



Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure
Including Safeguarding Children Alert Procedure

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Document History:

Issue level	Page No(s)	Date	Brief details of amendment(s) to Policy

1. Purpose

These policy and procedures are designed to fully inform and empower staff in the consistent reporting of potential abuse. After reading this policy staff should

- Be able to recognise all forms of abuse.
- Understand their absolute duty to report concerns.
- Be able to understand and follow the reporting procedure and be confident that they can implement it.

2. Policy

2.1 Aspens embraces the guidance that states that it is essential to take a comprehensive approach to prevent young people from any potential source of harm: Every Child Matters www.ncvys.org.uk

2.2 It is the duty of each member of staff under their contract of employment to report matters of concern relating to abuse witnessed or suspected. Failure to do so would be considered gross misconduct.

2.3 Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may cause or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family, or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

2.4 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 includes definitions of the five broad categories of abuse which are used for the purposes of recognition:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Neglect

2.5 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is also a form of child abuse and as such will be dealt with under the Organisations Child Protection/Safeguarding policy and FGM Policy.

2.6 These categories overlap and an abused child does frequently suffer more than one type of abuse.

2.7 This policy must be read in conjunction with the following:

- Child Sexual Exploitation Policy
- Female Genital Mutilation Policy
- Prevention of Extremism and Radicalisation Policy

3. Procedure

3.1 Abuse must be reported to the Manager or, if unavailable, to the on-call person or Safeguarding Lead. If a member of Management is the person suspected of abuse, the member of staff should report to the next line manager and the Safeguarding Lead should be informed.

3.2 Any member of staff witnessing, suspecting or receiving allegations of abuse must report this to their Line Manager or above immediately in line with the guidance below;

For Sussex Services; in accordance with 'Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures' (Pan-Sussex Safeguarding Procedures/ Sussex Local Safeguarding Children Boards), <http://pansussexscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/contents.html>

For Bexley Services; in accordance with 'London Child Protection Procedures' (London Child Protection Procedures and Supplementary Procedures) <http://www.londoncp.co.uk/>
http://www.londoncp.co.uk/files/part_a.pdf

For Surrey Services; in accordance with 'Surrey Safeguarding Children's Board Procedures' <http://surreyscb.procedures.org.uk/>

For Kent Services; in accordance with Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children's Procedures <http://www.proceduresonline.com/kentandmedway>

3.3 Staff have a duty to protect the child, not the person suspected of abuse.

3.4 Abuse can occur in any setting or environment and there is a duty of care to report witnessed, suspected or allegations of abuse wherever it occurs.

3.5 All staff must be made aware and have access to the Whistle Blowing Policy of the organisation.

3.6 If the service is registered, the Registered Manager must be informed as soon as possible. If the incident has been reported to the police, the Registered Manager must inform Ofsted within 24 hours of being informed.

3.7 The Responsible Individual and Designated Safeguarding Officer, Samantha Fievez, must be informed of all allegations of abuse.

3.8 All allegations will be treated seriously and investigated. The person making the allegation will be supported. Where the allegation is against individuals who work or volunteer within the settings supporting children and young people. A referral **must** be made to the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24hrs** by the Designated Safeguarding Officer for the organisation, Samantha Fievez. (Please see pages 7-9)

3.9 Where there is an ongoing risk to the child, appropriate action must be taken immediately to ensure that the child is safe from further abuse. Ensure that the service user receives the necessary support.

3.10 The confidentiality of those involved in the investigation will be protected. If there is a need to share information with anyone outside the investigation, this will be decided in consultation with those already involved. This will be on a need to know basis and in the best interests of the child. Informed consent will be obtained whenever possible. It is not possible to give assurances of absolute confidentiality that may put other vulnerable people at risk.

4 Reporting & Immediate Situation

4.1 Following disclosure and/or identification of potential abuse, the Manager or on-call Manager or Safeguarding Lead should be contacted.

