

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

<b>Policy number</b>	
<b>Title</b>	Safeguarding Children Policy
<b>Approved by</b>	Board of Trustees
<b>Date of approval</b>	24 September 2018
<b>Review date</b>	3 years from date of approval
<b>Owner</b>	Safeguarding Lead

<b>Version</b>	<b>Amendments</b>	<b>Date</b>
0.0	None – ORIGINAL draft	24 Sep 18

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Board of Trustees of Autism Wessex is required by the Charity Commission to:
- Know their responsibilities in respect of safeguarding.
  - Promote the well-being and welfare of the charity beneficiaries.
  - Take reasonable steps to safeguard beneficiaries and to protect them from abuse or neglect.
  - Take reasonable steps to protect staff, volunteers and those connected with the activities of the charity, from harm.
  - Have adequate measures in place to assess and address safeguarding risks.
  - Have adequate safeguarding policies and procedures appropriate for their charity's particular circumstances and which reflect both the law and best practice.
  - Make sure that these policies and procedures are effectively implemented and regularly reviewed.
  - Take responsibility for putting right anything that goes wrong in the charity
- 1.2 This policy sets out the responsibilities of Autism Wessex to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and has been developed in line with national and local legislation and guidance. The policy applies to all trustees, school governors and staff, senior managers, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students working on behalf of the organisation.
- 1.3 The purpose of this policy is to protect children and young people who receive services from Autism Wessex and any children who come into contact with adults who use our services. Also, to provide all Autism Wessex staff with a framework to enable them to fulfil their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

1.4 Autism Wessex believes that no child or young person should ever experience abuse or neglect and the organisation has a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and to take appropriate action when concerns are identified.

## **2. DUTIES**

### **Staff & Volunteers**

2.1 All Autism Wessex staff and volunteers, including trustees and school governors, have a duty to:

- Be alert to the possibility of child abuse and neglect and be aware of local safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Attend mandatory safeguarding children training, as appropriate to their role and responsibilities.
- Keep accurate records in respect of children and adult service users, appropriate to their role, when there are concerns regarding children's welfare.
- Report concerns regarding children who are suffering abuse, or who may be at risk of harm, to statutory agencies, ie Children's Social Care or the Police, when appropriate to do so.
- Share relevant information with other professionals and other agencies regarding children who are suffering abuse, or who may be at risk of harm.
- Share relevant information with other professionals and other agencies, regarding adult service users who may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Report concerns to senior management regarding any Autism Wessex staff or volunteers who may have harmed a child, who may pose a risk of harm to children, who may have committed an offence against a child, or who may be unsuitable to work with children.
- Seek and follow advice from the Autism Wessex safeguarding leads when in doubt regarding any of the above duties.

### **The Chief Executive**

2.2 The Chief Executive has a duty to ensure that a suitable infrastructure is in place to enable correct implementation of safeguarding children policies and procedures and that suitable safeguarding children training is in place and implemented. The Chief Executive should also ensure that the organisation participates in Serious Case Reviews, when required to do so.

### **The Safeguarding Lead**

2.3 The Safeguarding Lead has the responsibility to offer advice to the Chief Executive and Senior Managers on safeguarding issues and provides assurance to the Board of Trustees that all necessary measures and arrangements are in place to safeguard children and young people in the organisation, including the Prevent duty.

2.4 The Safeguarding Lead is also responsible for:

- Promoting good professional practice.
- Ensuring that advice and support is available to all Autism Wessex staff in relation to safeguarding children issues.
- Ensuring that safeguarding audit is undertaken and learning disseminated.

- Ensuring that safeguarding incidents are reviewed and any appropriate actions taken.
- Ensure that learning from Serious Case Reviews is disseminated.

