



Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures

Purpose

This document sets out the procedures that Leicestershire Cares staff, volunteers and trustees should follow in order to recognise and report concerns about the safety of the children, young people and vulnerable adults who participate in our activities.

It is vital that children, young people and vulnerable adults are able to speak out about abuse or any other concerns they have about their wellbeing, and that whoever they tell takes them seriously and acts on what they have been told. These procedures aim to ensure that anyone working on behalf of Leicestershire Cares is able to recognise the signs of abuse and know how to respond appropriately.

These procedures apply to anyone working on behalf of Leicestershire Cares, including paid staff and associated personnel, such as the board of trustees, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

Definitions and signs of abuse

Abuse for children and young people aged under 18 might be defined as neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, domestic abuse, bullying, criminal exploitation, grooming (including extremism) or female genital mutilation (FGM).

Abuse for young people and vulnerable adults aged 18 and over might be defined as organisational abuse, financial abuse, discriminatory abuse, material abuse, self-neglect, modern slavery or coercive control.

See the '[Appendix: Definitions and signs of abuse](#)' for full definitions and signs of each of these types of abuse.

Disclosures

Disclosure is the process by which children, young people and vulnerable adults start to share their experiences of abuse with others. Children, young people and vulnerable adults may disclose abuse in a variety of ways, including:

- directly – making specific verbal statements about what's happened to them
- indirectly – making ambiguous verbal statements which suggest something is wrong
- behaviourally – displaying behaviour that signals something is wrong (this may or may not be deliberate)
- non-verbally – writing letters, drawing pictures or trying to communicate in other ways.

However they disclose and whatever amount they disclose, it is important that all disclosures made by children, young people and vulnerable adults are taken seriously.

Dealing with disclosures

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult discloses that they have experienced abuse, it is important that they feel they are being listened to and taken seriously. Staff should ensure they:

- **show they care, help the young person open up:** Give your full attention to the child or young person and keep your body language open and encouraging. Be compassionate, be understanding and reassure them their feelings are important.
- **take their time, slow down:** Respect pauses and don't interrupt the young person – let them go at their own pace. Recognise and respond to their body language. And remember that it may take several conversations for them to share what has happened to them.
- **show they understand, reflect back:** Make it clear you are interested in what the young person is telling you. Reflect back what they have said to check your understanding – and use their language to show it is their experience.
- **reassure the young person:** tell them that they have done the right thing in sharing their experience with you. Make sure they know that abuse is never their fault.

Never talk to the alleged perpetrator about the young person's disclosure. This could make things a lot worse for the young person. However, it is also important that you do not assume that the young person's account is true and accurate. You need to maintain an unbiased approach in your response to disclosures.

How to report a concern

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, staff should **call the police on 999**. If they are not in immediate danger, staff should report any complaints or concerns **immediately** to the Safeguarding Designated Lead. If the Designated Lead is unavailable, staff may report to any other appropriate staff member, such as their line manager or a senior manager, or the relevant local authority designated officer (LADO).

Concerns and disclosures should be reported using Leicestershire Cares' safeguarding report template. If a child, young person or vulnerable adult makes a verbal disclosure, staff should record:

- their name, age and address (if known)
- exactly what they said in their own words
- any information that has been given about the alleged abuser

If there is evidence of physical abuse on the young person's body, a body map can be used to identify where this is and what colour the injuries are.

The information recorded from any disclosures may be shared with the police, local authority designated officer or used in court. It is therefore important that this information is as detailed and accurate as possible.

Consent and sharing information

Staff must gain consent from children, young people and vulnerable adults for any information they have disclosed to be shared. Be clear that you will not be able to keep what they tell you a secret, and you may have to share the information with someone else who can help.

In an instance where children cannot consent, the consent should be gained through their parents unless to do so would put them at risk. Disclosed information can be shared without consent if not doing so will put the child, young person or vulnerable adult at risk.

