



ASHLEY'S HOUSE

SAFEGUARDING POLICY (YOUNG ADULTS 16+)

Safeguarding Policy (Young Persons aged 16+)

Contents

1. Headline Procedure	2
2. Policy Statement	2
3. Context	3
Related Policies	3
Legal framework and definition of safeguarding	3
Definition	3
4. Policy Intention	4
5. Important Contacts	5
6. Reporting Procedures	6
7. Countering risks of self harm and suicide	9
8. Online Safety	10
9. Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma Informed Working Practices	10
10. Involving Young People in Safeguarding	11
11. Allegations against adults working or volunteering with young people	11
12. Looked after young people	13
13. Safer Staffing and volunteering	13
14. Designated Safeguarding Lead	14
15. Types of abuse and particular procedures followed	16
16. Signatures	25
17. Appendix 1 – Incident Reporting Form	26

1. Headline Procedure

All Safeguarding and Young person Protection concerns must be reported to a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) contacts below, see page 6 for external contacts		
DSL	Service area	Contact details
Dipaley Patel	Harrow	07949830873

2. Applicability

This Policy applies to Manchester Settlement services targeted at children aged 16+, and is a variant of our Child protection and Safeguarding Policy for young children

Young People refers specifically to those aged 16 or 17. For those aged 18+ this policy should continue to be the dominant policy, with due reference being made to the safeguarding adults policy

The reference to Parents may not be relevant to some young people.

3. Policy Statement

At **Ashley's House** we work with young people, parents, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of young people and to give them the very best start in life. Young people have the right to be treated with respect, be helped to thrive and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

We support the young people within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of young people's health and development. In our setting we strive to protect young people from the risk of radicalisation and we promote acceptance and tolerance of other beliefs and cultures (please refer to our inclusion and equality policy for further information). Safeguarding young people is everybody's responsibility. All staff, students, supply staff, volunteers and visitors are made aware of and asked to adhere to, the policy.

4. Context

Related Policies

Safeguarding is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with the charity's other policies and procedures including:

- Online safety
- Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery
- Prevent Duty and Radicalisation
- Domestic Abuse, Honour Based Abuse (HBA) and Forced Marriage
- Looked After Young people
- Monitoring staff behaviour
- Social networking
- Mobile phone and electronic device use
- Safe recruitment of staff
- Disciplinary
- Grievance
- Promoting positive behaviour

Legal framework and definition of safeguarding

- Young people Act 1989 and 2004
- Young person care Act 2006 (amended 2018)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Young people and Social Work Act 2017
- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2021
- Working Together to Safeguard Young people 2018
- Keeping Young people Safe in Education 2021
- Data Protection Act 2018
- What to do if you're worried a young person is being abused 2015
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.
- Inspecting Safeguarding in Early years, Education and Skills settings 2019
- Prevent Duty 2015

Definition

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people, in relation to this policy is defined as:

- Protecting young people from maltreatment
- Preventing the impairment of young people's health or development
- Ensuring that young people are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all young people to have the best outcomes.

(Definition taken from the HM Government document 'Working together to safeguard young people 2018

5. Policy Intention

To safeguard young people and promote their welfare we will:

- Create an environment to encourage young people to develop a positive self-image
- Provide positive role models and develop a safe culture where staff are confident to raise concerns about professional conduct
- Ensure all staff are able to identify the signs and indicators of abuse, including the softer signs of abuse, and know what action to take
- Encourage young people to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all young people
- Promote tolerance and acceptance of different beliefs, cultures and communities
- Help young people to understand how they can influence and participate in decision-making and how to promote British values through activities, discussion and role modelling
- Always listen to young people
- Provide an environment where practitioners are confident to identify where young people and families may need intervention and seek the help they need
- Share information with other agencies as appropriate.

Staff are aware that abuse does occur in our society, and we are vigilant in identifying signs of abuse and reporting concerns. Our practitioners have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of young people. Staff working on the frontline with young people and families are often the first people to identify a concern, observe changes in a young person's behaviour or receive information relating to indicators of abuse. They may well be the first people in whom young people confide information that may suggest abuse or to spot changes in a young person's behaviour which may indicate abuse.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of each young person in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the young people, parents and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. This includes sharing information with any relevant agencies such as local authority services for Young people's Social Care, family support, health professionals including health visitors or the police. All staff will work with other agencies in the best interest of the young person, including as part of a multi- agency team, where needed.

