SAFEGUARDING POLICY

part of the YMCA SPG Safeguarding Framework

Effective from:
30 October 2026

APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

The vision of YMCA St Paul's Group is of 'places where young people thrive and communities flourish'. To achieve this, we must safeguard and promote the welfare of all children, young people and adults, particularly those who may be at risk of harm, abuse or neglect.

By Safeguarding in general we mean protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and promoting their welfare by enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

This policy forms part of the **YMCA St Paul's Group Safeguarding Framework**, which brings together this overarching policy with the procedures, guidance and supporting documents that explain how safeguarding responsibilities are applied in practice.

YMCA SPG SAFEGUARDING FRAMEWORK

Overarching Safeguarding Policy
sets the commitments, principles, governance and responsibilities

↓

Safeguarding Core Procedures
set out the consistent steps for reporting and responding to concerns

↓

Specialist Safeguarding Procedures
provide detailed guidance for specific circumstances, risks and groups

↓

Related Procedures
other key documents that support staff to safeguard people effectively

This policy sets out the Group's safeguarding commitments, principles, governance arrangements and responsibilities. It should be read alongside the relevant procedures and specialist documents within the Framework, taking account of the nature of the concern, the service involved, and the person's age and circumstances.

The topics covered in other documents within the Safeguarding Framework include:

- Safeguarding Procedures
- Safer Recruitment
- Code of Conduct
- Induction, training, supervision and support
- Domestic Violence
- Roles & responsibilities for the designated safeguarding leads
- Online Safety
- Behaviour codes for persons at risk
- Anti-bullying
- Managing complaints

- Photography and sharing images guidance
- Prevent & British Values
- Dealing with disclosures and concerns about a person at risk
- Managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- Child and adult protection records retention and storage
- Recording concerns and information sharing
- Whistleblowing
- Health & Safety
- DBS Policy & Procedures
- Contractor management
- Missing Persons procedures
- Adult and child ratios

As the safeguarding needs, rights and legal protections of children and adults at risk differ, staff and volunteers must also consider the person's wishes, rights, mental capacity, care and support needs and level of risk when deciding which part of the Framework applies. Where a concern involves both a child and an adult, or it is unclear which procedure to follow, advice must be sought promptly from a Safeguarding Lead or Designated Safeguarding Officer.

This policy applies to all legal entities within YMCA St Paul's Group (the Group) and to all trustees, employees, workers, volunteers, contractors and others acting on behalf of the Group.

Everyone covered by this policy is expected to understand their safeguarding responsibilities and follow the procedures relevant to their role and area of work.

DEFINITIONS

In this policy, a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means 'babies, children and young people' throughout.

By safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children we mean:

- protecting children from abuse and maltreatment, including online
- preventing harm to children's health or development
- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined as an activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

A vulnerable adult, also referred to as 'adult at risk', means a person aged 18 or over who has care and/ or support needs, is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect and, as a result of those needs, is unable to protect themselves from the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

In relation to safeguarding vulnerable adults we follow the 6 Principles of Safeguarding as set out by the Care Act 2014. These are:

- **Empowerment:** Empowering vulnerable adults to make their own decisions and informed consent
- **Prevention:** Preventing harm from occurring as soon as possible
- **Proportionality:** Responding to risks in an appropriate, ideally unintrusive manner
- **Protection:** Ensuring everyone has the knowledge and training required to protect people from abuse
- **Partnership:** Partnering with other organisations and communities to support vulnerable people
- **Accountability:** Making sure everyone understands their responsibilities around safeguarding

In this document, children and adults at risk are collectively referred to as 'persons at risk'.

POLICY STATEMENT

We believe that:

- Effective safeguarding is anti-discriminatory and anti-racist.
- Children, young people and adults at risk should be able to achieve their full potential, this means never experiencing harm, abuse or neglect of any kind;
- Communities should be places filled with opportunities, where people are safe (and feel safe), so we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all persons at risk, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of persons at risk is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take;
- all persons at risk, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm, abuse or neglect;
- some persons at risk are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues;
- working in partnership with persons at risk, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare.

OBJECTIVES

- To create an environment at the YMCA where everyone is able to achieve their potential, thriving and flourishing in life.

- To protect children, young people, and adults at risk, who receive or encounter YMCA St Paul's Group services. This includes the children of adults who use our services.
- To provide staff and volunteers with overarching principles and clear practice guidelines that ensure we safeguard against the potential of abuse.
- To ensure staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and creating an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role.
- To ensure the Charity's Early Years and childcare settings are safe environments where children can learn and develop.
- To create a culture of vigilance and professional curiosity where persons at risk's welfare is promoted, timely and appropriate safeguarding action is taken, and that those who need extra help or who may be suffering or likely to suffer harm are properly supported.

PRACTICALITIES

Appendix A sets out the flowchart for reporting a concern.

Appendix B sets out the key contacts within and linked to our Charity.