### **The Head of Human Resources**

2.5 The Head of Human Resources has the responsibility to:

- Ensure that safe staff recruitment practices are in place, to protect service users.
- Ensure that procedures are followed in respect of any staff or volunteers who work with children and may have harmed a child, may pose a risk of harm to children, may have committed an offence against a child, or who may be unsuitable to work with children and are referred, as required, to the Designated Officer (LADO) in the Local Authority.

### **Managers**

2.6 All managers have a duty to:

- Ensure that their staff are aware of and comply with local safeguarding policies and procedures
- Ensure that their staff fulfil their duties, whilst paying due regard to the safety and welfare of children and young people at all times.
- Ensure that their staff attend safeguarding children training, as appropriate to their roles and responsibilities.
- Provide safeguarding advice and support to their staff and provide an opportunity for discussion during supervision sessions, regarding safeguarding matters.
- Submit safeguarding incident notifications to the Autism Wessex Safeguarding Leads, as required.
- Submit notifications to CQC, in respect of allegations of abuse, as per CQC regulations.

### **The Board of Governors of Portfield School**

2.7 The requirements of Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, and Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2018 place a duty on Boards of Governors to:

- Carry out their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Have regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- Have an individual on the board who should take leadership responsibility for the organisation's wider safeguarding arrangements, which includes the Prevent duty.
- Ensure that everyone on the board has the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities.
- Ensure that their schools have effective safeguarding policies and procedures in place that take into account local risks, any statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State, any Local Authority guidance and locally agreed inter-agency procedures.
- Ensure that the school provides effective support for anyone facing an allegation.

### **The Head Teacher of Portfield School**

2.8 The Head Teacher has a duty to:

- Ensure that all school staff are aware of and comply with local safeguarding policies and procedures, including the school child protection policy
- Ensure that all school staff fulfil their duties, whilst paying due regard to the safety and welfare of children and young people at all times.
- Ensure that all school staff attend safeguarding children training, as appropriate to their roles and responsibilities.
- Ensure that all school staff are able to identify children who may benefit from early help provision.
- Provide safeguarding advice and support to school staff and provide an opportunity for discussion during supervision sessions, regarding safeguarding matters.
- Ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead is provided with appropriate support and training.

### **The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Portfield School**

2.9 The DSL has a duty to:

- Provide support to school staff to enable them to carry out their safeguarding duties and liaise closely with other services, such as children's social care.
- Provide school staff with advice on the response to safeguarding concerns.
- Access safeguarding supervision.

### **3. SAFEGUARDING PROCESSES**

3.1 Autism Wessex staff are required to participate in all safeguarding processes when there are concerns regarding the welfare of a child, including Section 47 investigations, Child Protection Conferences, Child in Need meetings and any legal proceedings, when required. Advice can be sought from the Autism Wessex Safeguarding Leads regarding these processes.

### **4. INFORMATION SHARING**

4.1 Information sharing is vital to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. A key factor identified in many Serious Case Reviews has been a failure by practitioners to record information, to share it, to understand its significance and then take appropriate action.

4.2 Autism Wessex staff are required to cooperate with requests from Children's Social Care or the police, to share information regarding children and their families, when there are concerns about a child's welfare. Further guidance can be found in: Information sharing advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers; HM Government (2018).  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/721581/Information\\_sharing\\_advice\\_practitioners\\_safeguarding\\_service\\_s.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_service_s.pdf)

## **5. STAFF SUPPORT & SUPERVISION**

- 5.1 Advice to staff regarding safeguarding issues is available from the Autism Wessex Safeguarding Leads and senior managers and may also be sought from Children's Social Care in the local authority.
- 5.2 All managers are required to provide an opportunity for discussion regarding safeguarding issues during supervision sessions, to promote best practice and to offer support to practitioners, as involvement in safeguarding issues can have an impact on staff.

## **6. SAFE RECRUITMENT**

- 6.1 Autism Wessex has a Recruitment Policy, which reflects national safer recruitment guidelines and Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance. All Autism Wessex staff will undergo enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks.