Our services aim to:

- Keep the young person at the centre of all we do, providing sensitive interactions that develops and builds young people's well-being, confidence and resilience. We will support young people to develop an awareness of how to keep themselves safe, healthy and develop positive relationships
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- Ensure staff are trained right from induction to understand the safeguarding policy, are alert to identify possible signs of abuse (including the signs known as softer signs of abuse), understand what is meant by young person protection and are aware of the different ways in which young people can be harmed, including by other young people (peer on peer) through bullying or discriminatory behaviour.
- Be aware of the increased vulnerability of young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), isolated families and vulnerabilities in families; including the impact of toxic trio (domestic violence, alcohol and drugs misuse, mental health) on young people and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's).
- Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to act in the best interest of the young person; maintaining professional curiosity around welfare of young people and share information, and seek the help that the young person may need at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with young person protection training and procedures and kept informed of changes to local/national procedures, thorough safeguarding updates.
- Make any young person protection referrals in a timely way, sharing relevant information as necessary in line with procedures set out by Manchester and Tameside city councils (or others as required)
- Ensure that information is shared only with those people who need to know in order to protect the young person and act in their best interest.
- Keep the setting safe online, we refer to Safeguarding young people and protecting professionals in our settings: online safety considerations and use appropriate filters, checks and safeguards, monitoring access at all times and maintaining safeguards around the use of technology by staff and visitors in the setting.
- Ensure that young people are never placed at risk while in the care of staff.
- Identify changes in staff behaviour and act on these as per the Staff Behaviour Policy.
- Take any appropriate action relating to allegations of serious harm or abuse against any person working with young people working on the charity premises including reporting such allegations to Ofsted and other relevant authorities including the local authority.
- Ensure parents/corporate parents are fully aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures when they register with the young peoples services and are kept informed of all updates when they occur.
- Regularly review and update this policy and make sure it complies with any legal requirements and any guidance or procedures issued by the local authority and OFSTED

6. Important Contacts

NSPCC 0808 800 5000

MASH 0208 901 2690

LADO 0208 736 6435

Golden Number (local authority services) 0208 901 2690

Ofsted 0300 123 1231

Emergency police **999**

Non-emergency police **101**

Government helpline for extremism concerns **020 7340 7264**

Young person exploitation and Online protection command (CEOP)

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

Local Authority (LA) safeguarding websites

<https://www.harrowscb.co.uk>

<https://www.harrow.gov.uk/childrens-social-care/safeguarding-children>

<https://www.harrow.gov.uk/adult-social-care/staying-safe>

7. Reporting Procedures

All staff have a responsibility to report safeguarding/young person protection concerns and suspicions of abuse. This should be done within 24 hours. These concerns will be discussed with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) as soon as possible.

- Staff will report their concerns to the DSL Dipaley Patel in the absence of the DSL they will be reported to the Deputy DSLs Mitesh Patel.
- Any signs of marks/injuries to a young person or information a young person has given will be recorded and stored securely
- If appropriate, any concerns/or incidents will be discussed with the parent/carer/ social worker and discussions will be recorded. Parents will have access to these records on request in line with GDPR and data protection guidelines.
- If there are queries/concerns regarding the injury/information given, then the following procedures will take place:

The designated safeguarding lead will:

- Contact the Local Authority young people's social care team to report concerns and seek advice immediately, or as soon as it is practical to do so. If it is believed a young person is in immediate danger, we will contact the police. If the safeguarding concern relates to an allegation against an adult working or volunteering with young people then the DSL will follow the reporting allegations procedure (see below)
- Record the information and action taken relating to the concern raised
- Speak to the parents (unless advised not to do so by LA young people's social care team)
- The designated safeguarding lead will follow up with the Local Authority young people's social care team if they have not contacted the setting within the timeframe set out in Working Together to Safeguarding Young people (2018). We will never assume that action has been taken.

Keeping young people safe is our highest priority and if, for whatever reason, staff do not feel able to report concerns to the DSL or deputy DSL they should call the Local Authority young people's social care team, the Police or the NSPCC and report their concerns anonymously.

These contact numbers are displayed in each room of the building at Ashley's House.

Responding to a spontaneous disclosure from a young person

If a young person starts to talk openly to a member of staff about abuse they may be experiencing, then staff will:

- Give full attention to the young person

- Keep body language open and encouraging
- Be compassionate, be understanding and reassure them their feelings are important using phrases such as 'you've shown such courage today'
- Take time and slow down: show respect, pause and will not interrupt the young person or ask leading questions or presumptions – let them go at their own pace
- Recognise and respond to their body language
- Show understanding and reflect back
- Make it clear you are interested in what the young person is telling you
- Reflect back what they have said to check your understanding – and use their language to show it's their experience
- Reassure the young person that they have done the right thing in telling you. Make sure they know that abuse is never their fault
- Never talk to the alleged perpetrator about the young person's disclosure. This could make things a lot worse for the young person.