Appendix C contains a glossary of terms used throughout this document as well as key safeguarding terms everyone working for the organisation should know

We will seek to keep Children, Young People and Adults at Risk safe by:

1. Creating a culture where thriving and flourishing is promoted.
2. Valuing, listening to and respecting them.
3. Appointing a nominated child/adult protection lead for persons at risk, a deputy and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding (Board Safeguarding Champion).
4. Adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures, training and code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
5. Developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures.
6. 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.
7. Recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
8. Recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance.
9. Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with persons at risk and their families via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions.

10. Making sure that children, young people, adults at risk and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern.
11. Using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know and involving persons at risk's families and carers appropriately.
12. Using our procedures to manage any safeguarding allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately, including following 'Allegations against Persons in a Position of Trust' (PiPoT) protocols.
13. Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise.
14. Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
15. Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our service users, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.
16. Building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people, adults at risk and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

Roles and Responsibilities

Chief Executive

It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive through the Designated Safeguarding Officers to ensure that this policy and related procedures are implemented. The Chief Executive will maintain at least two Designated Safeguarding Officers, providing continuity of cover during absence.

It is the Chief Executive's responsibility to create and support an honest culture including around whistleblowing and to ensure that there is a reporting and escalation structure in place with clear lines of responsibility and accountability for all staff and volunteers.

Executive Safeguarding Lead

It is the role of the Executive Safeguarding Lead to work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Officers and the Board Safeguarding Champion to ensure that the Charity acts at all times in keeping with legislation, statutory guidance and the Charity's Safeguarding Policy & Procedures.

They will do so by using the Charity's governance structure to ensure that safeguarding issues are considered and addressed at the appropriate level.

It is the Executive Safeguarding Lead's responsibility to produce quarterly & annual safeguarding reports for the Board Safeguarding Champion & Board.

The Executive Safeguarding Lead is also responsible for ensuring that the Charity responds appropriately to changes in relevant legislation.

Designated Safeguarding Officers

The Designated Safeguarding Officers are appointed from within the organisation and are responsible for overseeing the Safeguarding Policy & wider Safeguarding Framework and the way it is put into practice.

There are two Designated Safeguarding Officers, one for Children and Young People and one for Adults at Risk and Residents aged 16/17. They ensure that issues are reported to the relevant authorities and for maintaining a proper record of any safeguarding referral, complaint or concern.

Designated Safeguarding Officers are senior members of staff with appropriate experience and training in safeguarding procedures and in working with persons at risk.

The Designated Safeguarding Officers have a key duty to take lead responsibility for raising awareness with the staff on issues relating to the welfare of persons at risk and the promotion of a safe environment for all service users within the Organisation.

The Chief Executive will be responsible for appointing the Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) and for ensuring that such appointments are well publicised within the Charity.

The Designated Safeguarding Officers are accountable to the Chief Executive & the Senior Executive Team. They will be trained in child protection and adult safeguarding issues and inter-agency working and will be required to keep up to date with developments in child protection and safeguarding issues.

The Designated Safeguarding Officers shall ensure that their contact details are displayed in all appropriate operational sites of the Charity.

Safeguarding Leads

There are also Safeguarding Leads who deputise for the Designated Safeguarding Officers. The Designated Safeguarding Officers are responsible for appointing at least one suitably trained Safeguarding Lead for their area of responsibility.

The Safeguarding Leads are expected to ensure that everyone within their area of responsibility, including service users, staff and volunteers, is aware of this policy and related procedures.

It is the Safeguarding Leads' responsibility to make referrals to statutory agencies and liaise with them to help them work through the safeguarding concern.

It is important to recognise that it is not the job of the Safeguarding Leads to decide whether abuse has taken place or not but to act as an appointed person for people to report their concerns to and then pass these concerns onto the relevant parties.

A vital responsibility of the Safeguarding Leads is to ensure that accurate safeguarding records are kept by the Charity.

All staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers are given appropriate mandatory induction and training to ensure that this policy operates effectively.

It is the responsibility of managers to ensure that staff have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they have knowledge, skills and expertise that improve over time.

It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that all new staff and volunteers are trained on this policy and related procedures during their induction.

Staff and volunteers working with children, young people and adults at risk will be required to attend refreshers every three years, or as often as significant changes to the systems require.

Staff working with children and young people in Ofsted registered Early Years, childcare and accommodation settings are required to attend refreshers at least every two years.

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to report incidents or concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Officers or Safeguarding Leads. It is their responsibility to ensure that cases of abuse are reported to the appropriate authorities.

It is the responsibility of all staff members and volunteers to be alert and to adhere to this policy and related procedures.