4.2 In cases where the child is in immediate danger or where an incident involves an allegation of physical or sexual abuse, urgent action to protect that individual should be taken by calling the relevant emergency services (e.g. the Ambulance/Police). A medical opinion must be sought immediately and photographs taken of any injury if possible.

4.3 Staff must not, under any circumstances confront the person allegedly responsible for the abuse or alert them to what has been alleged.

4.4 If there is a possibility that forensic evidence can be secured or preserved, protect the evidence: **Do not clean up.**

4.5 Staff should record an account of the incident following the guidelines in:

For Sussex Services; 'Sussex Children Protection and Safeguarding Procedures: 3.2 Making a Referral' http://pansussexscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_making_ref.html

For Bexley Services; 'London Child Protection Procedures' (London Child Protection Procedures and Supplementary Procedures) 2.4 'Making and receiving a referral' http://www.londoncp.co.uk/files/part_a.pdf

For Surrey Services; 'Surrey Safeguarding Children Board Procedures: 4.5 Contact and Referrals' <http://surreyscb.procedures.org.uk/zkpgqy/managing-individual-cases/contacts-and-referrals/#s1130>

4.6 The Manager will contact the duty Social Worker to follow the guidance in accordance with;

For Sussex Services; 'Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures' (Pan-Sussex Safeguarding Procedures/ Local Safeguarding Children Board). According to referral criteria 3.3.23

For Bexley Services; 'London Child Protection Procedures' (London Child Protection Procedures and Supplementary Procedures) 2.4 'Making and receiving a referral'

4.7 The timing of such referrals (to Social Services) must reflect the level of perceived risk, without delay on the recognition of risk. In emergency situations this should be through 'Out of Hours Team'.

4.8 In accordance with;

For Sussex Services; 3.2.30 of the 'Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures' all professional referrals made verbally must be confirmed in writing ideally using the Inter-agency Referral Form but in all cases covering the areas in section 3.2.29 by the referrer, within 24 hours.' http://pansussexscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_making_ref.html

For Bexley Services; 2.4 of the 'London Child Protection Procedures all new referrals and referrals on closed cases should be made to the LA children's social care duty social worker. New information on open cases should be made to the allocated social worker for the case (or in their absence their manager or the duty social worker). Referrals should ideally be in writing unless a child is at immediate risk of significant harm. In these circumstances, referrals should be made by telephone without delay and the referrer should discuss their concerns with a qualified social worker. http://www.londoncp.co.uk/files/part_a.pdf

For Surrey Services: 4.5 of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board sub section 4 'Making a Referral' all professional referrals should be made in one of the following ways:

- For multi-agency partners urgent referrals via a telephone call and followed up in writing using the Multi Agency Referral Form; All Professional referrers must confirm verbal referrals within 24hrs, using the Multi-Agency Referral Form including a body map when appropriate.
- In person or by telephone contact with Surrey Children's Services in an emergency outside office hours, by contacting the Emergency Duty Team or the Police.
- <http://surreyscb.procedures.org.uk/zkpqy/managing-individual-cases/contacts-and-referrals>

4.9 If a Child Protection/ Safeguarding incident or alleged Child Protection/ Safeguarding incident occurs in a Registered Service, the Manager of that Service must inform Ofsted Immediately.

4.10 A senior member of staff will inform the next of kin or contact person of the service user involved within 24 hrs following the alleged incident, should this be safe to do so and having consulted with 'Children's Social Care Team' investigating the referral.

5. Recruitment

5.1 Prior to commencing employment with our organisation, all trustees, employees, and volunteers must adhere to the following:

5.1.1 Complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check - satisfactory disclosure clearance is essential.

5.1.2 Both acceptance of and commitment to our Safeguarding Children Policy and Code of Conduct.

5.1.3 Providing the name and contact information of two character references they have known for no less than two years, excluding family members. The first must be your current or last employer.