(Information taken from NSPCC)

Any disclosure will be reported to the manager or DSL and will be referred to the local authority young people's social care team immediately, following our reporting procedures.

Recording Suspicions of Abuse and Disclosures

Staff should make an objective, accurate record of any observation or disclosure, supported by the service area manager or designated safeguarding lead (DSL). This record should include:

- Young person's name
- Young person's address
- Age of the young person and date of birth
- Date and time of the observation or the disclosure, location
- Exact words spoken by the young person (word for word) and non-verbal communication
- Exact position and type of any injuries or marks seen
- Exact observation of any incident including any concern was reported, with date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time
- Any discussion held with the parent(s) (where deemed appropriate).

These records should be signed by the person reporting this and the DSL, dated and kept in a separate confidential file managed by the DSL. The Management Information System will be updated according to decisions made about confidentiality across the team.

If a young person starts to talk to an adult about potential abuse it is important not to promise the young person complete confidentiality. This promise cannot be kept. It is vital that the young person is allowed to talk openly and disclosure is not forced, leading or words put into the young person's mouth. As soon as possible after the disclosure details must be logged accurately. It is not the



charity's role to investigate, it is the role of statutory services to complete this.

Staff involved in a safeguarding case may be asked to supply details of any information/concerns they have with regard to a young person. The charity expects all members of staff to co-operate with the local authority young people's social care, police, and Ofsted in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the young people.

Staff must not make any comments either publicly or in private about the supposed or actual behaviour of a parent, young person or member of staff.

Informing parents (where applicable)

With our current service for UASC, parents will not be contactable or have rights within each young persons lives. However should this be the case the following will apply.

If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are normally the first point of contact. Except where the parent or family member is the likely abuser or where a young person may be endangered by this disclosure. The guidance of the Local Authority will specifically be sought with regard to informing parents in these cases. In all other cases parents will be informed by the investigating officers.

Confidentiality

All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared in line with guidance from the local authority. All staff, students and volunteers are bound by confidentiality and any information will not be discussed out of work, or this will become a disciplinary matter. The young peoples services have due regard to the data protection principles as in the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)¹. These do not prohibit the collection and sharing of personal information, even without consent if this would put the young person at further risk. We will follow the principles around data collection and information sharing, and ensure any information is recorded and shared in an appropriate way.

Support to families

We will take every step to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff, students and volunteers within Ashley's House, OOSC, crèche, stay and play services.

Ashley's House continues to welcome the young person and the family whilst enquiries are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation. Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst any external investigations are carried out in the best interest of the young person.



8. Countering risks of self-harm and suicide

Where staff identify or are informed that the young person has tendencies towards self-harm/suicide, an immediate response must be determined, ranging from calling for emergency services where the need is immediate, to contacting the DSL for a risk management plan update.

Key partner agencies will be informed (social workers/ after care workers) and a management plan put into place

Staff will support the young person to access suitable professional support to help keep the young person safe and to help the young person to better understand their previous experiences and behaviours of self-harm (where applicable).

Staff should keep appropriate records of self-harming incidents and share relevant information and decisions with the young person's accommodating authority and other relevant professionals.

The young person should be involved in decision making around any changes to their support package and living arrangements.

Online Safety

All of our properties have free wifi access, with Safe Search enabled, however we recognise that our young people will be able to access a wider range of online material through their own mobile data plans.

We aim to inform young people attending our venue of the responsibilities, behaviours and associated risks that come with accessing online services. Following the Readiness for Adulthood (Individual Assessment) we deliver specific support sessions to each young person relative to their current understanding of risks.

9. Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma Informed Working Practices

The term ACE is used to describe a wide range of stressful or traumatic experiences that children can be exposed to whilst growing up. ACEs range from experiences that directly harm a child (such as suffering physical, verbal or sexual abuse, and physical or emotional neglect) to those that affect the environment in which a child grows up (including parental separation, domestic violence, mental illness, alcohol abuse, drug use or incarceration).

The Commons Select Committee report: Evidence-based early years intervention published in November 2018 cited that whilst there is no universally agreed definition of an adverse childhood experience (ACE) studies addressing the issue have mostly converged on a similar set of experiences falling under this term and listed the following experiences:



- verbal abuse
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- physical neglect
- emotional neglect
- parental separation
- household mental illness
- household domestic violence
- household alcohol abuse
- household drug abuse
- incarceration of a household member.

It has been shown that considerable and prolonged stress in childhood has life-long consequences for a person's health and well-being, with negative behaviours often being used unconsciously as protective solutions to unrecognised problems dating back to childhood.

We recognise that the most effective way for us to reduce the impact of ACE's on the lives of our young people is to work in a Trauma Informed Way, we ensure that staff are trained to at least "Trauma Skilled" levels.