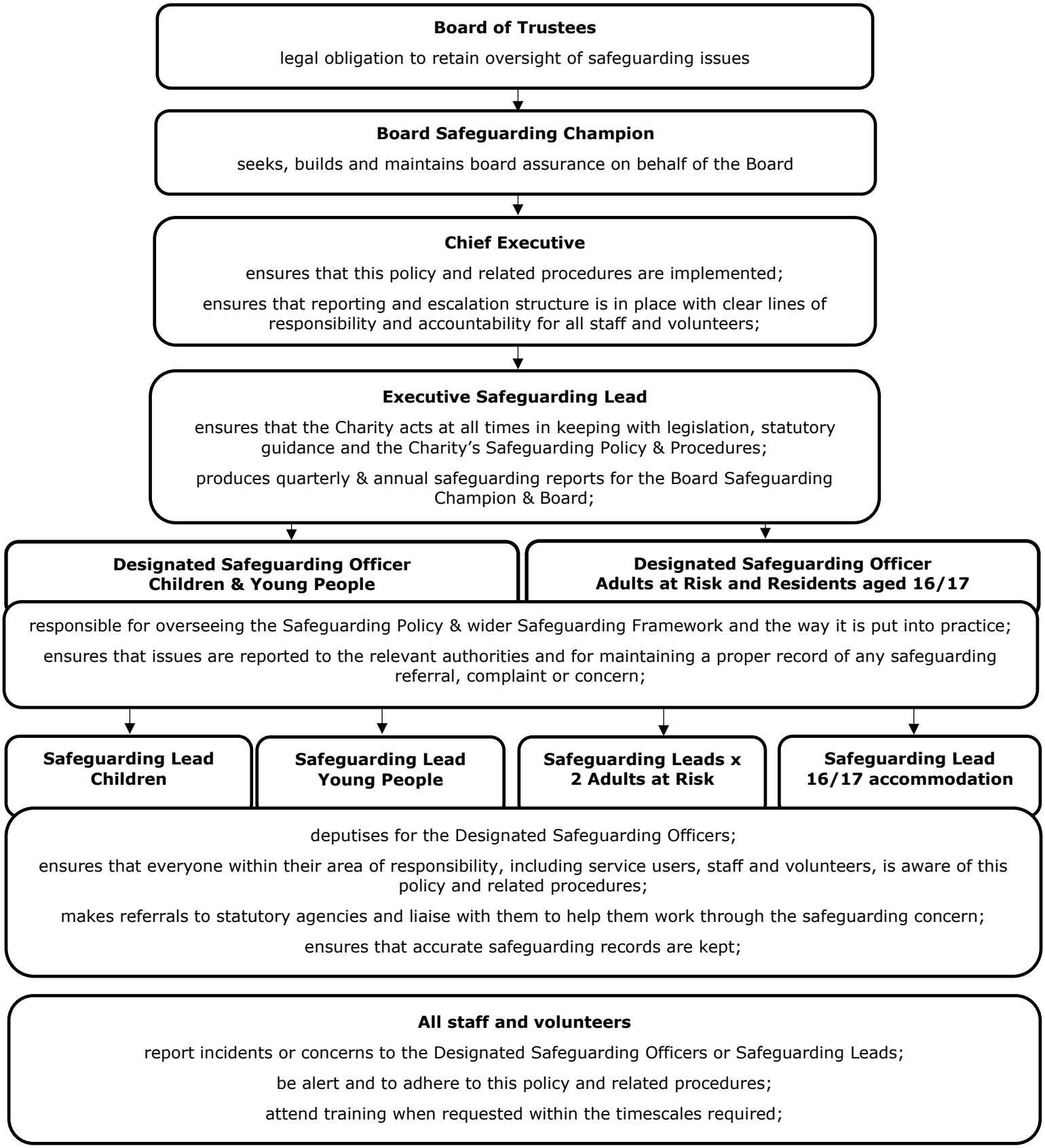
Board Safeguarding Champion

The Board Safeguarding Champion, which must be an active trustee, is appointed by the Board to work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Officers, the Executive Safeguarding Lead and the Chief Executive to ensure that the Charity acts at all times in keeping with safeguarding legislation, statutory guidance and the Charity's Safeguarding Policy & Procedures.

