



Children's Links Group

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN HANDBOOK

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

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KEY PERSONNEL

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Board Safeguarding Officer
Julie Fowler julie.fowler@childrenslinks.org.uk	Helena Kucharczyk

Other key safeguarding personnel

Organisation	Rachel Aylmer – Chief Executive
Deputy Safeguarding Lead	Michelle Randle
Little Explorers	Danielle McKeown and Claire Kirby
Maple Vue	Lisa Brown and Amber Holton
Shining Stars	Natasha Lewis, Grace Holyer and Kirsty Chambers
North Lincs Disability Playscheme	Samatha McClements and Joanne Horrocks
Burton Play	Joanne Andrew and Ruth Klos
RAF Waddington Nursery	Kirsteen Newman and Beth Hildred
RAF Waddington OOSC	Jane Grange, Louise Crick, Emma Atkin-Findley, Louise Cheung
RAF Scampton Nursery	Rachel Paita and Angela Brennan

Date Originated	November 2010	Date Reviewed	June 2025
Date of next review	June 2026	Date of Board Approval	July 2025

Safeguarding Policy

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Children Links Group, including senior managers and the board trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

They will be reviewed annually or if subject to legislative changes.

Safeguarding Policy Statement

PURPOSE

Children's Links aims to change children's lives for the better and achieves this through working in partnership and delivering a range of services to children, families and communities.

The purpose of this policy statements is:

- ✓ To protect children and young people who receive Children's Links group services from harm. This includes children and adults who use our services.
- ✓ To provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy is drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from:

[Child protection system for England | NSPCC Learning](#)

[Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[Local Safeguarding Children Partnership – About the LSCP - Lincolnshire County Council](#)

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

This policy should be read alongside Children's Links organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents:

[G:\Company Documents\Policies and Procedures](#)

WE BELIEVE THAT:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind.
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practice in a way that protects them.

WE RECOGNISE THAT:

- The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.
- Working in partnership with other agencies is essential in promoting children & young people's welfare.
- All children regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm and abuse.
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse.

WE WILL SEEK TO KEEP CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE BY:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them.
- Appointing a nominated child protection lead for children and young people, a deputy and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding.
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures, so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently.
- Recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Recording and storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance.
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions.
- Making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern.
- Using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately.
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise.
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.
- Building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

Safeguarding Children Procedures

Safeguarding Procedures (All staff)

1. Purpose

To help keep children safe from abuse and to equip staff and volunteers about safeguarding so they can **See it. Recognise it. Report it.** Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

All members of staff are required to report any suspected abuse and be aware of the appropriate reporting and support procedure for safeguarding. Staff will exercise a 'professional curiosity' and will be alert to the fact that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves in any number of ways including, child-on-child abuse, child-on-adult abuse, service users can abuse service provider staff.

Staff will respond to all concerns, worries, suspicions, disclosures, allegations. If there is a safeguarding concern staff must not keep information about their concerns to themselves they must follow the procedure in the flowchart below for reporting safeguarding concerns.

The Safeguarding Officer(s) discharge their safeguarding functions in a way that ensures that children and young people at risk of harm are safeguarded from harm and promotes their welfare. They are responsible for following up any suspected reports of abuse and for informing the police or other appropriate organisations.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for safeguarding governance and may discharge some of the functions to the Chief Executive who is responsible for supervision of these activities.

*Staff refers to paid staff and volunteers.

2. Definitions

A child is anyone up until their 18th birthday.

"Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children" is defined in Working Together 2023 as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children.
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework.

3. Safeguarding procedures

- Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility.
- Children's Links commitment to keeping children and young people safe is regularly and consistently referenced in all our key policies, procedures, website and appropriate documents.
- Children's Links communicates its safeguarding policies and procedures to all staff. This is done as part of induction, at supervision for relevant roles and policies and procedures are available on the staff '**shared drive**' under policies and procedures: safeguarding
- Children's Links communicates its safeguarding policies and procedures to all staff and relevant stakeholders, including the children and young people we support through its website, staff and documentation. Safeguarding updates on practice or referral routes etc is a standing item on internal team meeting agendas.
- Children's Links communicates its safeguarding policies and procedures to its Board Members as part of a standing agenda item at Board meetings.

4. Reporting of Safeguarding concerns

If you are worried about a child, talk to the Children's Links Safeguarding Lead to discuss your concerns at the very earliest opportunity. **Do not delay.**

Safeguarding Officers

Lead Officer: Julie Fowler 07554 450486 julie.fowler@childrenslinks.org.uk

Deputy DSL: Michelle Randle 07903 023393 michelle.randle@childrenslinks.org.uk

Chief Executive: Rachel Aylmer 07908 466601 rachel.aylmer@childrenslinks.org.uk

Safeguarding Trustee: Helena Kucharczyk

4.1 MAKING A SAFEGUARDING REFERRAL

1. Our cross organisational team and your manager will support making a safeguarding referral to the relevant Local Authority.
2. To report a safeguarding concern about a child, contact your local safeguarding team. Contact numbers can be found in appendix and your workplace. Please contact your manager if you are experiencing difficulties with reporting.
3. All telephone referrals to MUST be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.
4. The **police and relevant emergency services will be contacted in an emergency situation by calling 999**. If there is no immediate danger call the police on 101

Where appropriate and safe to do so, staff need to make it clear to anyone who shares information with them that we will have to pass the information on and follow Children's Links procedure in order to ensure that no one else is at risk, to prevent a crime or to protect them if they cannot protect themselves from harm.