There are several ways that we can apply a trauma informed lens to practice:

Look 'behind the behaviours' and consider what the root cause of the presenting behaviour may be

Always have a focus on 'what happened to someone?' instead of 'what's wrong with them?' Consider how to apply the core principles of a trauma-informed approach

- Safety
- Trustworthiness & transparency
- Peer support
- Collaboration & mutuality
- Empowerment & choice
- Cultural, historical & gender issues

Keep in mind the 4 R's of trauma informed practice

- Realise the widespread impact of trauma and the potential pathways to recovery
- Recognise the signs and symptoms of trauma
- Respond by integrating our knowledge into practice, policies and procedures
- Resist re-traumatisation

10. Involving Young People in Safeguarding

All young people in the supported housing service receive a "Young Persons Guide" which provides them



with a handbook to their entitlements in using our services.

The guide explains to them how they are central to the support that we provide, and how they have a say in that support. The Young Persons Guide tells young people how they can contact the service, how they can “have a say” in their support, and how they can complain about the service they are receiving,

We meet regularly with each young person to discuss the risks that they face, and their strengths and capabilities in working with us to reduce those risks. (Their Risk Assessment). When individual circumstances change for a young person, we revisit their Risk Assessment together to proactively plan for their ongoing safeguarding.

11. Allegations against adults working or volunteering with young people

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, student or volunteer or any other person who works in the young people’s services premises regardless of whether the allegation relates to those premises or elsewhere, we will follow the procedure below.

An allegation against a member of staff/student/volunteer/supply staff or any other person may relate to a person who has: behaved in a way that has harmed a young person, or may have harmed a young person;

- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a young person;
- behaved towards a young person or young people in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to young people; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with young people.

The allegation should be reported to the senior manager on duty. If this person is the subject of the allegation then this should be reported to the next senior manager or DSL or in the case of the CEO the Chair of the Board of Trustees instead.

We will follow our own local safeguarding partner’s website information (see page 4 for details) about how to report an allegation and we would also inform Ofsted where required in order for this to be investigated by the appropriate bodies promptly. This includes:

- If as an individual you feel this will not be taken seriously or are worried about the allegation getting back to the person in question then it is your duty to inform the local authority young people’s social care team yourself directly
- The local authority young people’s social care team will be informed immediately for advice and guidance
- A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals (local authority



- young people's social care team, Ofsted) to determine how this will be handled
- The service will follow all instructions from the local authority young people's social care team and Ofsted and ask all staff members to do the same and co-operate where required
 - Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with local authority young people's social care team support and advice
 - Manchester Settlement reserves the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation, Legal advice will be sought to ensure compliance with the law.
 - All enquiries/external investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file for access by the relevant authorities
 - Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisations including the local authority young people's social care team and where an offence is believed to have been committed, the police will also be informed.
 - Founded allegations will be dealt with as gross misconduct in accordance with our disciplinary procedures and may result in the termination of employment, Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision along with notifying the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure their records are updated.
 - All safeguarding records will be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 21 years and 3 months if that is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for references and future DBS checks and avoids any unnecessary reinvestigation
 - Manchester Settlement retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry
 - Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being reinstated
 - A return to work plan will be put in place for any member of staff returning to work after an allegation has been deemed unfounded. Individual support will be offered to meet the needs of the individual staff member and the nature of the incident; this may include more frequent supervisions, coaching and mentoring and external support.

12. Looked after young people

All young people in the housing service are "Looked After". Our referral processes must ensure that we are well informed of the needs and characteristics of each young person. As part of our safeguarding practice we will ensure our staff are aware of how to keep looked after young people safe. In order to do this we ask that we are informed of:

- The legal status of the young person (e.g. whether the young person is being looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order)
- Family time arrangements for the biological parents (or those with parental responsibility)
- The young person's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her
- The details of the young person's social worker and any other support agencies involved
- Any young person protection plan or care plan in place for the young person in



question.

13. Safer Staffing and volunteering

Our policy is to provide a secure and safe environment for all young people. We follow safer recruitment practices including obtaining references and all staff employed to work with young people will have enhanced criminal record checks from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before being able to have unsupervised contact with young people.

We will obtain enhanced criminal records checks (DBS) for volunteers in the setting. Volunteers and visitors will never have unsupervised access to young people.

All staff will attend young person protection training updated as a minimum every 2 years and receive initial basic young person protection training during their induction period. This will include the procedures for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and abusers/potential abusers, recording and reporting concerns and creating a safe and secure environment for the young people. During induction staff will be given contact details for the local authority young people's social care team's, the local safeguarding young people partnership and Ofsted to enable them to report any safeguarding concerns, independently, if they feel it necessary to do so.