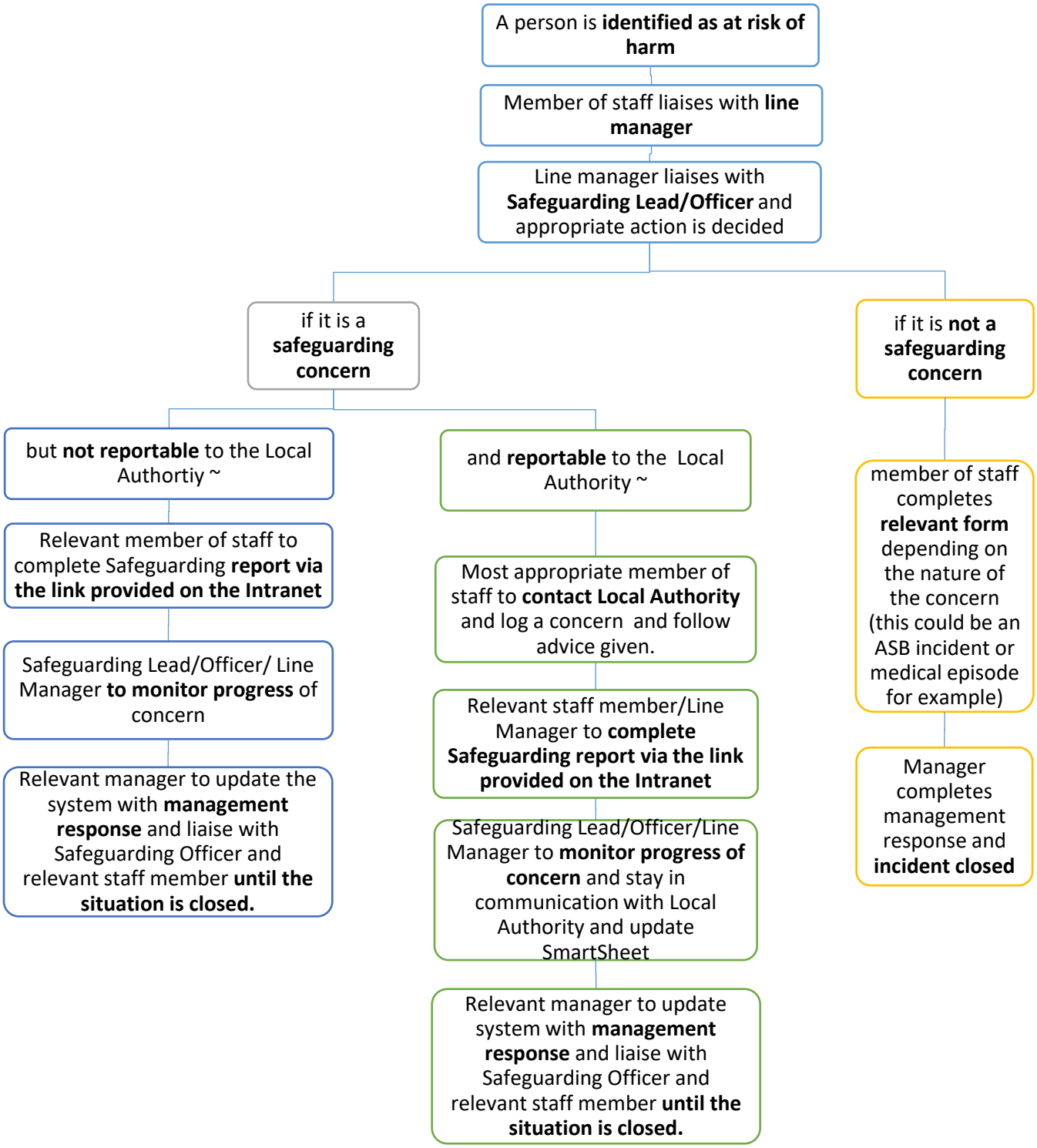
In order that the Trustee Board is in a position to fulfil its legal responsibilities in relation to safeguarding, and retain of oversight of safeguarding issues, trends, incidents and practice, it is important that safeguarding information and data is up-to-date, accurate, reliable and presented for scrutiny, challenge and discussion in a timely way.

It is a key responsibility of the Board Safeguarding Champion to help seek, build and maintain board assurance on behalf of the Board and to provide them with information on issues, trends, and progress against key areas of work, including risks and challenges.

Safeguarding Responsibilities Flowchart



APPENDIX A: FLOWCHART FOR REPORTING A CONCERN:



~ the decision whether the concern is reportable to the Local Authority or not will be made when the staff member liaises with their line manager and the Designated Safeguarding Officer/ Lead

The decision whether the concern should be escalated to the Board is made by the Chief Executive and Executive Lead for Safeguarding.

APPENDIX B – KEY CONTACTS

If you think a child, young person or adult at risk is in immediate danger call 999	
Board Member Responsibility	Graham Beech Trustee & Performance Committee member
Executive Team responsibility	Jessica Laryea Group Director of Operations
Designated Safeguarding Officer – Children and Young people	Kristina Lanham Head of Children, Youth and Family Work
Designated Safeguarding Officer - Adults at risk & Residents Aged 16/17	Ayoku Ademoye Head of Housing, Care & Support
Safeguarding Lead – Children	Sharon Pickerill Group Children Work Development Manager
Safeguarding Lead – Young People	Sharon Pickerill Group Children Work Development Manager
Safeguarding Lead – Adults at Risk	Relevant Regional Housing Manager Heather Barrow Kerry Oldfield-Spence
Safeguarding Lead – 16/17 Accommodation	Marianna Stavrou & Simon Farmbrough Registered Services Managers & Regional Managers
Kingston Safeguarding contact	Safeguarding Children - click here Adult Safeguarding - click here
Richmond Safeguarding contact	Safeguarding Children - click here Adult Safeguarding - click here
Merton Safeguarding contact	Safeguarding Children - click here Adult Safeguarding - click here
Sutton Safeguarding contact	Safeguarding Children - click here Adult Safeguarding - click here