Lack of consent to share information does not mean that the staff member keeps the information to themselves, they must tell their Safeguarding Lead/Deputy.

Your report must be accurate and where possible use the child's exact words if they disclosed the information to you.

The report must be signed and dated, including the year. Ensure the form is emailed safely following the directions on the form, ensure a copy is saved confidentially on the server and that the CLM incident log is updated.

4.2 UNSURE IF THE REFERRAL IS A SAFEGUARDING OR WELFARE REFERRAL?

If staff are unsure that a safeguarding referral is needed, speak to your manager and contact our safeguarding leads or the local safeguarding team.

Flowchart for referral for actual or suspected abuse: Children (2024) See it. Recognise it. Report it.

If the matter is urgent because a child is in immediate danger phone 999 for the Police.

See it.

Are they safe? If you are concerned about a child you could help stop abuse if you follow the safeguarding policy and procedure (use this flowchart)

It is not your responsibility to decide if abuse has happened. **It Is Your Responsibility To Report It to the Safeguarding Lead and/or appropriate authority**

Recognise it.

- Share your concerns/ information with the Safeguarding Lead/ Deputy Safeguarding Lead.
- If you need to discuss whether or not a referral is required, call your local safeguarding team
- **If there is immediate danger to the child call 999 for the Police.** If there is no immediate danger call the police on 101

Report it

If you have a concern about a child and need to make a safeguarding referral use the relevant online form

Contact information

Safeguarding referral:

Police: 999 if it is an emergency If there is no immediate danger call the police on 101

Safeguarding Lead: Julie Fowler 07554 450486 julie.fowler@childrenslinks.org.uk

Safeguarding Deputy: Michelle Randle 07903 023393 michelle.randle@childrenslinks.org.uk

Chief Executive: Rachel Aylmer 07908 466601 rachel.aylmer@childrenslinks.org.uk

Safeguarding Trustee: Helena Kucharczyk

Notes: reporting for CYP

- Parents/ carers should be advised that you are making a referral unless this might put the child at risk or cause any delay in referring
- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Referrals** If you have concerns about an adult working with a child under the age of 18 that you would like to report,

Remember ALL notes will be disclosable should a formal or criminal investigation occur. *Ensure that your notes are signed, dated, professional, separate opinion from fact, are recorded verbatim using the same words as were used during the disclosure.*

4.3 REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE OR MALPRACTICE AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF INCLUDING VOLUNTEERS

It is essential that **any** allegation of abuse made against a person who works with children and young people including those who work in a voluntary capacity are dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

This procedure applies to a wider range of allegations than those in which there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. **It also includes allegations that might indicate that the alleged perpetrator is unsuitable to continue to work with children in their present position, or in any capacity. This may be due to concerns about the persons conduct in their personal or professional life that might indicate their unsuitability to work with children.**

It must be used in respect of all allegations that are consistent with the guidance in Working Together i.e. cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

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

If the allegation is against a Children's Links member of staff or Children's Links volunteer the allegation must be reported immediately, at least within one working day, to the Safeguarding Lead.

If the allegation is against the Safeguarding Lead then the allegation must be reported to the Children's Links Deputy Safeguarding Lead/CEO. The Children's Links Safeguarding Lead/or Deputy must then report the allegation to the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) on the same day.

Contact details for LADO's

Local Authority Designated Officers can be contacted for allegations against all staff and volunteers. Contact details can be found in the appendix

5. Recognising Child Abuse

Abuse can take many forms and the examples in the definitions below are not exhaustive. There may be other situations not covered in the examples below that give you concern for a child's safety and wellbeing. If you have a concern follow the reporting flowchart.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Physical Abuse

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

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to

children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate... It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving high levels of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or 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.

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 care-givers);
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment;
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Definitions from *Working together to safeguard children, 2023*

STAFF MUST ALSO BE AWARE OF THE FOLLOWING SAFEGUARDING ISSUES:

5.1 DOMESTIC ABUSE

Children's Links will act in accordance with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and local safeguarding procedures including making a referral if it seems reasonable to suspect that:

- a child sees, hears, experiences or is otherwise aware of domestic abuse – i.e. that domestic abuse is part of their experience of family life. This applies regardless of whether they actually witness any particular event or are physically harmed, and
- the non-abusing parent will not be able – for whatever reason – to ensure the safety and well being of their child without significant professional assistance and support.

(Refer to the Domestic Abuse guidance on the local Safeguarding Partnership website for further guidance and accompanying Children's Link's procedure for more information).