Ongoing suitability of staff is monitored through:

- regular supervisions
- peer observations
- annual declaration of staff suitability
- safeguarding competencies
- regular review of DBS using the online update service.

14. Designated Safeguarding Lead

We have named persons within the charity who take lead responsibility for safeguarding and co-ordinate young person protection and welfare issues, known as the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL), there is always at least one designated person on duty during the opening hours of the setting. The designated persons will receive comprehensive training at least every two years and update their knowledge on an ongoing basis, but at least once a year.

The DSL's liaise with the local authority young people's social care team, undertakes specific training, including a young person protection training course, and receives regular updates to developments within this field. They in turn support the ongoing development and knowledge of the staff team with regular safeguarding updates.



The Designated Safeguarding Leads

(DSL) Dipaley Patel, Ameet Patel and

Mitesh Patel

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- Ensure with the CEO and Trustees that the settings safeguarding policy and procedures are reviewed and developed in line with current guidance; and develop staff understanding of the settings safeguarding policies
- Take the lead on responding to information from the staff team relating to young person protection concerns
- Provide advice, support and guidance on an on-going basis to staff, students and volunteers.
- To identify young people who may need early help or who are at risk of abuse
- To help staff to ensure the right support is provided to families
- To liaise with the local authority and other agencies with regard to young person protection concerns
- Ensure the setting is meeting the requirements of the EYFS Safeguarding and welfare requirements
- To ensure policies are in line with the local safeguarding procedures and details
- Disseminate updates to legislation to ensure all staff are kept up to date with safeguarding practices
- To manage and monitor accidents, incidents and existing injuries; ensuring accurate and appropriate records are kept
- Attend meetings with the young person's key person
- Attend case conferences and external safeguarding meetings, as requested, by external agencies.

Reporting a Safeguarding Concern

At Ashley's House, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Concerns about a child's welfare, safety, or wellbeing must always be raised without delay.

For Staff and Volunteers

- Any safeguarding concern must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or, in their absence, the Deputy DSL.
- Concerns should be recorded in writing using the organisation's safeguarding concern form and submitted to the DSL the same day.
- If the concern involves a member of staff, it must be reported directly to the Manager. If the concern involves the Manager, it should be reported to the Chair of Trustees.



- Staff are reminded that it is not their role to investigate, but to record and report concerns promptly.

For Parents and Carers

- If you have a concern about the safety or wellbeing of your child or another child at Ashley's House, please speak directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Deputy DSL.
- You may also put your concern in writing if you prefer.
- If you feel unable to raise your concern within Ashley's House, you can contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the NSPCC for advice and support.

Contact details for the DSL and Deputy DSL are displayed clearly within the building and provided to all families.

Charity Commission Safeguarding Standards

As Ashley's House is a registered charity, our safeguarding responsibilities are guided not only by statutory legislation and Ofsted regulations.

The Board of Trustees recognises its ultimate responsibility for safeguarding and commits to ensuring that:

- Safeguarding is a governance priority at board level.
- Risks to children, young people, and adults at risk are assessed and managed across all our activities.
- This policy is reviewed annually (or sooner if statutory guidance changes).
- Trustees, staff, and volunteers receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role.
- A culture of openness and accountability is promoted, so that safeguarding concerns can be raised and acted upon without delay.
- Serious incidents, as defined by the Charity Commission, are reported promptly in line with CC30 requirements.

By embedding these standards, Ashley's House ensures that safeguarding is at the heart of our charitable purpose and practice.

15. Types of abuse and particular procedures followed

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a young person. Somebody may abuse or neglect a young person by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Young people may be abused within a family, institution or community setting by those known to them or more rarely, a stranger.



This could be an adult or adults, another young person or young people.

What to do if you're worried a young person is being abused, advice for practitioners (2015) and Working Together to Safeguard Young people (2018)

The signs and indicators listed below may not necessarily indicate that a young person has been abused, but will help us to recognise that something may be wrong, especially if a young person shows a number of these symptoms or any of them to a marked degree.

Indicators of young person abuse

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
- Unexplained injuries to a young person or conflicting reports from parents or staff
- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries
- Significant changes to behaviour patterns.

Softer signs of abuse as defined by National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) include:

Emotional states:

- Fearful
- Withdrawn
- Low self-esteem.

Behaviour:

- Aggressive
- Oppositional habitual body rocking.

Interpersonal behaviours:

- Indiscriminate contact or affection seeking
- Over-friendliness to strangers including healthcare professionals
- Excessive clinginess, persistently resorting to gaining attention
- Demonstrating excessively 'good' behaviour to prevent parental or carer disapproval
- Failing to seek or accept appropriate comfort or affection from an appropriate person when significantly distressed
- Coercive controlling behaviour towards parents or carers
- Lack of ability to understand and recognise emotions



- Very young people showing excessive comforting behaviours when witnessing parental or carer distress.