When sharing information about children, young people or vulnerable adults with other professionals, staff should ensure that the information is kept confidential and secure. There must always be a clear and legitimate purpose for sharing a someone's personal information. Only specific information that is relevant and appropriate should be shared with other professionals. Staff should keep a record of the reasons why they are sharing or requesting information about a child, young person, vulnerable adult or their family.

Child protection records retention and storage

All safeguarding reports should be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead for sign off and stored securely on the young person's file.

All child protection records should be stored securely until the young person turns 25 years old. Once this age is reached, the reports should be destroyed.

Enabling disclosures and reports

Leicestershire Cares is committed to ensuring that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff, volunteers, children, young people, vulnerable adults, parents/carers and wider agencies we work with.

Leicestershire Cares staff should share information about safeguarding and good practice with children, young people, vulnerable adults and their families via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions to ensure that they know where to go for help if they have a concern.

Leicestershire Cares will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies. Our safeguarding approach and key contacts are available on our website to facilitate this.

Any staff or volunteers who raise a concern or complaint against another employee (paid or unpaid) will be protected according to Leicestershire Cares' whistleblowing policy.

Managing allegations against staff and associated personnel

Leicestershire Cares takes any concerns raised about its staff or volunteers seriously. Any concerns or complaints raised about paid staff or associated personnel, such as the board of trustees, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff or students, should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately. If the complaint is about the DSL, it should be reported to the Chief Executive Officer.

Safeguarding complaints against staff and associated personnel will be investigated thoroughly, involving all relevant parties. If appropriate, they will also be reported to the local authority designated

officer (LADO) and/or the police. The member of staff about whom the complaint has been raised may be suspended while the investigation is carried out, depending on the nature/severity of the allegations.

The investigation and outcome will be recorded and shared with the member of staff and complainant as appropriate. The record will be stored confidentially on the employee's file for up to 10 years.

Related policies and procedures

These procedures should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents:

- Safeguarding policy
- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Code of conduct for children and young people
- Photography and sharing images guidance
- Online safety policy
- Anti-bullying
- Managing complaints
- Whistleblowing
- Health and safety
- Induction, training, supervision and support

Contact details

Leicestershire Cares designated safeguarding lead:

Charlotte Robey-Turner

Head of Children and Young People

Charlottert@leicestershircares.co.uk

0116 464 5215 / 07793 443 973

Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children and Adults Boards:

<https://lrsb.org.uk/>

Local Social Services Duty Teams:

Leicester: 0116 454 1004

Leicestershire: 0116 305 0005

Rutland:

During office hours: [01572 758 407](tel:01572758407) or childrensreferrals@rutland.gov.uk

Outside of office hours: 0116 305 0005

Leicestershire Police: 0116 222 2222

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Appendix: Definitions and signs of abuse

Definition	Signs
Neglect	
A passive form of abuse in which the perpetrator is responsible to provide care, for someone, who is unable to care for oneself, but fails to provide adequate care to meet their needs. Neglect may include failing to provide sufficient supervision, nourishment, medical care or other needs. Neglect is the most common form of abuse for children, and is found in about 60% of all referred cases of abuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unkempt appearance • Constant hunger • Unattended medical issues • Abuse of alcohol or drugs • Inappropriate clothing for the weather • Frequent illness • Being unsupervised for long periods with no explanation • Becoming withdrawn • Low self-esteem • Failure to ensure that medication is taken • Living in unsafe conditions
Physical	
Contact intended to cause feelings of intimidation, injury, or other physical suffering or bodily harm. Examples include hitting, slapping, pushing, biting and restraining. Physical abuse can also involve exaggerating or deliberately causing the symptoms of illness in a child; this is known as fabricated or induced illness (FII).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple bruises • Fractures and dislocations • Scratches and cuts • Loss of clumps of hair • Black eyes or bruised ears • Scalds or burns • A history of unexplained minor falls or accidental poisonings • Explanations which are not consistent with injuries • Deterioration of health with no obvious cause • Withdrawal and mood changes • Reluctance for the individual to be with specific people • Others not allowing access to the child
Emotional	
Threats or actions to cause mental or physical harm, humiliation or isolation. Emotional abuse can include threatening a child or trying to coerce them through harassment, verbal abuse or isolation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reluctance for the individual to be with specific people • Continual references to the individual in a derogatory way by others • Being overly affectionate to strangers • Lack of confidence • Severe anxiety • Aggression towards others • Individual not allowed to speak their opinion • Disturbed sleep patterns.