5.2 PREVENT: VULNERABLE TO RADICALISATION (VTR) OR INFLUENCED BY EXTREMISM

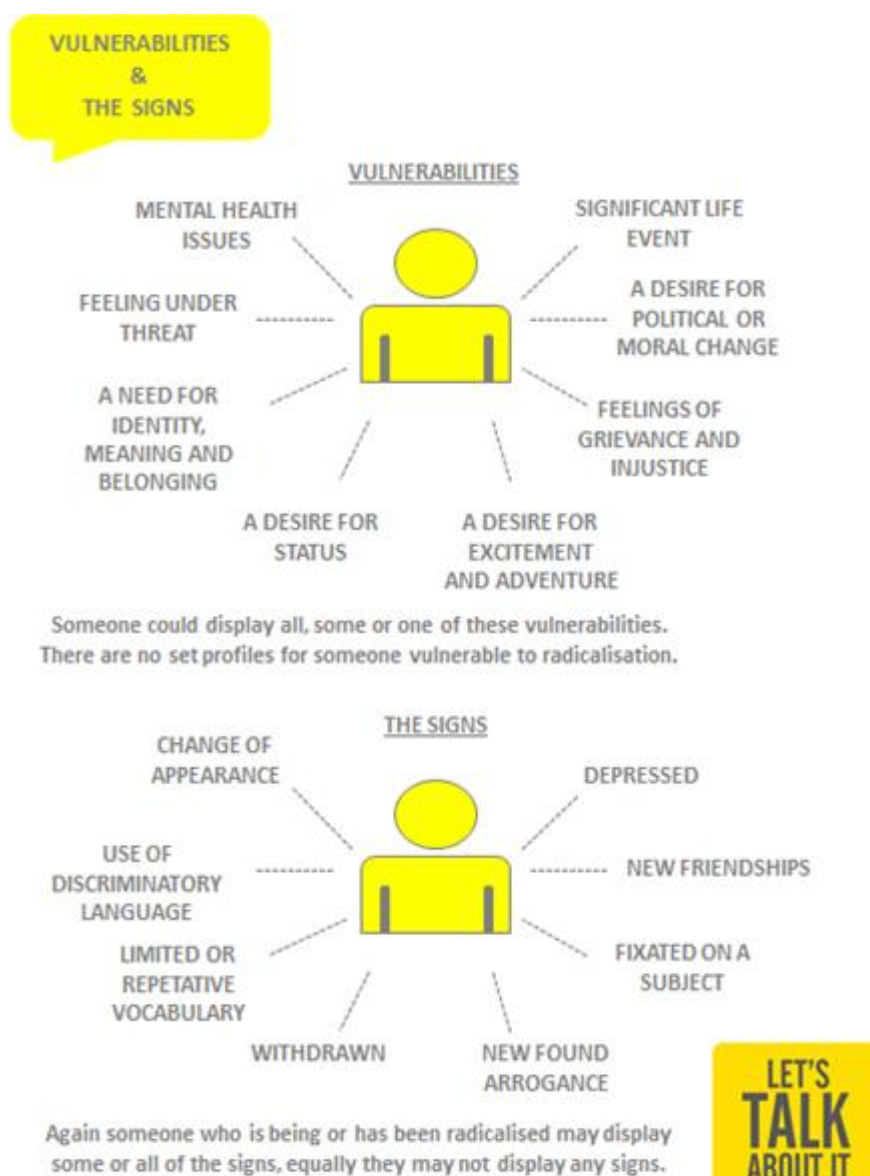
We will act in accordance with the policies and procedures on the Local Authorities Safeguarding Partnership website for PREVENT

Staff may notice a change in a child or adults' behaviour that may suggest they are vulnerable to violent extremism. After having discussed concerns with appropriate colleagues, being mindful of confidentiality, where the staff member still has concerns that the individual may be vulnerable to violent extremism, email ctp-em-preventreferral@lincs.police.uk or call 101 and ask for Prevent. For urgent safeguarding concerns call the local safeguarding teams

UNLIKE SAFEGUARDING STAFF MUST NOT DISCUSS CONCERNS WITH THE INDIVIDUAL PRIOR TO REFERRAL

Who is Vulnerable to Radicalisation?

People who are vulnerable to radicalisation come from all walks of life, genders, ages and social groups, income levels, professions etc.



Extremism is any form of extremism; this includes extreme right-wing views, animal rights issues as well as religious views. It is unhelpful to have a narrow view of who can be VTR. It is important to keep an open mind.

Looking at the factors associated with a person who becomes vulnerable to radicalisation it can be helpful to look at different aspects of their life.

THERE IS NO PROFILE FOR SOMEONE WHO COULD BE DRAWN INTO TERRORISM.

This guide is to help you refer concerns about an individual who may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Below are questions which may help you to quantify and structure your concerns. The list is not exhaustive and other factors may be present but they are intended as a guide to help communicate your professional judgement about what has led you to make a referral.

Faith / ideology

- Are they new to a particular faith / faith strand?
- Do they seem to have naïve or narrow religious or political views?
- Have there been sudden changes in their observance, behaviour, interaction or attendance at their place of worship / organised meeting?
- Have there been specific examples or is there an undertone of “Them and Us” language or violent rhetoric being used or behaviour occurring?
- Is there evidence of increasing association with a closed tight knit group of individuals / known recruiters / extremists / restricted events?
- Are there particular grievances either personal or global that appear to be unresolved / festering?
- Has there been an increase in unusual travel abroad without satisfactory explanation?