Peer-on-peer abuse

We are aware that peer-on-peer abuse does take place, so we include young people in our policies when we talk about potential abusers. This may take the form of bullying, physically hurting another young person, emotional abuse or sexual abuse. We will report this in the same way we do for adults abusing young people and will take advice from the appropriate bodies on this area; to support for both the victim and the perpetrator, as they could also be a victim of abuse. We know that young people who develop harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced abuse and neglect themselves.

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

All young people can suffer injuries during their early years as they explore and develop. If an explanation of how a young person received their injury doesn't match the injury itself or if a young person's injuries are a regular occurrence or there is a pattern to their injuries, then we will report our concerns.

Fabricated illness

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a young person. The parent or carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation; they may exaggerate a real illness and symptoms or deliberately induce an illness through poisoning with medication or other substances or they may interfere with medical treatments. Fabricated illness is a form of physical abuse and any concerns will be reported, in line with our safeguarding procedures.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

FGM can also be known as Female Genital Cutting. FGM is a procedure where the female genital organs are injured or changed and there is no medical reason for this. It is frequently a very traumatic and violent act for the victim and can cause harm in many ways. The practice can cause severe pain and there may be immediate and/or long-term health consequences, including mental health problems, difficulties in child birth, causing danger to the young person and mother; and/or



death (definition taken from the Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation).

The procedure may be carried out shortly after birth and during young personhood as well as adolescence, just before marriage or during a woman's first pregnancy and varies widely according to the community.

FGM is young person abuse and is illegal in the UK. It can be extremely dangerous and can cause:

- Severe pain
- Shock
- Bleeding
- Infection such as tetanus, HIV and hepatitis B and C
- Organ damage
- Blood loss and infections
- Death in some cases

Any concerns about a young person or family, will be reported to the young people's social care team in the same way as other types of physical abuse. We have a mandatory duty to report to police any case where an act of female genital mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18.

Breast ironing/flattening

Breast ironing also known as "breast flattening" is the process where young girls' breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded down through the use of hard or heated objects in order for the breasts to disappear, or delay the development of the breasts entirely. It is believed that by carrying out this act, young girls will be protected from harassment, rape, abduction and early forced marriage.

Breast Ironing/Flattening is a form of physical abuse and can cause serious health issues such as:

- Abscesses
- Cysts
- Itching
- Tissue damage
- Infection
- Discharge of milk
- Dissymmetry of the breasts
- Severe fever.

Any concerns about a young person or family, will be reported to the young people's social care team in the same way as other types of physical abuse.



Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing, or enticing, a young person or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the young person 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 young people in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a young person in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Adult males do not solely perpetrate sexual abuse; women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other young people.

Action must be taken if a staff member witnesses an occasion(s) where a young person indicates sexual activity through words, play, drawing, has an excessive preoccupation with sexual matters; or has an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or language, for their developmental age. This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls/toys or in the role-play area with their peers; drawing pictures that are inappropriate for a young person, talking about sexual activities or using sexual language or words.

If a young person is being sexually abused staff may observe both emotional and physical symptoms.

Emotional signs:

- Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the young person's age
- Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clingy
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Being isolated or withdrawn
- Inability to concentrate
- Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a carer
- Becoming worried about clothing being removed
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures or acting out actions inappropriate for their age
- Using sexually explicit language.

Physical Signs:



- Bruises
 - Bleeding, discharge, pains or soreness in their genital or anal area
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy

Any concerns about a young person or family will be reported to the young people's social care team.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022) describes CSE as: where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a young person 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. CSE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CSE can affect any young person or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. It can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity and may occur without the young person or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media).

Signs and indicators may include:

- Physical injuries such as bruising or bleeding
- Having money or gifts they are unable to explain
- Sudden changes in their appearance
- Becoming involved in drugs or alcohol, particularly if you suspect they are being supplied by older men or women
- Becoming emotionally volatile (mood swings are common in all young people, but more severe changes could indicate that something is wrong)
- Using sexual language that you wouldn't expect them to know
- Engaging less with their usual friends
- Appearing controlled by their phone
- Switching to a new screen when you come near the computer
- Nightmares or sleeping problems
- Running away, staying out overnight, missing school
- Changes in eating habits
- Talk of a new, older friend, boyfriend or girlfriend
- Losing contact with family and friends or becoming secretive
- Contracting sexually transmitted diseases.



Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a young person 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. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

CCE can include young people being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people. Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- Young people who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Young people who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Young people who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- Young people who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- Young people who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- Young people who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

If staff have any concerns regarding CSE or CCE, they will be reported in the usual way.