## **7. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF**

- 7.1 Autism Wessex has a Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy, which details the actions to be taken when there is an allegation or concern regarding any member of staff or volunteer who has contact with children and young people in their work or activities.
- 7.2 The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Allegations Against Staff procedure should be applied when there is an allegation or concern that a person who works with children, has:
- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
  - Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
  - Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children.
- 7.3 In Dorset, Bournemouth & Poole staff should follow the Pan-Dorset Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers procedure:  
[http://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\\_alleg\\_against\\_staff.html#procedures](http://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_alleg_against_staff.html#procedures)
- 7.4 In Somerset, staff should follow the Somerset LSCB Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers procedure:  
[http://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/somerset/p\\_alleg\\_against\\_staff.html?zoom\\_highlight=LADO](http://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/somerset/p_alleg_against_staff.html?zoom_highlight=LADO)

## **8. PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED IN RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS**

- 8.1 The procedure to be followed in responding to safeguarding concerns is at **Appendix 1**; this is supported by the flowchart at **Appendix 2**.

## **9. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION**

- 9.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with:
- Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children Procedures: <http://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm> or the

Somerset Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection Procedures:  
<https://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/working-with-children/local-protocols-guidance/>

- Autism Wessex Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy
- Autism Wessex Recruitment Policy

**Appendices:**

- 1. Responding to safeguarding children concerns**
- 2. Flowchart: what do if you are concerned about the welfare of a child**
- 3. Legal framework**
- 4. Definitions**

### RESPONSE TO SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN CONCERNS

- Should any member of staff become aware of information indicating harm or risk of harm to a child, including when an adult or child discloses something of concern, they have a duty to take appropriate action immediately, as any delay could increase the risk of harm to the child. Should information be disclosed to staff indicating harm or risk of harm to a child, or they disclose something of concern, they should listen to what they say and don't make assumptions.
- Any information should be clearly documented by staff and any disclosures should be documented in the individual's own words.
- When in doubt, staff should seek advice from the Safeguarding Leads and follow this advice immediately.
- If appropriate, staff should make a referral, or seek advice from the Children's Social Care immediately. A referral should be made by telephone to the Children's Social Care in the local authority area where the child lives and should be followed up in writing within 48 hours.
- The Children's Social Care should respond to the referrer within 1 working day, with the planned course of action, if this does not happen, staff should follow up the referral within 3 working days. Staff should not assume action has been taken without confirmation.
- Staff should document clearly all of their concerns, discussions, advice given and any action taken in the records of the service user.

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused; Advice for practitioners, HM Government, March 2015, has been produced to help practitioners identify child abuse and neglect and take appropriate action in response:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/419604/What\\_to\\_do\\_if\\_you\\_re\\_worried\\_a\\_child\\_is\\_being\\_abused.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf)

### ESCALATION OF CONCERNS

Any member of Autism Wessex staff who has raised a concern about a safeguarding children issue and is concerned that their concerns are not being addressed appropriately, must follow this up as a matter of priority.

Where there is professional disagreement between different agencies relating to the safeguarding of children, each Local Safeguarding Children Board has produced a mechanism for practitioners and agencies to resolve these differences, when they cannot be resolved through discussion and negotiation between practitioners at front line level. These processes should be followed by Autism Wessex staff in cases where agreement cannot be reached with front-line practitioners from Children's Social Care, or other agencies. Advice and support with this process should be sought from the Autism Wessex Safeguarding Leads, as required.