Personal / emotional / social issues

- Is there conflict with their families regarding religious beliefs / lifestyle choices?
- Is there evidence of cultural anxiety and / or isolation linked to insularity / lack of integration? Is there evidence of increasing isolation from family, friends or groups towards a smaller group of individuals or a known location?
- Is there history in petty criminality and / or unusual hedonistic behaviour (alcohol/drug use, casual sexual relationships, and addictive behaviours)?
- Have they got / had extremist propaganda materials (DVD's, CD's, leaflets etc.) in their possession?
- Do they associate with negative / criminal peers or known groups of concern?
- Are there concerns regarding their emotional stability and or mental health?
- Is there evidence of participation in survivalist / combat simulation activities, e.g. paint balling?

Risk / Protective Factors

- What are the specific factors which are contributing towards making the individual more vulnerable to radicalisation? E.g. mental health, language barriers, cultural anxiety, impressionability, criminality, specific grievance, transitional period in life etc.
- Is there any evidence of others targeting or exploiting these vulnerabilities or risks?
- What factors are already in place or could be developed to firm up support for the individual or help them increase their resilience to negative influences? E.g. positive family ties, employment, mentor / agency input etc.

5.3 INFORMATION SHARING PROCEDURES RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

To be read in conjunction with the Children's Links Recording Concerns and Information Sharing

Through the safe and effective sharing of information it aims to ensure that vulnerable adults and or children get the support they require from external services and that the people it works with are protected from harm, abuse or neglect. It also seeks to prevent them from offending.

In many reviews into deaths of children the lack of information sharing between agencies and organisations is often highlighted as a contributory, if not causal, factor in the death. It is imperative that Children's Links staff understand the requirement to share safeguarding information in order to protect vulnerable children from harm.

Confidentiality and information sharing must be integrated across all aspects of Children's Links services and management as its users have the right to privacy and confidentiality and to understand when "secrets" cannot be protected for their best interests.

INFORMATION SHARING DEFINITIONS

Confidentiality: Not all information is confidential. Confidential information is information of some sensitivity, which is not already lawfully in the public domain or readily available from another public source, and which has been shared in a relationship where the person giving the information understood that it would not be shared with others.

Children's Links understands confidentiality to mean that no information regarding a service user shall be given directly or indirectly to any third party which is external to the Staff, without that service user's prior expressed consent to disclose such information.

Breach of confidentiality: Confidence is only breached where the sharing of **confidential** information is not authorised by the person who provided it or to whom it relates. If the information was provided on the understanding that it would be shared with a limited range of people or for limited purposes, then sharing in accordance with that understanding will not be a breach of confidence. Similarly, there will not be a breach of confidence where there is explicit consent to the sharing.

Even where sharing of confidential information is not authorised, Children's Links may lawfully share it if this can be justified in the public interest.

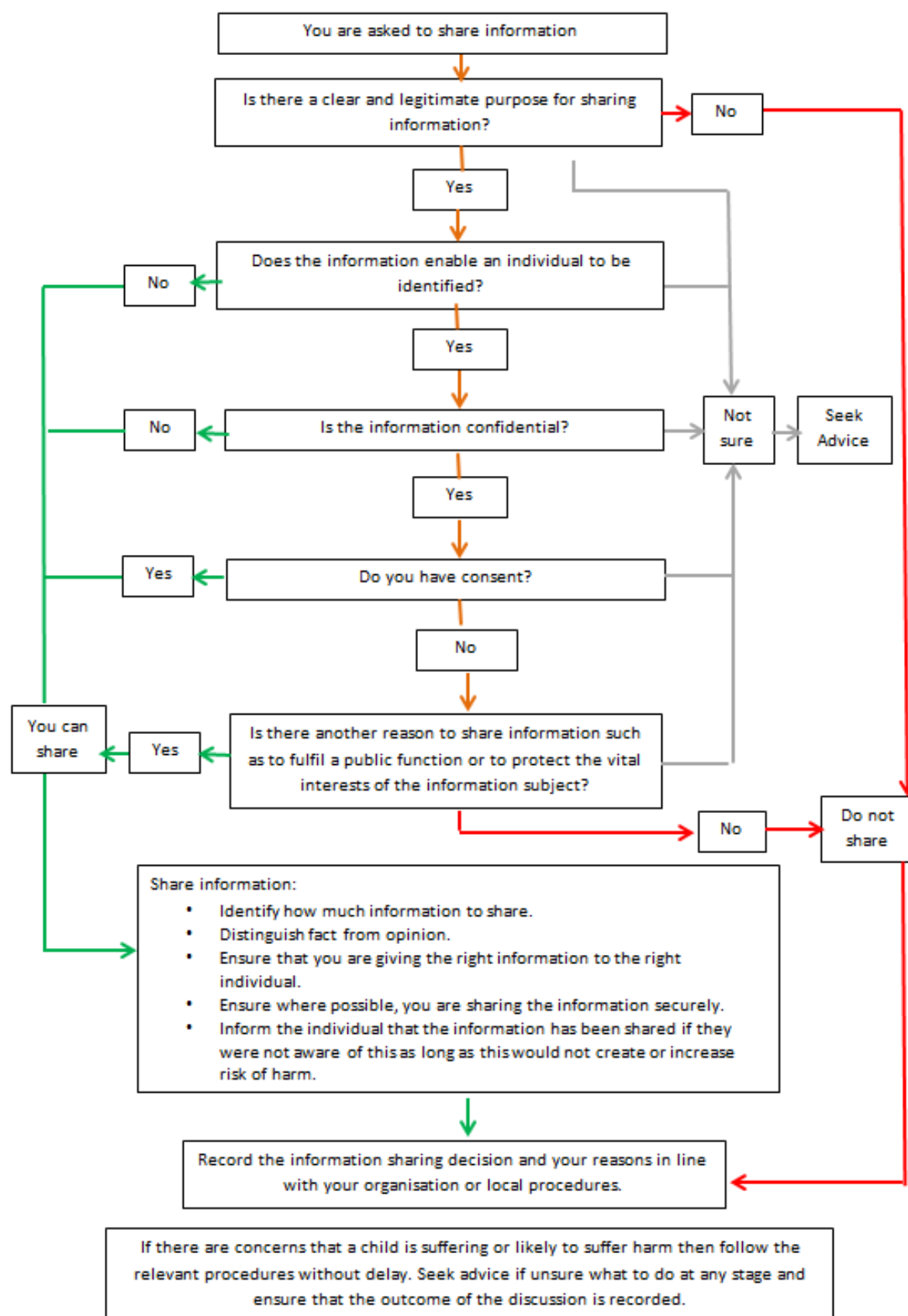
Seeking consent should be the first option, if appropriate. Where consent cannot be obtained to the sharing of the information or is refused, or where seeking it is likely to undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a crime, the question of whether there is a sufficient public interest must be judged by the Manager, CEO and Safeguarding Trustee on the facts of each case.