Sexual	<p>The forcing of undesired sexual behaviour by one person upon another. This can be direct abuse of the other person such as rape or sexual touching or by making someone watch images of a sexual nature. Sexual abuse comes about when sexual acts have not been consented to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruises around the genital area • Bite marks or scratches • Recurrent sexually transmitted infections • Blood in underwear • Abdominal pain that has no apparent cause • Pregnancy • Provocative and inappropriate sexual behaviour • Self-harming • Aggression towards others • Refusal to undress in front of others • Reluctance for the individual to be with specific people • Sexual abuse of others.
Domestic	<p>The abuse of one partner within an intimate or family relationship using repeated, random and habitual measures to intimidate or control a partner. Children who are witness to this behaviour are also victims of domestic abuse, and can be significantly affected by what they see and hear. Domestic abuse also involves 'honour-based' violence where children are targeted because they have brought shame to a family or they have violated cultural or religious rules.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suddenly becoming aggressive without an obvious cause • Displays of anti-social behaviour • Withdrawal with signs of depression • Not doing well at school for no apparent reason • Sleep problems • Minor medical complaints with no obvious source • Hyper vigilance • Increased separation anxiety • Easily distracted • Changes in play behaviour
Bullying and cyber-bullying	<p>Repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or group directed towards a less powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear. Bullying can be carried out in person or online. When bullying happens online it can involve social networks, games and mobile devices. Online bullying can also be known as cyberbullying.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal • Reluctance to be with certain individuals • Unexplained injuries • Aggressive towards others • Lowering of confidence and self-esteem
Criminal Exploitation (CCE)	<p>Criminal exploitation is child abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently absent from and doing badly in school/college. • Going missing from home, staying out late and

<p>committing crimes.</p> <p>County Lines is the police term for urban gangs exploiting young people into moving drugs from a hub, normally a large city, into other markets - suburban areas and market and coastal towns - using dedicated mobile phone lines or "deal lines". This can involve children being trafficked away from their home area, staying in accommodation and selling and manufacturing drugs.</p> <p>If a child has been trafficked for the purpose of criminal exploitation then they are a victim of abuse. However, as children involved in gangs often commit crimes themselves, sometimes they aren't seen as victims by adults and professionals, despite the harm they have experienced.</p>	<p>travelling for unexplained reasons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a relationship or hanging out with someone older than them. • Being angry, aggressive or violent. • Being isolated or withdrawn. • Having unexplained money and buying new things. • Making more calls or sending more texts, possibly on a new phone or multiple phones. • Having more than one mobile phone, especially if one is "cheap". • Wearing clothes or accessories in gang colours or getting tattoos. • Spending more time on social media and being secretive about time online. • Self-harming and feeling emotionally unwell. • Taking drugs and abusing alcohol. • Committing petty crimes like shop lifting or vandalism. • Unexplained injuries and refusing to seek medical help.
Grooming (including extremism)	
<p>Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them.</p> <p>Children and young people who are groomed can be sexually abused, exploited or trafficked.</p> <p>Children and young people can be groomed online, in person or both – by a stranger or someone they know.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being very secretive about how they're spending their time, including when online • Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend • Having money or new things like clothes and mobile phones that they can't or won't explain • Underage drinking or drug taking • Spending more or less time online or on their devices • A sudden change in opinions or behaviour towards others (e.g. being hostile towards particular groups of people) • Being upset, withdrawn or distressed • Sexualised behaviour, language or an understanding of sex that's not appropriate for their age • Spending more time away from home or going missing for periods of time.
Female genital mutilation (FGM)	
<p>FGM is the partial or total removal of female genitalia, through cutting, injuring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties with urination • Constant pain