In Dorset, Bournemouth & Poole staff should follow the Pan-Dorset LSCB Escalation Policy: [http://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\\_escalation\\_pol.html](http://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_escalation_pol.html)

In Somerset, staff should follow the Somerset LSCB Resolving Professional Differences Protocol: <https://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Resolving-Professional-Differences-Protocol-review-Nov-2017.docx>

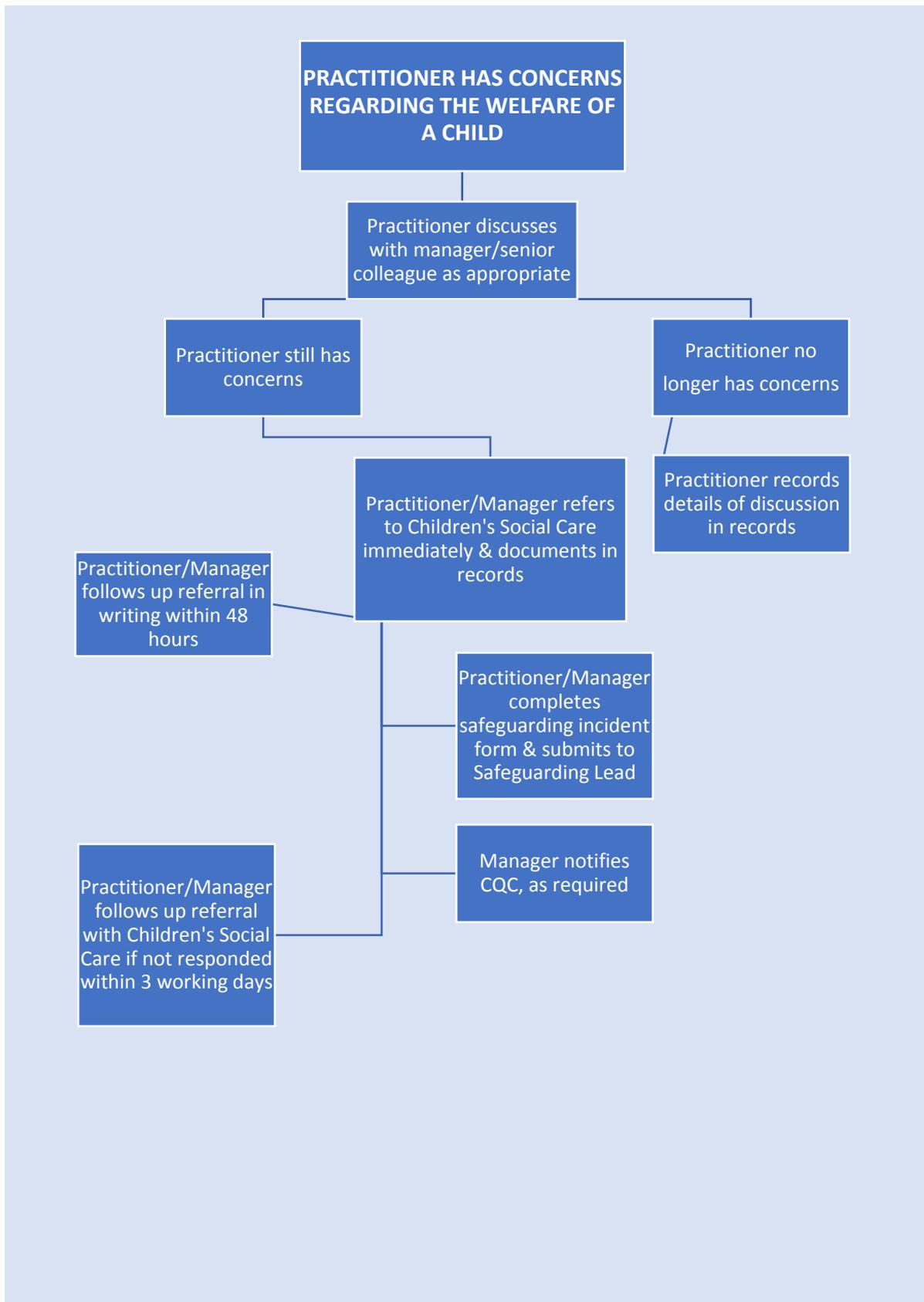
For concerns involving Autism Wessex staff, including poor professional practice, staff should seek support from line managers, or the Autism Wessex Safeguarding Leads.