Therefore, where you have a concern about a child or young person, you should not regard refusal of consent as necessarily precluding the sharing of confidential information

Public interest: A public interest can arise in a wide range of circumstances, for example, to protect children or other people from harm, to promote the welfare of children or to prevent crime and disorder. There are also public interests, which in some circumstances may weigh against sharing, including the public interest in maintaining public confidence in the confidentiality of certain services. The key factor in deciding whether or not to share confidential information is proportionality, i.e. whether the proposed sharing is a proportionate response to the need to protect the public interest in question.

Serious crime: This means any crime which causes or is likely to cause significant harm to a child or young person or serious harm to an adult.

5.4 INFORMATION SHARING FLOWCHART



6. Responsibilities of Children's Links Safeguarding Lead(s)

6.1 RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHILDREN'S LINKS SAFEGUARDING LEADS

This role will work closely with the senior Board level lead. The Lead Safeguarding Lead's role is to support other staff to recognise the needs of children, including identifying and responding to possible abuse. The role will be given sufficient resource and, supervision and support them to fulfil their child welfare and safeguarding responsibilities effectively

They will discharge their safeguarding functions in a way that ensures that children are safeguarded from harm, and promotes their welfare.

In the case of allegations made against Children's Links Staff (including volunteers) the Safeguarding Lead will work with the LADO and must follow the Local Authority procedures. In cases of actual or suspected abuse by a member of staff the Safeguarding Lead in consultation with the LADO will ensure the Police and/or other statutory bodies like Children's Social Care are informed as appropriate. The victim must be protected from further abuse while the Police/ external agencies conduct their own investigation.

If not already aware any allegation must be reported to the Safeguarding Lead unless the Safeguarding Lead is the alleged perpetrator, in that situation the report will be made to Children's Links Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

Any information held either electronically or in hard copy will be held securely in a restricted access file or sealed envelope in a secure, locked cabinet/drawer. Any electronic database used for recording and reporting abuse internally will protect the identity of the child and use an identifying code rather than the name so as to ensure confidentiality.

6.2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHILDREN'S LINKS SAFEGUARDING TRUSTEE

The Charity Commission is clear that Trustees have primary responsibility for safeguarding Children's Links; while some responsibilities can be delegated, overall responsibility lies with the Board.

To enable the Board not only to support the management and staff team in the organisation, including the Safeguarding Lead, but also to provide an important mechanism for critically evaluating the information presented to the Board by the management team, and, where necessary, challenging and checking it out.

To ensure that Children's Links is taking steps to safeguard and take responsibility for the children with whom it works and is acting in their best interests, taking all reasonable steps to prevent any harm to them, assessing and managing risk, ensuring safeguarding policies and procedures are in place, undertaking ongoing monitoring and reviewing of policies and procedures including complaints and recruitment, to ensure that safeguards are being implemented and are effective, that Children's Links is responding appropriately to allegations of abuse.