6. Training and Prevention

6.1 Aspens is committed to providing staff with training in child protection. This will take the form of:

- i. Basic training during the corporate induction with respect to awareness that abuse can take place and the duty to report. Staff will be expected to read and understand the following policies; Safeguarding Children Policy and Alert Procedure, Anti-Bullying Policy and Whistle Blowing Policy.
- ii. More detailed training within the first six months of employment to cover recognition of abuse and responsibilities with respect to procedures within the Aspens, London Child Protection Procedures, Pan Sussex Multi-Agency and Local Safeguarding Children's Board.
- iii. The training offered is through online training provider Kwango.com and where appropriate for service through East Sussex and West Sussex training portals for Children Services Staff. Online training is undertaken annually, classroom based training will be delivered every two years. This will include specialist training in Autism Spectrum Condition where appropriate. To facilitate the following:
 - To develop an understanding of what child protection is and how 'abuse' fits into this
 - To understand the vulnerability of disabled children to abuse
 - To identify categories of abuse
 - To identify signs and (physical or behavioural) indicators of abuse
 - To identify appropriate responses to suspected abuse or disclosure
 - To understand the importance of the child's voice within a safeguarding context
 - To understand requirements for recording, referring and reporting concerns
 - To develop a repertoire of techniques to support children to stay safe
 - Specialist training for Managers and Investigating Managers.

7. Workplace Measures

7.1 The Manager must ensure that preventative work is in place in each team to reduce the risk of potential abuse by staff or others. This will include regular supervision of staff, team meetings, detailed Support/Care Plans and Risk Assessments for each service user. All staff must have access to this policy during induction.

7.2 For any service user who may be perceived as vulnerable, or who may have a history of previously being abused, the team must draw up a protection plan.

7.3 This needs to be agreed by the social worker, relevant Children's Social Services Team, Manager, their parent/carer/advocate and in accordance with London Child Protection Procedures' (London Child Protection Procedures and Supplementary Procedures) or 'Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures' (Pan-Sussex Safeguarding Procedures/ Local Safeguarding Children Board). Whichever is relevant to service delivery. In this circumstance it would be agreed within the individual's Child Protection Plan.

7.4 In cases when a vulnerable child has a history of making false allegations, the protection plan may consider specific approaches to investigating allegations, for example whether the Police are called or not or whether the staff member is suspended or not. However, it is important to remember that children who have a history of making allegations can be more at risk of abuse. The fact that they may not be believed could make them more of a target for an abuser, particularly if they have a form of learning disability.

7.5 In cases of repeated allegations, a strategy must be developed by the Multi-Disciplinary Team in preparation. The strategy must ensure that every allegation is investigated thoroughly and must give staff clear instructions on how to respond to allegations.

7.6 When developing this strategy, the views of the child and their relatives or advocates must be taken into consideration along with those of the Child Protection Officer and any other relevant professionals. This strategy must form part of the individual's Support/Care Plan.

Safeguarding Children Alert Procedure

Local Authority Contacts when following Children Safeguarding Procedures

Immediately:

- Ensure the immediate safety of the Individual.
- Report to your Manager or on call Manager (or to his/her supervisor if necessary).
- Aspens 's Safeguarding Children's Policy and Procedures, in accordance with the London Child Protection Procedures' (London Child Protection Procedures and Supplementary Procedures) or 'Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures' must be followed by the staff member reporting, allocated Manager or appointed person in each case.
- Report to the Children Safeguarding duty team on:

Bexley

Contacts

Bexley London Safeguarding Board

Phone: 0208 303 7777 at any time if you are concerned that there is a risk of significant harm to a child or young person.

Out of hours you will be connected to the **Bexley Emergency Duty Service**

Forms to make a referral to Children's Social Care or the Family Well-Being Service are available here: [Family Wellbeing Service and how to contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\)](#)

For allegations against individuals who work or volunteer with children in Surrey, please call the above numbers and ask to be transferred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). This must be done within 24hrs of allegation being made.