### **Record Keeping**

Record keeping is an integral part of good practice, and is essential to the provision of safe and effective care. Records should be factual, accurate, clear, concise and contemporaneous, they should differentiate between fact, observation and opinion and any third-party information should be correctly attributed. Unnecessary abbreviations, jargon and meaningless phrases should be avoided.

All concerns, discussions, advice given and any action taken in respect of concerns regarding a child's welfare should be clearly documented. All referrals and correspondence should be saved in the child's record, or adult's record, for staff working with adult service users.

**AUTISM WESSEX**  
**WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE WELFARE OF A CHILD**



## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Children Act 1989 & 2004, including Section 11, as outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/722305/Working\\_Together\\_to\\_Safeguard\\_Children\\_-\\_Guide.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/722305/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children_-_Guide.pdf)

Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2018.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/707761/Keeping\\_Children\\_Safe\\_in\\_Education\\_-\\_September\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/707761/Keeping_Children_Safe_in_Education_-_September_2018.pdf)

The Charity Commission Strategy for dealing with safeguarding issues in charities, 2017.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategy-for-dealing-with-safeguarding-issues-in-charities/strategy-for-dealing-with-safeguarding-issues-in-charities>

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) Regulations for service providers and managers; Regulation 13: Safeguarding service users from abuse and improper treatment.

<https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/regulations-enforcement/regulation-13-safeguarding-service-users-abuse-improper#full-regulation>

Department for Education Governance handbook for academies, multi-academy trusts and maintained schools, 2017.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/582868/Governance\\_Handbook\\_-\\_January\\_2017.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/582868/Governance_Handbook_-_January_2017.pdf)

## DEFINITIONS

Term	Descriptor
A child	Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means 'children and young people'.
Safeguarding & promoting the welfare of children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protecting children from maltreatment</li> <li>• Preventing impairment of children's health or development</li> <li>• Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care</li> <li>• Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes</li> </ul>
Child protection	The activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.
Child 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. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.
Child in Need	A child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 by a social worker.
Significant harm	The threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children. The harm or likelihood of harm is attributable to a lack of adequate parental care or control.
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". (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018).
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". (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018).
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

	<p>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". (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018).</p>
Neglect	<p>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.</p> <p>Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);</li> <li>• protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; • ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or</li> <li>• ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.</li> <li>• It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.</li> </ul> <p>(Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018).</p>
Child Sexual Exploitation	<p>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. (Department for Education, 2017).</p>
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	<p>Comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. FGM is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act 2003. It is a form of child abuse and violence against women. From 31 October 2015 it became mandatory to report all 'known' cases of FGM in under 18s to the police. If a child is at risk of FGM, a referral should be made to Children's Social Care, or the police.</p>
Prevent	<p>Prevent is part of the UK's Counter Terrorism Strategy known as CONTEST. Prevent works to stop individuals from getting involved or supporting terrorism or extremist activity. Radicalisation is a psychological process where vulnerable and/or susceptible individuals are groomed to engage into criminal, terrorist activity. Prevent is part of existing safeguarding responsibilities for professionals, not an additional job. Vulnerable individuals can be referred to Prevent for support in a pre-criminal space. (The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, 2015)</p>
Domestic abuse	<p>Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• psychological</li> <li>• physical</li> <li>• sexual</li> <li>• financial</li> <li>• emotional</li> </ul> <p>Includes honour-based violence, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. Victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.</p>
Human trafficking	Human trafficking is the recruitment, movement, harbouring or receiving of children, women or men through the use of force, coercion, abuse of vulnerability, deception or other means for the purpose of exploitation. British and foreign nationals can be trafficked into, around and out of the UK.
Modern slavery	Encompasses slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking. Traffickers and slave drivers coerce, deceive and force individuals against their will into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment. A large number of active organised crime groups are involved in modern slavery, but it is also committed by individual opportunistic perpetrators.