6.3 DETAILED PROCEDURES FOR CHILDREN'S LINKS SAFEGUARDING LEADS OR STAFF REPORTING IN THEIR ABSENCE

ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES

The following procedures must be followed and referred to as necessary: -

- Early Help assessment (Formerly Common Assessment Framework CAF)
- Child In Need (CIN)
- Domestic abuse

Reporting allegations of abuse or malpractice against a member of staff including volunteers

It is essential that **any** allegation of abuse made against a person who works with children and young people including those who work in a voluntary capacity are dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

This procedure applies to a wider range of allegations than those in which there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. **It also includes allegations that might indicate that the alleged perpetrator is unsuitable to continue to work with children in their present position, or in any capacity. This may be due to concerns about the persons conduct in their personal or professional life that might indicate their unsuitability to work with children.**

It must be used in respect of all allegations that are consistent with the guidance in Working Together i.e. cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

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

If the allegation is against a Children's Links member of staff or Children's Links volunteer the allegation must be reported immediately, at least within one working day, to the Safeguarding Lead. If the allegation is against the Safeguarding Lead then the allegation must be reported to the Children's Links Deputy Safeguarding Lead/CEO. The Children's Links Safeguarding Lead/or Deputy must then report the allegation to the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) on the same day.

Contact details for LADO's

Local Authority Designated Officers can be contacted for allegations against all staff and volunteers. Please refer to appendix for contact details.

Initial consideration

The LA Designated Officer (LADO) will discuss the matter with the Children's Links Safeguarding Lead and, where necessary, obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The discussion should also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded.

If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a child or young person is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the LADO should immediately inform the police and convene a similar discussion to decide whether a police investigation is needed. That discussion should also involve the employer.

Action following initial consideration

Where the initial evaluation decides that the allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence, it is dealt with by the Children's Links Safeguarding Lead, CEO or Chair. In such cases, if the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, appropriate action should be instituted within three working days. If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, the hearing should be held within 15 working days.

Where further investigation is required to inform consideration of disciplinary action, the Safeguarding Officer or Chair will discuss who will undertake that investigation with the LADO.

In some settings and circumstances, it may be appropriate for the disciplinary investigation to be conducted by a person who is independent of THE ORG or the person's line manager to ensure objectivity. In any case, the investigating officer should aim to provide a report to the employer within 10 working days.

On receipt of the report of the disciplinary investigation, the Safeguarding Officer or Chair should decide whether a disciplinary hearing is needed **within two working days**, and if a hearing is needed it should be held **within 15 working days**

Please refer to the disciplinary policy and procedure for notice periods and recording of investigations and meetings.

Suspension

The possible risk of harm to children posed by an accused person needs to be managed and evaluated. The evaluation will be in respect of the child/ren involved in the allegation and any other children in the individual's home, work or community life. In some cases, it will require consideration to be given to the use of suspension for the person involved in the allegation. This may be until the matter is resolved

Children's Links member of staff must not be automatically suspended without careful thought and consideration of the circumstances of the allegation. In making the decision, the Safeguarding Lead must consider whether the person should be suspended from contact with children for the duration of the investigation, or until resolution has been reached. In any case, alternatives to suspension should be explored and advice sought from the LADO.

Appendix 1. How to respond when a child / young person wants to talk about abuse

General points

- Take seriously what the child/young person says (however unlikely the story may sound)
- Keep calm
- Look at the child/young person directly
- Be honest
- Let them know you will need to tell someone else – don't promise confidentiality
- Reassure them they are not to blame for the abuse
- Be aware that the child/young person may have been threatened
- Never push for information
- Ask questions for clarification only; avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.

Helpful things to say or show

- Show acceptance of what the child/young person says
- "I am glad you have told me"
- "It's not your fault"
- "I will help you"

Avoid saying

- "Why didn't you tell anyone before?"
- "I can't believe it"
- "Are you sure this is true?"
- Never make false promises
- Never make statements such as "I am shocked!", or "don't tell anyone else"

Concluding

- Reassure the young person that they were right to tell you and that you take them seriously.
- Let the young person know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what might happen. Immediately report the matter, as per procedures.

Appendix 2. Abuse definitions and recognising signs of abuse

Recognising possible child / young person abuse

The following behavioural signs *may* be indicators of child/young person abuse, but care should be taken in interpreting them in isolation.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

What is physical abuse?

Physical abuse is when someone hurts or harms a child or young person on purpose. It includes:

- hitting with hands or objects
- slapping and punching
- kicking
- shaking
- throwing
- poisoning
- burning and scalding
- biting and scratching
- breaking bones
- drowning.

It's important to remember that physical abuse is any way of intentionally causing physical harm to a child or young person. It also includes making up the symptoms of an illness or causing a child to become unwell.

SIGNS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE

Bumps and bruises don't always mean a child is being physically abused. All children have accidents, trips and falls. And there isn't just one sign or symptom to look out for. But it's important to be aware of the signs. If a child regularly has injuries, there seems to be a pattern to the injuries or the explanation doesn't match the injuries, then this should be reported.

Physical abuse symptoms include:

- bruises
- broken or fractured bones
- burns or scalds
- bite marks.

It can also include other injuries and health problems, such as:

- scarring
- the effects of poisoning, such as vomiting, drowsiness or seizures
- breathing problems from drowning, suffocation or poisoning.

Head injuries in babies and toddlers can be signs of abuse so it's important to be aware of these.

Visible signs include:

- swelling
- bruising
- fractures
- being extremely sleepy or unconscious
- breathing problems
- seizures
- vomiting
- unusual behaviour, such as being irritable or not feeding properly.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

There might not be any obvious physical signs of emotional abuse or neglect. And a child might not tell anyone what's happening until they reach a 'crisis point'. That's why it's important to look out for signs in how a child is acting.

