation
- gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks
- excessive receipt of texts/phone calls
- returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol
- inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections
- multiple callers (unknown adults or peers)
- self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being

## **11. Grooming**

Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation. Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know – for example a family member, friend or professional. Groomers may be male or female. They could be any age. Many CYP don't understand that they have been groomed, or that what has happened is abuse.

Children can be groomed for the purpose of sexual abuse as well as other forms of exploitation including involvement in criminal and extremist activity. Children who are missing are more vulnerable to being groomed and may also go missing as a result of being groomed.

## **12. Radicalisation: Prevent Strategy**

Prevent is one of the four strands of CONTEST which is the Government's Counter Terrorism Strategy. Safeguarding children and adults who are vulnerable to being radicalised or at risk of being drawn into terrorist-related activity, is one of the main objectives of the Prevent strategy, which is about early intervention to protect and divert people away from the risk they face before illegality occur.

A key element of the Prevent Strategy is Channel, namely the process of identifying and referring a person at risk of radicalisation for early intervention and support. It is a multiagency approach to protect vulnerable people, using collaboration between local authorities, statutory partners (such as education and health organisations, social services, children's and youth services and offender management services, the police and the local community).

People can be drawn into violence, or they can be exposed to the messages of extremist groups by many means. These can include through the influence of family members or friends and/or direct contact with extremist groups and organisations or, increasingly, through the internet.

**Potential risk indicators include:**

- use of inappropriate language
- possession of violent extremist literature or accessing extremist websites
- behavioural changes
- the expression of extremist views
- advocating violent actions and means
- association with known extremists

### 13. Gangs and County Lines

Gangs are defined as groups of children who often gather in public places to socialise, and peer association is an essential feature of most children's transition to adulthood. Groups of children often can be disorderly and/or anti-social without engaging in criminal activity.

Youth violence, serious or otherwise, may be a function of gang activity. However, it could equally represent the behaviour of a child acting individually in response to his or her particular history and circumstances. Children may be coerced or choose to carry a weapon as a result of involvement in gangs. They are also more likely to be at risk of sexual exploitation.

#### **Circumstances which can foster the emergence of gangs:**

- areas with a high level of social and economic exclusion and mobility (which weakens the ties of kinship and friendship and the established mechanisms of informal control and social support)
- areas made up of predominantly social housing, and especially where it is high rise / high density social housing
- areas with poor performing schools – in terms of leadership, positive ethos, managing behaviour and partnership working
- lack of access to pro-social activities (e.g. youth service) and to vocational training and opportunities
- communities who have experienced war situations prior to arrival in the UK
- areas with a high level of gang activity / peer pressure and intimidation, particularly if the family is denying this or is in fear of the gangs
- family members involved in gang activity and criminality

**County Lines** – 'County lines' is the term used to describe the approach taken by gangs originating from large urban areas, who travel to locations elsewhere such as county or coastal towns to sell class A drugs. Gangs typically recruit and exploit children and vulnerable young people to courier drugs and cash. Typically, users ask for drugs via a mobile phone line used by the gang. Couriers travel between the gang's urban base and the county or coastal locations on a regular basis to collect cash and deliver drugs.

### 14. Online safety

#### **Online abuse relates to the following main areas of abuse to children:**

- i. abusive images of children (although these are not confined to the Internet)
- ii. a child or young person being groomed in regard to sexual abuse
- iii. exposure to adult abusive images and other offensive material via the Internet
- iv. access to age restricted content including online sex work and pornography
- v. the use of the internet and in particular social media sites, to engage children in extremist ideologies
- vi. financial online abuse, including fraud, scams, extortion, online commercial sexual exploitation, and 'money mule' exploitation

Social networking sites are often used by perpetrators as a way to access children and young people for sexual abuse. Radical and extremist groups may use social networking to attract children and young people.

E.g. extreme Islamist, or Far Right/Neo Nazi ideologies, Irish Republican and Loyalist paramilitary groups, extremist Animal Rights groups and others who justify political, religious, sexist or racist violence.

**Cyber-bullying** or online bullying is when a person is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another online.

**Sexting** describes the use of technology to generate images or videos; images that are of a sexual nature. The content can vary, from text messages to images of partial nudity to sexual images or video. These images are then shared between young people and/or adults and with people they may not even know. People are not always aware that these actions are illegal.

## **15. Self-Harm and Suicidal Ideation/Behaviour**

Anyone who self-harms or expresses thoughts about self-harm or about suicide, must be taken seriously and appropriate help and intervention should be offered at the earliest point. If you become aware that someone has self-harmed, or is contemplating this or suicide, you should talk with them without delay, inform their parents or carers and /or refer them to Children's Social care.