Emotional abuse

Working Together to Safeguard Young people (2018) defines emotional abuse as 'the persistent emotional maltreatment of a young person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the young person's emotional development'. It may involve conveying to a young person 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 young person 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 young people. These may include interactions that are beyond a young person's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the young person 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 young people frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of young people.

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

Signs and indicators may include:



- Physical, mental and emotional development lags
- Sudden speech disorders
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Appear unconfident or lack self-assurance.

Action will be taken if the staff member has reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a young person, caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection. Young people may also experience emotional abuse through witnessing domestic abuse and alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them.

Neglect

Working Together to Safeguard Young people (2018) defines Neglect as 'the persistent failure to meet a young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the young person's health or development'. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a young person is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- a. Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- b. Protect a young person from physical and emotional harm or danger
- c. Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- d. Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

Signs may include a young person persistently arriving at charity unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the young person's growth or hurt them), arriving at charity in the same nappy they went home in or a young person having an illness or identified special educational need or disability that is not being addressed by the parent. A young person may also be persistently hungry if a parent is withholding food or not providing enough for a young person's needs.

Neglect may also be shown through emotional signs, e.g. a young person may not be receiving the attention they need at home and may crave love and support at charity. In addition, neglect may occur through pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.



Action will be taken if the staff member has reason to believe that there has been any type of neglect of a young person.

County Lines

The National Crime Agency (NCA) describe county lines as a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs from big cities into smaller towns, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line.' Customers will live in a different area to where the dealers and networks are based, so drug runners are needed to transport the drugs and collect payment.

Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Young people can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, young people's homes and care homes.

Signs and indicators to be aware of include:

- Changes in the way young people you might know dress
- Unexplained, sometimes unaffordable new things (e.g. clothes, jewellery, cars etc.)
- Missing from home or schools and/or significant decline in performance
- New friends or relationships with those who don't share any mutual friendships with the victim or anyone else
- May be carrying a weapon
- Receiving more texts or calls than usual
- Sudden influx of cash, clothes or mobile phones
- Unexplained injuries
- Significant changes in emotional well-being
- Young people seen in different cars/taxis driven by unknown adults
- Young people seeming unfamiliar with your community or where they are
- Truancy, exclusion, disengagement from school
- An increase in anti-social behaviour in the community
- Unexplained injuries
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks.

Cuckooing

Cuckooing is a form of county lines crime in which drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to criminally exploit them as a base for drug dealing, often in multi-occupancy or social housing properties. Signs that this is happening in a family property may be an increase in people entering or leaving the property, an increase in cars or bikes outside the home; windows



covered or curtains closed for long periods, family not being seen for extended periods; signs of drug use or an increase in anti-social behaviour at the home. If we recognise any of these signs, we will report our concerns as per our reporting process.

If staff have any concerns regarding county lines/cuckooing they will be reported in the usual way.

Contextual safeguarding-

As young people grow and develop they may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their family. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. As part of our safeguarding procedures we will work in partnership with parents/carers and other agencies to work together to safeguard young people and provide the support around contextual safeguarding concerns.

Domestic Abuse / Honour Based Abuse / Forced Marriages

We look at these areas as a young person protection concern. Please refer to the separate policy for further details on this.

Extremism – the Prevent Duty

Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 we have a duty to safeguard at risk or vulnerable young people under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and refer any concerns of extremism to the police (In Prevent priority areas the local authority will have a Prevent lead who can also provide support).

Young people can be exposed to different views and receive information from various sources. Some of these views may be considered radical or extreme. Radicalisation is the way a person comes to support or be involved in extremism and terrorism. It's a gradual process so young people who are affected may not realise what's happening.

Radicalisation is a form of harm. The process may involve:

- Being groomed online or in person
- Exploitation, including sexual exploitation
- Psychological manipulation
- Exposure to violent material and other inappropriate information



- The risk of physical harm or death through extremist acts

We have a Prevent Duty and Radicalisation policy in place. Please refer to this for specific details.

Online Safety

We take the safety of our young people very seriously and this includes their online safety. Please refer to the Online Safety policy for further details.

Human Trafficking and Slavery

Please refer to our Human Trafficking and Slavery policy for detail on how we keep young people safe in this area.

Adult sexual exploitation

As part of our safeguarding procedures we will also ensure that staff and students are safeguarded from sexual exploitation.

Up skirting

Up skirting involves taking a picture of someone's genitals or buttocks under their clothing without them knowing, either for sexual gratification or in order to humiliate, or distress, the individual. This is a criminal offence and any such action would be reported following our reporting procedures.