As children grow up, their emotions change. This means it can be difficult to tell if they're being emotionally abused. But children who are being emotionally abused might:

- seem unconfident or lack self-assurance
- struggle to control their emotions
- have difficulty making or maintaining relationships
- act in a way that's inappropriate for their age.

The signs of emotional abuse can also be different for children at different ages.

SIGNS IN BABIES AND TODDLERS

Babies and pre-school children who are being emotionally abused or neglected might:

- be overly-affectionate to strangers or people they don't know well
- seem unconfident, wary or anxious
- not have a close relationship or bond with their parent
- be aggressive or cruel towards other children or animals.

NEGLECT

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and the most common form of child abuse. A child might be left hungry or dirty, or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision or health care. This can put children and young people in danger. And it can also have long term effects on their physical and mental wellbeing.

TYPES OF NEGLECT

Neglect can be a lot of different things, which can make it hard to spot. But broadly speaking, there are 4 types of neglect.

- **Physical neglect** A child's basic needs, such as food, clothing or shelter, are not met or they aren't properly supervised or kept safe.
- **Educational neglect** A parent doesn't ensure their child is given an education.
- **Emotional neglect** A child doesn't get the nurture and stimulation they need. This could be through ignoring, humiliating, intimidating or isolating them.
- **Medical neglect** A child isn't given proper health care. This includes dental care and refusing or ignoring medical recommendations.

Signs of neglect

Poor appearance and hygiene, health and development problems, housing and family issues, changes in behaviour.

SEXUAL ABUSE

It is never a child's fault they were sexually abused – it's important to make sure children know this.

When a child or young person is sexually abused, they're forced, tricked or manipulated into sexual activities. They might not understand that what's happening is abuse or that it's wrong for the abuser to do this to them. They might be afraid to tell someone or behave as though this is normal for them to experience, both are valid for the child to be displaying. Sexual abuse can happen anywhere – and it can happen in person or online.

Types of sexual abuse

There are two types of sexual abuse – contact and non-contact abuse. And sexual abuse can happen in person or online.

Contact abuse

Contact abuse is where an abuser makes physical contact with a child or forces the child to make physical contact with someone else. This includes:

- sexual touching of any part of a child's body, whether they're clothed or not
- using a body part or object to rape or penetrate a child
- forcing a child to take part in sexual activities
- making a child undress or touch someone else.

Contact abuse can include touching, kissing and oral sex – sexual abuse isn't just penetrative.

Non-contact abuse

Non-contact abuse is where a child is abused without being touched by the abuser. This can be in person or online and includes:

- exposing or flashing
- showing pornography
- exposing a child to sexual acts
- making them masturbate
- forcing a child to make, view or share child abuse images or videos
- making, viewing or distributing child abuse images or videos
- forcing a child to take part in sexual activities or conversations online or through a smartphone.

Find out more about [grooming](#) and [child sexual exploitation](#). Although their definitions are slightly different to sexual abuse, they are all forms of child abuse.

Signs of sexual abuse

Knowing the signs of sexual abuse can help give a voice to children and can get support for that child earlier on. Sometimes children won't understand that what's happening to them is wrong. Or they might be scared to speak out. Some of the signs you might notice include:

Emotional and behavioural signs

- Avoiding being alone with or frightened of people or a person they know.
- Language or sexual behaviour you wouldn't expect them to know.
- Having nightmares or bed-wetting.
- Alcohol or drug misuse.
- Self-harm.
- Changes in eating habits or developing an eating problem.
- Changes in their mood, feeling irritable and angry, or anything out of the ordinary.
- Change in normal behaviour for the child, for example suddenly not attending education or avoiding wanting to go home/running away.

Physical signs

- Bruises.
- Bleeding, discharge, pains or soreness in their genital or anal area.
- Sexually transmitted infections, including in the throat.
- Pain/soreness in throat
- Pregnancy.
- Difficulty in walking/sitting that are not usual for the child.

If a child is being or has been sexually abused online, they might:

- spend a lot more or a lot less time than usual online, texting, gaming or using social media
- seem distant, upset or angry after using the internet or texting
- be secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone
- behaving as though they have to be online at a certain time, or rushing to get on their phone
- have lots of new phone numbers, texts or email addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet
- Expressing the need for money, this may be used if they are being blackmailed.

Children and young people might also drop hints and clues about the abuse.

Refer to [Types of Child Abuse & How to Prevent Them | NSPCC](#) for further definitions and sign of;

- Cyberbullying
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Child Trafficking
- Criminal exploitation and gangs
- Domestic Violence and Operation encompass
- Grooming
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Non-recent abuse
- Online abuse
- Breast flattening
- Ebinyo / infant oral mutilation
- Peer on peer abuse
- Honour based abuse
- Forced marriage

Appendix 3: Local Safeguarding Teams and LADO Contacts Details

LEICESTERSHIRE

Leicester Children's Social Services: 0116 4541004 (24 hour service)

Concerns about children

Leicestershire First Response Children's Duty Team:

0116 305 0005 (24 hour phone line)

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/community-safety/report-abuse-or-neglect-of-a-child>

Multi Agency Referral Form (MARF)