Waltham Forest Safeguarding contact	Safeguarding Children - click here Adult Safeguarding - click here
Newham Safeguarding contact	Safeguarding Children - click here Adult Safeguarding - click here
Redbridge Safeguarding contact	Safeguarding Children - click here Adult Safeguarding - click here
Harrow Safeguarding contacts	Safeguarding Children - click here Adult Safeguarding - click here
Hillingdon Safeguarding contacts	Safeguarding Children - click here Adult Safeguarding - click here
Hounslow Safeguarding contacts	Safeguarding Children - click here Adult Safeguarding - click here
Ealing Safeguarding contacts	Safeguarding Children - click here Adult Safeguarding - click here
Slough Safeguarding contacts	Safeguarding Children - click here Adult Safeguarding - click here
Elmbridge Safeguarding contacts	Adult and Child Safeguarding - click here
Surrey Safeguarding contacts	Safeguarding Children - click here Adult Safeguarding - click here
Hammersmith & Fulham Safeguarding contacts	Safeguarding Children - click here Adult Safeguarding - click here
The NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children)	Helpline: 0808 800 5000 or help@nspcc.org.uk Whistleblowing Advice Line | NSPCC
Prevent Duty	Any concerns regarding radicalisation and extremism should be raised via the above contacts for the relevant council

APPENDIX C – GLOSSARY

Note: *"person at risk" is used as an umbrella term to refer to any child, young person or adult at risk who may need safeguarding support or protection. This includes children and young people under the age of 18, adults with care and support needs who are experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect and, where relevant, the children of adults who use our services. The term should not replace the need to consider the person's age, circumstances, wishes, rights, mental capacity, care and support needs, and the relevant child or adult safeguarding framework.*

Abuse - a form of maltreatment of a person at risk. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or an adult at risk by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional and psychological abuse, coercive and controlling behaviour and economic or financial abuse, where they see, hear, or experience its effects.

Persons at risk may be abused in a family or in an institutional or extra-familial context by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. This includes in teenage relationships, or under the guise of 'honour' based abuse including forced marriage and female genital mutilation, or abuse related to faith or belief such as allegations of demonic possession.

Bullying and cyberbullying - Bullying is behaviour that hurts, threatens, humiliates or undermines another person. It can include name-calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, intimidation, exclusion, threats, coercion or behaviour intended to frighten or control someone. Bullying can happen face-to-face, in a service, school, home, community setting or online.

Cyberbullying is bullying carried out through digital technology, including social media, messaging, email, gaming platforms or mobile phones. Bullying and cyberbullying may be repeated or sustained and can cause physical, emotional and psychological harm. Concerns should be recognised, recorded and escalated where a person at risk is being harmed, intimidated, exploited or made unsafe.

Child criminal exploitation - Child criminal exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Child-on-child / peer-on-peer abuse - Child-on-child or peer-on-peer abuse occurs when a child or young person is exploited, bullied, harmed or abused by another child or young person. It can include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, bullying, cyberbullying, coercion, control, intimidation, initiation or hazing behaviours, sharing sexual images, exploitation, abuse within teenage relationships or abuse linked to gangs or groups. It may happen in person, online, in schools, services, families, friendship groups, intimate relationships or wider community settings. It should never be dismissed as "banter", "part of growing up" or normal behaviour. Support needs to be considered for both the child harmed and any child alleged to have caused harm.

Child protection - Part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

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

Sexual abuse can take place in family settings, in institutional settings, online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Child sexual abuse material available online may have been generated in a family environment. Online abuse can also take the form of cyber grooming or self-generated sexual content under coercion. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. A child of any age or gender can be a victim of sexual abuse.

Child sexual exploitation - Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Children – A person from birth to age 18. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.

Controlling or coercive behaviour - Also known as coercive control, controlling or coercive behaviour is a form of domestic abuse. In 2015, the offence of controlling or coercive behaviour was introduced under Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act as a criminal offence. Controlling or coercive behaviour is included in the definition of domestic abuse in section 1(3)(c) of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Controlling or coercive behaviour is a pattern of abuse (on two or more occasions) that involves multiple behaviours and tactics used by a perpetrator to (but not limited to) hurt, humiliate, intimidate, exploit, isolate, and dominate the victim. It is an intentional pattern of behaviour used to exert power, control, or coercion over another person and can also be present in teenage relationships or between a child and adult. Controlling or coercive behaviour is often committed in conjunction with other forms of abuse and is often part of a wider pattern of abuse, including violent, sexual, or economic abuse.

Children can be used to control or coerce the victim, for example, by frustrating child contact and/or child arrangements, telling the children to call the victim derogatory names or to hit the victim, or by threatening to abduct the children.

This pattern of abuse causes fear, serious alarm and/or distress which can lead to a substantial adverse effect on a victim's day-to-day life. This can have a significant impact on children and young people.

Section 68 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 came into force on 5 April 2023 and removed the 'living together' requirement for the controlling or coercive behaviour offence, which means that the offence applies to partners, ex-partners or family members, regardless of whether the victim and perpetrator live together.

County lines – A term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons. This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK; no specified distance of travel is required.

Cuckooing - Cuckooing is a form of exploitation where criminals or organised groups take over, use or control a person's home for criminal activity, often linked to county lines, drug supply, financial exploitation, trafficking or other forms of abuse. The person may be targeted because of vulnerability, isolation, care and support needs, substance use, poverty, mental or physical ill health, learning disability, homelessness risk or fear of intimidation. Signs may include increased visitors, evidence of drug use, anti-social behaviour, unexplained money or goods, the person appearing frightened or withdrawn, or the person being forced to leave or avoid parts of their home.

Discriminatory abuse - Discriminatory abuse includes harassment, slurs, unequal treatment or similar abuse because of a person's actual or perceived age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or any other aspect of their identity or circumstances. It can include verbal abuse, derogatory comments, exclusion, bullying, refusal to provide culturally appropriate support, denying access to services or communication aids, or providing a poorer standard of care or support because of who someone is. Discriminatory abuse may be a one-off incident or a pattern of behaviour.

Domestic abuse -The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced the statutory definition of domestic abuse (section 1 of the Act). The statutory definition is clear that domestic abuse may be a single incident or a course of conduct which can encompass a wide range of abusive behaviours, including a) physical or sexual abuse; b) violent or threatening behaviour; c) controlling or coercive behaviour; d) economic abuse; and e) psychological, emotional, or other abuse such as 'honour' abuse, faith- or belief-based abuse, forced marriage, female genital mutilation or reproductive coercion, harassment and stalking.

Under the statutory definition, both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be "personally connected" (as defined in section 2 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021). The definition ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members.

All children can experience and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members, including where those being abusive do not live with the child. Experiencing domestic abuse can have a significant impact on children. Section 3 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children (0 to 18), as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse.

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as teenage relationship abuse. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of domestic abuse (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support.

The 'Domestic Abuse Act 2021: statutory guidance' provides further advice for frontline professionals who have responsibility for safeguarding and supporting victims of domestic abuse, including children. This guidance provides further information about the different forms of domestic abuse (including teenage relationship abuse and child to parent and carer abuse) and the impact of domestic abuse on children.

Education, health and care (EHC) plan - An education, health and care (EHC) plan details the education, health and social care support that is to be provided to a child or young person who has SEN.

Emotional / Psychological abuse - The persistent emotional or psychological maltreatment of a person at risk so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects (in the case of children, this would include adverse effects on the child's emotional development). It may involve conveying to a person at risk 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 person at risk opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or making fun of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on the person at risk. These may include interactions that are beyond their developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing them 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 the person at risk frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of the person.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a person at risk, though it may occur alone.

Extra-familial contexts - Extra-familial contexts include a range of environments outside the family home in which harm can occur. These can include peer groups, school, and community/public spaces, including known places in the community where there are concerns about risks to the person at risk (for example, parks, housing estates, shopping centres, takeaway restaurants, or transport hubs), as well as online, including social media or gaming platforms.

Extra-familial harm – Persons at risk may be at risk of or experiencing physical, sexual, or emotional abuse and exploitation in contexts outside their families or the home they live in, such as a children's home or foster home (see glossary definition of extra-familial contexts).

While there is no legal definition for the term extra-familial harm, it is widely used to describe different forms of harm that occur outside the home.

Children in particular can be vulnerable to multiple forms of extra-familial harm from both adults and/or other children and harm may be perpetrated or facilitated by individuals or groups. Examples of extra-familial harm may include (but are not limited to): criminal exploitation (such as county lines and financial exploitation), serious violence, modern slavery and human trafficking, online harm, sexual exploitation (including group-based child sexual exploitation), child-on-child (non- familial) sexual abuse and other forms of harmful behaviour displayed by children towards their peers, abuse, and/or coercive control, children may experience in their own intimate relationships (sometimes called teenage relationship abuse), and the influences of extremism which could lead to radicalisation.

Extremism - Extremism is defined in the Prevent strategy as the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Family group conference (FGC) - this is one model of family group decision-making.

Family group decision making (FGDM) - Family group decision-making is an umbrella term for voluntary, family-led decision-making forums in which a child's family network has all the resources, adequate preparation, relevant information and a safe and appropriate environment to make a plan in response to concerns about a child's safety and wellbeing, working alongside skilled professionals.

Family network - A group of people close to a person at risk made up of relatives and non- related connected people (where connected people has the same definition used in the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 in addition to close family friends who have a connection with the child). A family network could include step-parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, godparents, or close family friends.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) - Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of, or other injury to, external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is sometimes referred to as female circumcision, cutting or Sunna. FGM is abuse, is illegal in the UK and is a criminal offence. It has no health benefits and can cause serious and long-lasting physical, emotional and psychological harm. It may be carried out because of social, cultural, family or community pressure, but these reasons must never be used to justify it.

Forced marriage - Forced marriage is where one or both people do not, or cannot, consent to the marriage and pressure, coercion, threats, abuse or deception are used. This can include physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, financial or family pressure, and may involve being taken abroad, having travel documents withheld, being isolated, or being threatened with harm, shame or rejection. Forced marriage is different from an arranged marriage, where both people have freely chosen to consent. Forced marriage is abuse and a criminal offence.

Financial/ Material Abuse - Financial or material abuse includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to a person's financial affairs or arrangements, and the misuse or misappropriation of money, property, possessions or benefits. It may involve taking money or belongings, pressuring someone about wills, property, inheritance, loans or financial transactions, misusing benefits, bank cards or appointeeship arrangements, or using a position of trust to gain financial advantage. Financial or material abuse can be carried out by family members, friends, carers, professionals, strangers or organised criminals, and may occur alongside other forms of abuse such as domestic abuse, exploitation, neglect or coercive control.

Financial exploitation - Financial exploitation is different from financial abuse and can take many forms but includes exploitation which takes place for the purpose of money laundering. This is when criminals target children and adults and take advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive them into facilitating the movement of illicit funds. This can include physical cash and/or payments through financial products, such as bank and cryptocurrency accounts.

Grooming - Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust or emotional connection with a person at risk (usually children or young people), and sometimes with their family, friends or community, in order to abuse, exploit, manipulate or control them. Grooming can happen online or face-to-face, by a stranger or by someone known to the person, including a family member, peer, professional, volunteer or person in a position of trust. It may involve gifts, attention, promises, secrecy, threats, isolation, drugs, alcohol, money, accommodation or social status. A person may not recognise that they have been groomed or may appear to agree with what is happening.

Group-based child sexual exploitation – Group-based is defined as two or more individuals (whether identified or not) who are known to (or associated with) one another and are known to be involved in or to facilitate the sexual exploitation of children. Being involved in the sexual exploitation of children includes e.g. introducing them to other individuals for the purpose of exploitation, trafficking a child for the purpose of sexual exploitation, taking payment for sexual activities with a child or allowing their property to be used for sexual activities with a child, etc. This can be perpetrated within or beyond the family, by both children and adults, and groups can be organised or loosely linked.

'Honour'-based abuse - So-called 'honour'-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.

Kinship care - When a child lives full-time or most of the time with a relative, friend or connected person and that person provides most or all of the child's care. It does not include parents, foster carers with no prior connection to the child, or anyone caring in a professional capacity. Kinship care arrangements can be formal (through legal orders or kinship fostering) or informal (family or friends caring without a formal agreement in place).

Local authority designated officer (LADO) - Local authorities should ensure that allegations against people who work with children are not dealt with in isolation. Any action necessary to address corresponding welfare concerns in relation to the child or children involved should be taken without delay and in a coordinated manner. Local authorities should, in addition, have designated a particular officer, or team of officers (either as part of multi-agency arrangements or otherwise), to be involved in the management and oversight of allegations against people who work with children – this is the LADO. Any allegations about those who work with children are passed to the designated officer, or team of officers, without delay and within 24hrs of being made aware of the allegation.

Maltreatment - All forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the person at risk's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

Modern slavery - Modern slavery is a form of abuse and exploitation where a person is controlled, coerced, deceived or forced into work, services or activity for another person's benefit. It includes slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking. Modern slavery can involve adults or children and may include sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude, forced begging, forced marriage, organ removal or being made to move, store or sell drugs or money. A person may still be a victim even if they appear to have agreed to the situation, particularly where there is coercion, threat, debt, dependency, fear, deception or an imbalance of power. Concerns about modern slavery should be recognised, recorded and escalated as a safeguarding concern, and urgent action should be taken where there is immediate risk of harm.

Neglect - The persistent failure to meet a person at risk's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

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

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

Online abuse - Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens through the internet or digital technology. It can take place on any internet-enabled device, including phones, tablets, computers, games consoles and smart devices, and in online spaces such as social media, messaging apps, email, online gaming, livestreaming, forums or chat functions.

Online abuse may include cyberbullying, harassment, stalking, threats, grooming, sexual exploitation, sharing or coercing sexual images, emotional abuse, blackmail, financial exploitation, hate abuse, radicalisation or exposure to harmful or age-inappropriate content. It can happen on its own, be part of abuse taking place offline, or start online and move into face-to-face abuse. Concerns about online abuse should be recognised, recorded and escalated as a safeguarding concern, with urgent action where there is immediate risk of harm or where images, threats, coercion or exploitation are involved.

Organisational abuse - Organisational abuse includes neglect, poor care or poor support practice within an institution, specific care setting or service, or in relation to care and support provided in a person's own home. It may range from a one-off incident to ongoing ill-treatment and can arise from the structure, culture, policies, processes, routines, staffing levels or practices within an organisation.

Organisational abuse may include rigid or unsafe routines, lack of dignity, privacy or choice, poor record keeping, failure to respond to concerns, unsafe staffing, inappropriate restraint, poor medication practice, inadequate supervision, or a culture where poor practice is accepted or not challenged. Concerns should be recognised, recorded and escalated as a safeguarding concern, particularly where there is evidence that the issue may affect more than one person or reflect wider service failings.

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

Self-harm and suicidal behaviour - Self-harm is when a person intentionally injures or poisons themselves, irrespective of the apparent purpose of the act. It can include cutting, burning, self-poisoning, hitting, scratching, taking significant risks, not looking after physical or emotional needs, eating distress, substance misuse or other behaviours that place the person at risk of harm. Suicidal behaviour includes thoughts, plans, actions or attempts connected to ending one's life. Self-harm and suicidal behaviour are safeguarding concerns because they may indicate significant emotional distress, mental ill health, trauma, abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying, isolation or immediate risk.

Safeguarding partners - A safeguarding partner in relation to a local authority area in England is defined under the Children Act 2004 as: (a) the local authority, (b) an integrated care board for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area, and (c) the chief officer of police for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area. The three safeguarding partners should agree on ways to co-ordinate their safeguarding services, act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others, and implement local and national learning, including from serious child safeguarding incidents. To fulfil this role, the 3 safeguarding partners must set out how they will work together and with any relevant agencies as well as arrangements for conducting local reviews.

Self-neglect - Self-neglect covers a wide range of behaviour where an adult neglects to care for their personal hygiene, health, wellbeing or surroundings, and includes behaviour such as hoarding. It may involve lack of self-care to an extent that threatens personal health or safety, failure to seek help or access services, inability or unwillingness to manage personal affairs, or living in unsafe or unsanitary conditions. Self-neglect can be linked to physical or mental ill health, trauma, addiction, deteriorating capacity, social isolation or other complex circumstances. Concerns should be considered sensitively and proportionately,

taking account of the person's wishes, mental capacity, level of risk, care and support needs, and whether a safeguarding response or multi-agency support is required.

Spiritual Abuse - Spiritual abuse is a form of emotional or psychological abuse that occurs in a religious, spiritual or belief-based context. It can involve the misuse of faith, belief, scripture, spiritual authority, religious teaching, prayer, ritual or community position to coerce, control, manipulate, shame, silence, isolate or frighten a person at risk. It may include using spiritual threats, fear of spiritual consequences, claims of possession, witchcraft or evil, pressure to comply with harmful practices, or suggesting that abuse must be endured, forgiven or kept hidden for religious or spiritual reasons. Spiritual abuse can occur on its own or alongside other forms of abuse, including physical, emotional, sexual, domestic, discriminatory abuse, exploitation or neglect. Concerns should be dealt with with sensitivity to the person's faith or beliefs while making clear that faith, culture or belief must never be used to justify harm, abuse or neglect.

The Children's Commissioner - The post of Children's Commissioner was created following a recommendation made by Lord Laming in the **Victoria Climbie Inquiry**. The role was initially established under the Children Act 2004 which gave the Commissioner responsibility for promoting awareness of the views and interests of children. The Commissioner's statutory remit includes understanding what children and young people think about things that affect them and encouraging decision makers to always take their best interests into account. Their unique data gathering powers and powers of entry to talk with children and gain evidence, enable them to help bring about long-term change and improvements for children, particularly the most vulnerable.

The Children and Families Act 2014 further strengthened the remit, powers and independence of the Commissioner, and gave them special responsibility for the rights of children who are in or leaving care, living away from home or receiving social care services. They also speak for wider groups of children on non-devolved issues including immigration (for the whole of the UK) and youth justice (for England and Wales).

As well as a team of staff, the Commissioner is supported by an advisory group, an audit and risk committee and children's groups, stakeholders, and specialists.

The Children's Commissioner's office is formed to deliver for children. The office spans policy, research, communications, public service innovation and Help at Hand. The **Help at Hand** service is for children in care, leaving care, living away from home or working with children's services to offer free support, advice, and information. Alongside this, **In My Opinion (IMO)** is a voice for teenagers in care and for care leavers to share their experiences and stories.

Trafficking - Trafficking is a form of abuse and exploitation where a person is recruited, moved, transported, transferred, harboured or received for the purpose of exploitation. It can involve children, young people or adults at risk and may take place within the UK or across borders. Trafficking may involve sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude, forced marriage, benefit fraud, debt bondage, forced begging, drug supply, county lines or other criminal activity. A person may be controlled through threats, violence, deception, debt, dependency, fear, confiscation of documents, isolation or abuse of power.

Young carer - A young carer is a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person (of any age, except generally where that care is provided for payment, pursuant to a contract or as voluntary work). Young adult carers are aged 16 to 25 and may have different support needs as they transition to adulthood.