<p>or changing when there is no medical reason to do so. It is usually carried out on young girls between infancy and the age of 15, most commonly before the onset of puberty. It is illegal in the UK.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incontinence • Frequent vaginal, pelvic or urinary infections • Menstrual problems • Kidney damage • Cysts and abscesses • Discomfort when sitting or standing • Appearing anxious or depressed • Reluctance to undress or undergo medical examinations • Unusual absences from school or college
Organisational or institutional abuse	
<p>Abuse or poor practice throughout an organisation. Repeated incidents of poor professional practice or neglect. Inflexible services based on the needs of providers rather than the person receiving services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate or poor care/ Lack of flexibility in the care regime. • Sensory deprivation/ Denial of aids – hearing aids, glasses, walking frame, etc. • Lack of choice – meal times, food, clothes, etc. • Lack of personal possessions/ Lack of privacy or dignity. • Attitudes and behaviour of staff towards service users.
Financial abuse	
<p>Misappropriate or misuse of money/assets. Transactions to which the person could not consent, or which were invalidated by intimidation/deception.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained financial problems, unexplained bank account activity. • Recent changes of deeds or title of property. • Unusual interest by other in the person's financial affairs or assets. • Misuse of the person's money by others. • Uncooperative Power of Attorney, unpaid bills. • Not accessing activities.
Discriminatory abuse	
<p>Any form of abuse based on discrimination because of a person's race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation etc. Discrimination may be a motivating factor in other forms of abuse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of respect shown to an individual. • Signs of a sub-standard service to an individual • Exclusion from rights, services or activities that others have. • Prejudicial attitudes to towards others based on their gender, sexual orientation, race, belief, etc. • Failure to accommodate dietary needs. • Not helping people to practice their faith.
Psychological abuse	
<p>Action or neglect by the carer or any person that while not of a physical nature severely impairs the psychological or</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in appetite (weight loss or weight gain) • Deference. • Passivity.

well-being of the person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resignation. • Emotional withdrawal / Low self-image. • Unexplained fear. • Sleep disturbance.
Self-neglect This includes a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical condition of the person, bed sores, ulcers, unkempt – dirty clothes, person unwashed, dirty hair or nails. • Poor, inappropriate or unsafe environment, hoarding, inadequate diet and malnutrition. • Failure to give/take medication, untreated medical problems. • Isolated, won't socialise/not encouraged to socialise.
Modern slavery This type of abuse encompasses slavery, human trafficking and forced labour. The individuals who perpetrate this form of abuse will use whatever they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life they have not agreed to, which is likely to be inhumane and abusive. Slavery and trafficking can apply to children equally as much as adults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of physical or emotional abuse • Rarely allowed to travel alone • Appearing to be under the control of someone else • Few or no personal belongings • Hesitation when speaking with strangers
Coercive control Coercive control is a pattern of psychological and emotional behaviours (i.e. intimidation, humiliation, threats, etc.) that enforces the perpetrator's rules on a victim through varying levels of abuse and degrees of severity. The tactics are intended to create a state of fear and subordination (especially in the victims of domestic violence) for taking away their sense of liberty. Apart from causing psychological harm, the coercive control may also escalate into inflicting physical pain or injury to the victim, especially when the perpetrator wants to enhance the credibility of a threat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in behaviour, e.g. going out less, seeing friends/family less frequently, withdrawing from friends or activities • Changes in appearance either in terms of personal hygiene or clothes • Comments about another person having control of money, having to account for money spent • Checking in regularly with another person, receiving lots of texts/calls from the same person about where they are/who they are with etc. • Being deprived of sleep. • Signs of physical and/or psychological abuse