[*Multi-Agency Referral Form for Early Help and Social Care services \(MARF\) | Leicestershire County Council Professional Services Portal*](#)

Concerns about vulnerable Adults and adult social care:

0116 305 0004 (Monday to Thursday, 8.30am to 5pm, Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm)

Emergency Duty Team: 0116 305 0888 (Evenings, weekends, Bank Holidays)

[*Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Partnerships Business Office - Home \(lrsb.org.uk\)*](#)

LADO REPORTING

Leicestershire County Council LADO

Allegations Line: 0116 305 4141 (Monday-Thursday, 8.30am-5.00 pm and Friday, 8.30am-4.30pm)

Outside office hours contact Leicestershire First Response Children's Duty Team: 0116 305 0005

LADO email for Referrals and New Enquiries: CFS-LADO@leics.gov.uk

Rutland County Council LADO

Tel: 01572 758 454

[*Local Authority Designated Officer \(LADO\) | Rutland County Council*](#)

Leicester City Council LADO

Tel: 0116 454 2440

Email: Lado-allegations-referrals@leicester.gov.uk

HAMPSHIRE

Hampshire Children's Services: childrens.services@hants.gov.uk

Tel: 0300 5551384 (8.30 to 5pm Monday to Thursday, 9am to 4.30pm Friday)

Tel: 0300 5551373 (out of hours)

[Inter-agency referral to Children's Services - Area - Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](http://hants.gov.uk)

[Children's Services Safeguarding Form \(office.com\)](http://office.com)

[Homepage - Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership](http://hants.gov.uk)

LADO REPORTING

Tel: 01962 876364

[LADO service initial enquiry form- \(office.com\)](http://office.com)

[Allegations against people in a position of trust | Children and Families | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](http://hants.gov.uk)

LINCOLNSHIRE

[Safeguarding – Lincolnshire County Council](http://lincolnshire.gov.uk)

Lincolnshire Customer Service Centre: 01522 782155

[Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership – Report a concern about a child - Lincolnshire County Council](http://lincolnshire.gov.uk)

Children's safeguarding - 01522 782111 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm)

[Lincolnshire SCP Policy and Procedures Manual](http://lincolnshire.gov.uk)

[Adult Safeguarding Concern Form 17.10.22.docx \(live.com\)](http://live.com)

Adults safeguarding - 01522 782155 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm)

Tel: 01522 782333 (outside office hours)

[Team Around the Child – Professional resources \(lincolnshire.gov.uk\)](http://lincolnshire.gov.uk)

LADO REPORTING

LADO: 01522 554674

[LADO referral | Completing the form – Lincolnshire County Council](http://lincolnshire.gov.uk)

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE

[Keeping children safe in North Lincolnshire - North Lincolnshire Council \(northlincs.gov.uk\)](http://northlincs.gov.uk)

North Lincolnshire's Children's Services Single Point of Contact Team: 08081 689667 (free phone)

01724 296500 (9am to 5pm Monday to Thursday, 9am to 4.30pm Friday)

01724 296555 (answerphone – out of office hours and at weekends)

Email: imap@northlincs.gov.uk

[CMARS | Children's resilience and safeguarding board \(northlincscmars.co.uk\)](http://northlincscmars.co.uk)

Email: mars@northlincs.gov.uk

Children's MARS Team

Church Square House

30-40 High St

Scunthorpe

DN15 6NL

Safeguarding Adults in North Lincolnshire

[North Lincs SAB | North Lincs SAB](#)

[Safeguarding Adults Concern form v2022 - About this form - NORTHLINCS.GOV.UK \(achieveservice.com\)](#)

LADO REPORTING

North Lincolnshire LADO Tel: 01724 298293

[LADO-Referral-Form-formatted-and-restricted-1.docx \(live.com\)](#)

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

<https://safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/children-board/>

Peterborough: 01733 864180

Cambridgeshire: 0345 045 5203

Outside office hours, at weekends and on public holidays contact the emergency duty team for Peterborough and Cambridgeshire on 01733 234724.

LADO REPORTING

Cambridgeshire 01223 727967

Peterborough 01733 864038

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

[Safeguarding children - Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\) | Nottinghamshire County Council](#)

Tel: 0300 5008080 (8.30 to 5pm)

Emergency Duty Team: 4564546 (out of hours)

[Report a new concern about a child | Nottinghamshire County Council](#)

Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership
County Hall
West Bridgford
Nottingham, NG2 7QP.

Email: info.nscp@nottsccl.gov.uk

Telephone: 0115 977 3935

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults:

[Report abuse or neglect of an adult | Nottinghamshire County Council](#)

Contact the Emergency Duty Team: 0300 456 4546 (Monday - Friday 5:00pm-8:30am and 24 hours Saturday and Sunday)

LADO REPORTING

Safeguarding Independent Review telephone: 0115 8041272

Email: LADO@nottsccl.gov.uk

[Submit a LADO Contact Form - Advice and guidance - config - Section 1 - Nottinghamshire County Council](#)

National Police Prevent advice line 0800 011 3764

[Report online material promoting terrorism or extremism - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[EMSOU East Midlands Special Operations | Regional Policing Unit East Midlands](#)
Covering Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire police