

Policy for Safeguarding and Protecting Children and Young People (aged under 18)

Author	Head of Community Investment and Support
Ratified by forum	Operations Committee July 2021
Last update	October 2019
Reviewed	October 2019
Review due	October 2021

SUPPORTING POLICIES & PROCEDURES:

- **Missing Persons Policy**
- **Recruitment and Selection Policy**
- **Grievance Policy**
- **Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure**
- **Complaints Policy**
- **Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy**
- **Whistle blowing Policy**
- **Lone Working Policy**
- **Confidentiality Policy**
- **Use of Disclosure and Barring Service checks**
- **Dignity at work policy**
- **Domestic Abuse policy**
- **ASB and Harassment policy**
- **Handling cash and valuables**
- **Professional Boundaries**
- **Use of mobile phones and cameras (Mobile Technology)**
- **Adverse Incident Reporting**

1.0 Purpose of CHS' Safeguarding Policy

1.1 Safeguarding children and young people is everyone's responsibility. Everyone working with children and young people has an important role to play in protecting them, and anyone can recognise, report and refer concerns about abuse.

1.2 The purpose of this CHS' Safeguarding Policy is to:

- keep children and young people safe and promote their welfare within our services
- ensure all CHS employees know what to do if abuse is suspected
- assist our staff to avoid situations where abuse might be alleged

2.0 Guidance and Legislation

2.1 Legislation and good practice policy govern how we must safeguard vulnerable people. For children and young people these are:

- Cambridgeshire Local Safeguarding Children Board Procedures, updated April 2021
- Government Guidance: 'Working together to Safeguard Children' 2018, 'Safeguarding Children who may be affected by gang activity' 2010, and the 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage – safeguarding and welfare requirements' March 2017
- Prevent and Safeguarding Guidance: Supporting individuals Vulnerable to Violent Extremism, National Police Chiefs Council undated April 2021.
- Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat – Improving Outcomes for People Experiencing Mental health Crisis, HM Government 2014
- Keeping Children Safe in Education Updated January 2021
- Care of Unaccompanied Migrant Children and Child Victims of Modern Slavery: Statutory guidance for local authorities Nov 2017
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers, July 2018
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – Advice for practitioners March 2015
- The Care Act 2014 means that good safeguarding practice is compulsory across CHS in all service areas.
- Modern Slavery Act 2015 and Help Free the UK from Modern Slavery, Home Office and NSPCC
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Children and Families Act 2014
- All this is underpinned by the duty on public agencies under the Human Rights Act (1998) to intervene proportionately to protect the rights of citizens
- The reporting/sharing of personal information must be within the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulations (2016)
- [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2018](#)

3.0 Focus of CHS's Policy

3.1 This document contains the policy for children and young people living in CHS supported and general needs housing, or receiving CHS Community services in accommodation owned by CHS or other landlords, as well as children using our day care nurseries, and children and young people visiting our services/properties.

4.0 Duty to Act and Apply the policy

4.1 It is the duty of all employed by CHS, Board members and volunteers under the law to act if they have any concern that a child or young person is being abused, neglected or exploited. All have a duty to follow this policy and procedures.

5.0 Definitions

- 5.1 **Child.** A child is anyone under the age of 18.
- 5.2 **Abuse** is a violation of the individual's human rights. It may be a single or repeated act. It may be physical, verbal, sexual, psychological/emotional, financial, institutional, discriminatory (e.g. racism, ageism), as well as domestic violence, forced marriage and trafficking. It includes acts of neglect and omission to act, as well as exploitation (sexual and other forms), harassment and threats. Abuse includes such activity as Female Genital Mutilation.
- 5.3 Abuse may occur through deliberate targeting or grooming of the child or young person and may be carried out by individuals or groups of individuals, by gangs and through radicalisation activity. Abuse may be perpetrated by staff or other service users.
- 5.4 See **Appendix 1** for summary of how to recognise different kinds of abuse.

6.0 Risk of abuse

- 6.1 This is increased if the child or young person is socially isolated, has a family with history of violence, if there are communication problems, drugs/alcohol are involved, relationships are under stress, there are low staffing levels, staff training is inadequate. Most reported cases of abuse are in the person's own home or a care setting, but can be in any situation.

7.0 Significant Harm

- 7.1 This is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention by Local Authorities to safeguard a child or young person. Local Authorities have a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm ('Working Together', 2010, reviewed 2018). See **Appendix 7** for a definition of significant harm. If the child/young person is not at risk of significant harm, it is still required that any concerns are logged by CHS staff and investigated as decided by a senior CHS manager (Community Support Manager, Head of Community Investment & Support).

8.0 Gang related activity

- 8.1 Some young people, especially young people in care, are vulnerable to becoming involved with gangs. Gang related activity may lead to involvement with violence, weapons, drugs and sexual exploitation. Additional support is likely to be required to help a young person involved with a gang.

9.0 Radicalisation

- 9.1 Young people may be susceptible to exploitation into violent extremism by radicalisers. Violent extremists often use charismatic individuals with a persuasive rationale to attract people to their cause with promises of glory and a better life, and to some young people, especially young people in care, are vulnerable to becoming involved in gangs. Additional targeted support may be required. Gang related activity may lead to involvement with violence, weapons, drugs and sexual exploitation.
- 9.2 There are a number of factors that may make an individual susceptible to exploitation by violent extremists. None of these factors should be considered in isolation but in conjunction with the particular circumstances of the individual: identity or personal crisis, particular personal circumstances, unemployment or underemployment and criminality. All of these may contribute to alienation from UK values and a decision to undertake radical actions and cause harm to symbols of the community or the state.
- 9.3 The Home Office leads on the anti-terrorism strategy 'CONTEST', and PREVENT is part of the overall CONTEST strategy, placing specific duties on schools and registered child care providers. The Prevent duty aims to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. In early years education (our Nurseries) this means that providers must ensure they educate children about fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of others with different

faiths and beliefs. Any concerns that a child or family may be being drawn into terrorism needs to be referred to local Channel Panels, Channel Police Practitioners or the Local Children's Safeguarding Board.

10.0 Missing Persons and Unauthorised absence

10.1 When children who are in care go missing this is always regarded as a safeguarding incident. In particular episodes of young people being Missing are associated with increased risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and/ or of involvement in drug related activity such as County Lines.

10.2 Unauthorised absence of children in care or not in care may be a safeguarding issue depending on the circumstances - Refer to CHS Missing Person Policy and Procedure.

11.0 E-safety – children and young people exposed to abuse through digital media

11.1 Internet Abuse relates to four main areas of abuse:

- Abusive images of children on the Internet
- A child or young person being groomed with the intention of Sexual Abuse
- Exposure to pornographic images and other offensive material via the Internet
- Use of the internet in particular social media sites, to engage young people in extremist ideologies.

11.2 Digital mobile technology includes a range of electronic devices, including mobile phones, laptops, computers, tablets, webcams, cameras and games consoles, which are constantly being upgraded. They provide access to the internet using text, photos and video.

11.3 Social networking sites are often used by perpetrators as an easy way to access children and young people for sexual abuse. In addition radical and extremist groups may use social networking to attract children and young people into rigid and narrow ideologies that are intolerant of diversity: this is similar to the grooming process and exploits the same vulnerabilities.

11.4 Internet abuse includes cyber-bullying or online bullying. This happens when a child is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child using the Internet and/or mobile devices. It is essentially behaviour between children, although it is possible for one victim to be bullied by many perpetrators. In any case of severe bullying it may be appropriate to consider the behaviour as child abuse by another young person.

11.5 Sexting describes the making and sending of text, images or videos of a sexual nature by young people aged under 18 to other young people or adults, who may or may not be known to each other. Young people may not be aware that their actions are illegal.

11.6 E-Safety is the generic term that refers to raising awareness about how children, young people and adults can protect themselves when using digital technology and in the online environment, and provides examples of interventions that can reduce the level of risk for children and young people.

12.0 The Principles of the CHS Safeguarding Policy

12.1 CHS staff know how to respond. They recognise record, report and refer:

- **Recognise:** know what to look for, are trained to recognise the signs/symptoms, listen to concerns of those working with children/young people
- **Record:** note the issue so that details are not forgotten
- **Report:** know who to report the concern to
- **Refer:** know where to refer to outside CHS, to get advice and help

12.2 Children and young people are safeguarded from abuse in our services and housing through an established protective culture.

- 12.3 The services received by children and young people from CHS are person centred and actively promote their empowerment and well-being.
- 12.4 CHS employees work themselves, and together with all responsible agencies, to prevent abuse.
- 12.5 CHS employees are trained to recognise abuse and report it. They work closely with all responsible agencies to resolve cases of abuse or suspected abuse.
- 12.6 CHS takes a person centred approach to managing incidents of abuse. CHS employees deal sensitively and effectively with incidents of abuse or suspected abuse.
- 12.7 CHS employees are vigilant about possible abuse issues and implement this policy accordingly.
- 12.8 CHS employees have a duty of care to report any concerns.

13.0 Safeguarding by CHS

- 13.1 CHS seeks to instil a culture of openness, fairness, trustworthiness and thoughtfulness in which the potential for abuse is significantly reduced. Employees, volunteers and Board members apply these concepts at all times when carrying out all activities.
- 13.2 Safeguarding at CHS is supported by a robust recruitment process that is followed at all times. Key features of the process are:
- Clearly defined Job Descriptions and Person Specifications
 - Behaviours framework
 - Completion of application forms
 - Declaration from applicants regarding convictions
 - Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks, which are repeated 3 yearly
 - 2 verbal and written references taken up, including ascertaining whether the referrer has any concerns regarding the applicant working with children or vulnerable adults
 - Identity checks
 - Full employment/occupation history required from age 16
 - Interviews by a Panel, of whom at least one must have received recruitment and selection training, and which includes assessment of behaviours and suitability for working with children/young people
 - Equality and Diversity Policy
 - Induction processes and probationary periods
 - Regular supervision and appraisals
- 13.3 Regular training is provided to ensure that employees understand and implement the policy and the procedures effectively. Employees receive training on CHS Policy and Procedures, which is in line with Cambridgeshire County Council Policy and Procedure.
- 13.4 Managers/Designated People receive additional training provided by Cambridgeshire County Council.
- 13.5 Coaching, advising and direction on good practice is provided through regular 1:1 supervision sessions and team discussions.
- 13.6 Staff can access practical and legal guidance, advice and support through the operational lead for safeguarding at CHS – [Head of Community Investment and Support Services](#).
- 13.7 CHS has effective links with the Local Authority Safeguarding Leads to ensure cooperation and information sharing, and to improve joint working and address any issues or barriers; the formal links being via the Operations Director. The Operations Director also has a link with the Safeguarding Children Board (SCB).
- 13.8 Risk assessments cover areas relevant to safeguarding, including risks posed to clients through lone working, and the potential for employees and others to obtain personal benefit from their work.

- 13.9 CHS has a policy on the use of mobile phones, cameras and sharing of images, which all employees and volunteers must adhere to.
- 13.10 Employees follow the CHS Professional Boundaries Policy and must maintain consistent boundaries in each service and across services.
- 13.11 Employees working with children are familiar with and make use of the provisions of the Early Help Assessment(EHA) . If a practitioner believes that a child's health or development would be impaired without the provision of services by the Local Authority then a EHA is completed with the child and family and used as a basis for deciding whether referral to Social Care is appropriate. If an employee believes that a child/young person is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm then they should always refer their concerns immediately to Children's Services.
- 13.12 CHS contributes to MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) when appropriate, i.e. when an individual service user has been identified as a high-risk offender or has been identified as being at risk of domestic violence. There is a duty of care to report any concerns. If they are related to Safeguarding this will be through the usual safeguarding process and if not related to Safeguarding will be to the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub – see Appendix for contact details). An action plan to support the individual can then be created.

14.0 The person centred approach to protection from abuse (children)

- 14.1 The key principles of the Children Act 1989 inform CHS's approach and are summarised as:
- 14.2 The safety and welfare of the child is paramount and there is the duty to promote this.
- 14.3 Children are individuals, whose views must be listened to and must be taken into account.
- 14.4 Children and young people are best brought up and cared for by their own family for as long as it is assessed as safe to do so. Children are not removed from their home unless it is considered to be in their best interest. The Local Authority is responsible for making such a decision based on an assessment of whether significant harm would result from the child or young person being left in the family.
- 14.5 All agencies work collaboratively with parents and carers, enabling them to maximise their parental responsibility except where to do so would not be consistent with the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child.
- 14.6 CHS practice is in line with the Children Act 2010, promoting the welfare of children through achieving the five Every Child Matters Outcomes, including staying safe.
- 14.7 Each CHS service provides safeguarding information and awareness-raising amongst its service users, and endeavours to ensure that all service users can recognise abuse, know how to report it and are confident enough to report it.

15.0 Visitors to our services

- 15.1 The principles of this policy apply to all children or young people who may be visiting our services. A Visitors procedure is in place at our supported housing services that contain measures to promote the safety of children and young people whilst at the service.
- 15.2 If an employee/volunteer believes that a visiting child or young person has suffered abuse or is an abuser then s/he has a duty to report this immediately in line with the procedures set out below.
- 15.3 Visitors who are adults (aged 18 or over) who may harm children or young people or has caused harm must be reported immediately in line with this procedure.

16.0 Recording and Reporting abuse

- 16.1 It is really important that employees/volunteers record, and where necessary report all cases of suspected or alleged abuse in line with the procedure.
- 16.2 Clear detailed written records need to be kept for any concern about children, using a logging concern form, noting the date, event and action taken – even where there is no need to refer the matter to Social Care. In the Nurseries the logging concerns form is completed. In Supported Housing services the Adverse Incident reporting form is used.
- 16.3 Reporting abuse can feel difficult. To support individuals in making such reports CHS offers the following support:
- Employees/volunteers can speak with a Manager from a different service
 - Employees can use the whistle blowing procedure
 - Employees can use the free Employee Assistance service to help them think through their report
 - Employees may contact 'Public Concern at Work'
 - If an employee or the person receiving a report considers that an employee may be at risk of reprisal as a result of making a report, an assessment of that risk will be undertaken and appropriate actions agreed.
- 16.4 If an employee does not report concerns about suspected abuse or evidence of abuse, this may put a child or young person at risk and as such may be a disciplinary matter.

17.0 Further Advice

- 17.1 If in doubt, further advice may be sought from the Contact Centre about the most appropriate way of dealing with an incident of abuse or suspected abuse.

18.0 Procedure

- 18.1 CHS employees will follow the procedure associated with this Policy. Flow charts are provided for employees in the Community Services Directorate.
- 18.2 There is a separate procedure for residents and service users for reporting abuse, suspected abuse or neglect
- 18.3 Nursery Managers complete a self-evaluation form each year .

19.0 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- 19.1 The principle is to preserve confidentiality. Consent to refer should be sought from the person who has been abused. Information held by CHS is subject to the legal 'duty of confidence' and is normally not disclosed without the consent of the person who has provided the information or is subject of the information. Young children are, however, unlikely to be of sufficient age and understanding to give consent for information to be shared, and their permission is not required to share information. Where a child is of sufficient age and understanding they should be told of the action to be taken. There is the need to share information with the Designated Safeguarding Officer and they will decide whether to involve/consult the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and their seek opinion and advice.
- 19.2 Staff must ensure that confidentiality protocols are adhered to and information is only shared appropriately. Within CHS confidential information is shared on a need to know basis. The employees that need to know are the line manager in the service, the Community Support Manager, Quality Assurance and Health and Safety Compliance Manager and the _____ of Service (latter in the case of red or amber concerns). CHS employees must work together with these senior managers to decide next steps.
- 19.3 Parents/carers of young children. If the child has come to the Nursery showing signs of abuse then staff will ask the parent/carer what has happened. In seeking an explanation from the parent/carer staff will be mindful that the child could potentially have been abused or still be at risk of abuse. Any issue which