Child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB)

Child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB) can happen in families when there is a concept of belief in:

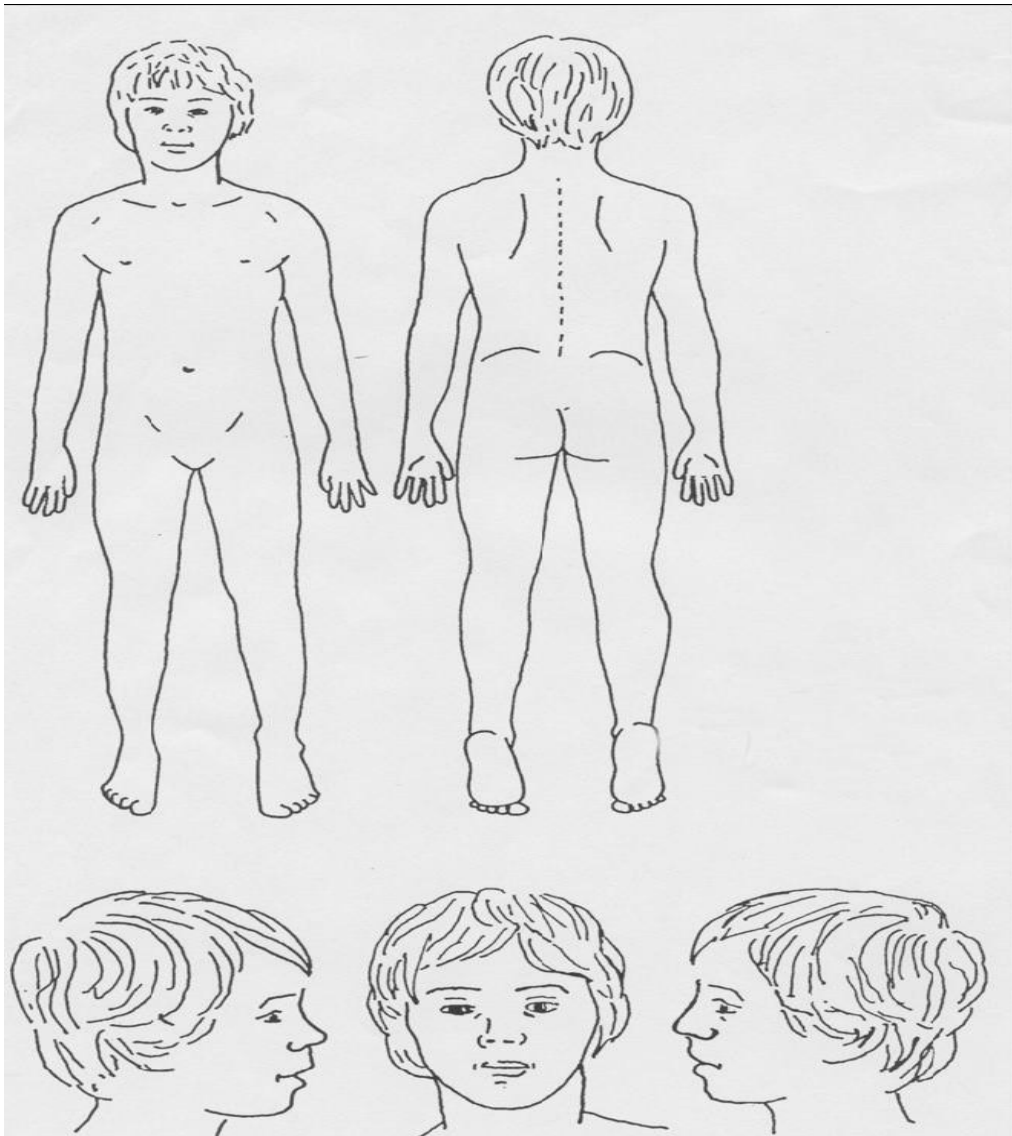
- Witchcraft and spirit possession, demons or the devil acting through young people or leading them astray (traditionally seen in some Christian beliefs)
- The evil eye or djinns (traditionally known in some Islamic faith contexts) and dakini (in the Hindu context)
- Ritual or multi murders where the killing of young people is believed to bring supernatural benefits, or the use of their body parts is believed to produce potent magical remedies
- Use of belief in magic or witchcraft to create fear in young people to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation.

This is not an exhaustive list and there will be other examples where young people have been harmed when adults think that their actions have brought bad fortune.



ASHLEY'S HOUSE

Appendix1 – Incident Reporting Form





ASHLEY'S HOUSE

Practitioner Signature:	Print Name:
Witness Signature:	Print Name:
Designated Safeguarding Lead:	Print Name:

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the Organisation	Date for review
05/09/2025	<i>Dipaley Patel</i>	05/09/2026