West Sussex

If you need to report a concern during office hours duty Service team please call

Phone: 01403 229900

If you urgently need help outside of office hours you can contact the Emergency Duty Service for West Sussex.

Phone: 033 022 26664

For allegations against individuals who work or volunteer with children in Surrey, please call the above numbers and ask to be put through to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). This must be done within 24hrs of allegation being made.

East Sussex

Contacts

Single Point of Advice (SPOA) team

Phone: 01323 464222

If you urgently need help outside of office hours you can contact the Emergency Duty Service for East Sussex and Brighton and Hove.

Phone 01273 335905 or 01273 335906.

For allegations against individuals who work or volunteer with children in Surrey, please call the above numbers and ask to be transferred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). This must be done within 24hrs of allegation being made.

Brighton and Hove

If you need to report a concern during office hours duty Service team please call

Phone: (01273) 290400

If you urgently need help outside of office hours you can contact the Emergency Duty Service for East Sussex and Brighton and Hove. Telephone: 01273 295643

Phone 01273 335905 or 01273 335906.

For allegations against individuals who work or volunteer with children in Surrey, please call the above numbers and ask to be transferred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). This must be done within 24hrs for allegation being made.

Surrey

If you need to report a concern during office hours call duty Service team

Phone: 0300 470 9100

Email: mash@surreycc.gov.uk

If you urgently need help outside of office hours you can contact the Emergency Duty Service for Surrey

Phone: 01483 517898

For allegations against individuals who work or volunteer with children in Surrey, please call the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). This must be done within 24hrs of allegation being made.

Phone 0300 123 1650 Option 3

Kent

If you need to report a concern during office hours

Phone: 03000 41 11 11

Text Relay: 18001 03000 41 11 11

Email: social.servcices@kent.gov.uk

Out of Office Hours: 03000 41 91 91

For Reporting and Immediate Situation, please see page 2 section 4 of Aspens 'Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures.'

Reference List

- 1 The WHO definition of Child Abuse as defined by the Report of the Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention
WHO – 1999.
- 2 Definition taken from *Are you worried about the safety of a child?*, NSPCC, 2002, available to download from <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/documents/safetyofchild.pdf>.
4. 'London Child Protection Procedures 5th Edition. http://www.londoncp.co.uk/files/part_a.pdf
3. 'Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures Volumes 1 and 2' (Pan-Sussex Safeguarding Procedures/Local Safeguarding Children Board)
<http://pansussexcscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/contents.html>
4. Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2015,
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/592101/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children_20170213.pdf
5. The Children's Act, 1989 and 2004, www.dcsf.gov.uk

Appendix A

Abuse

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

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 child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Examples of signs or symptoms of abuse – Injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts, malnutrition

Emotional Abuse

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 a child 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 feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Examples of signs or symptoms of abuse – Being nervous, scared or quiet. Self-harm. Desperate for attention, contact or care. Taking part in terrorist or racist attacks.

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 (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.

Examples of signs and symptoms of abuse – Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's), unexplained pregnancy, Urinary Tract Infections (UTI's), bruising in the genital area i.e. inner thighs, change in sexual activity or behaviour, fear, shame, crying.

Neglect

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); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.
- Examples of signs and symptoms of abuse – Poor appearance and hygiene i.e. inadequate clothing no winter coat, smelly and unwashed body/hair/clothes. Health and development problems i.e. untreated medical injuries including medical, dental issues, thin swollen tummy, skin sores, recurring illnesses and infections, not treated appropriately with medications. Poor language, communication and social skills. Housing and Family issues i.e. living in an unsuitable home environment for example dog mess being left or not having any heating, left alone for a long time, taking on the role of carer for other family members.

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 the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Examples of signs and symptoms of abuse – Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's), unexplained pregnancy, Urinary Tract Infections (UTI's), bruising in the genital area i.e. inner thighs, change in sexual activity or behaviour, fear, shame, crying, sudden increase in finances to afford new technology i.e. smartphones and/or having new technology/designer clothes that they previously have not been able to afford.