remains potentially suspicious after the parent/carer has explained what happened will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and their advice sought – the parent/carer will not be told that we are discussing the matter with the DSO if it may put the child further at risk. Discussion with the DSO must happen without delay so that any necessary resultant actions are taken quickly to safeguard the child at risk.

- 19.4 If the safeguarding issue has taken place whilst the child is in our care, then parents will be informed and staff will report the issue immediately to the County Council's Children's Safeguarding Team and Ofsted is informed. If a staff member is suspected of the abuse, then the CHS Disciplinary Procedure is followed (the staff member is suspended immediately The MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) will advise how to start the investigation. CHS will not investigate until they have been advised to do so
- 19.5 In general we would seek to discuss our concerns with the young person and to inform them of our intention to share information with Police/Social Care. If the young person does not agree with this and is considered to be at serious risk of abuse, then the public interest in maintaining confidentiality can be overridden by the public interest to protect vulnerable people. Disclosure without consent must be necessary and justifiable, and the minimum amount of information must be disclosed to achieve the aim of protecting the vulnerable person(s). Any disclosure made outside these exceptional circumstances would be in breach of confidentiality and a breach of GDPR.

20.0 Lead Officers and Review of Policy and Procedures

- 20.1 The senior manager at CHS with strategic responsibility for safeguarding is the Operations Director. The operational leads for safeguarding at CHS is the Head of Community Investment & Support.
- 20.2 All managers at CHS attend training in managing Safeguarding. At the Nurseries, senior staff receive training at the appropriate level from the Early Years Partnership to act as Safeguarding and Child Protection Leads within each Nursery. The names of the CHS operational lead for safeguarding, and other Designated Persons for Child Protection, are displayed at each Nursery.
- 20.3 The CHS Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are subject to annual review, interim updates as appropriate, and learning in line with best practice, as follows:
- 209.3.1 An assessment of effectiveness of the policy and procedures in resolving each case of abuse that has arisen during the year is conducted. This includes seeking feedback from staff, service users and other agencies as appropriate. The number and type of safeguarding concerns and actual cases, and seriousness rating is summarised.
- 209.3.2 A check of any Cambridgeshire County Council good practice guidance.
- 20.3.3 A written report to the Operations Committee on the effectiveness of the Policy and Procedures including any proposals for revision, and an action plan.
- 20.4 Each safeguarding incident or concern is recorded on the Adverse Incident form and copied to the line manager, Head of Community Investment & Support Services and the Quality Assurance Manager. On the basis of the forms, monthly reports on safeguarding incidents are produced by the Quality Assurance Manager for the Heads of Service in the Community Services Directorate, and the Community Support Managers. These are to look for patterns, trends, and consider what further actions can be taken to support customers and employees. An annual report on safeguarding incidents is also produced for the Annual Review of Safeguarding for Operations Committee.

21.0 Prevention of Abuse

- 21.1 CHS employees endeavour to prevent abuse and reduce the risk of it occurring by doing the following:

- Ensuring that they know what abuse is, and are aware of how it can happen and the kinds of context in which it is likely to happen (e.g. young people missing from their accommodation could be at risk of or be being abused)
- Ensuring that they are able to recognise signs of abuse
- Being alert to indicators of potential abuse or abusive situations
- Knowing the procedures for reporting concerns and poor practice and following them
- Performing their work, particularly concerning needs and risk assessments and care/support planning and provision, to a high standard
- Ensuring appropriate information, including telephone numbers, is available to users of our services e.g. by way of notice boards and welcome pack
- Erring on the side of caution and seeking earliest discussion with Community Support Manager or Head of Community Investment & Support.

