



Safeguarding Policy for Children at Risk

Adopted July 2021

Reviewed July 2025

Next review July 2026

Foreword

A life that is free from harm, abuse, and neglect is a basic right of every person. The objective of safeguarding is to prevent and reduce the risk of harm to adults and children from abuse or other types of exploitation and impairment of development, while supporting individuals to maintain control over their lives and enabling them to make informed decisions without coercion. Although safeguarding is recognised as a key responsibility of local authorities, safeguarding is still everybody's business, and as neighbours, citizens, and community members we need to be alert to neglect and abuse, and be committed to reporting our concerns.

This policy sets out how the Council will meet its obligations to safeguard children and adults at risk. It applies to staff, agency workers, volunteers and contractors employed by the Council. It is also applicable to Councillors undertaking official duties on behalf of the Council. The policy complements and supports the agreed multi-agency procedures set down by the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board and Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board. (*See Appendix 1: Safeguarding Boards*) The policy is governed by a set of key principles and themes, designed to ensure that people who are at risk experience the process in such a way that it is sensitive to individual circumstances, is person-centred and is outcome-focused. It is vital for successful safeguarding that the procedures in this policy are understood and applied consistently at an individual, managerial, and organisational level.

The aims of safeguarding are to:

- Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect
- Stop abuse or neglect wherever possible
- Prevent impairment of development and enable individuals to have the best outcomes
- Safeguard individuals in such a way that supports them in making choices and having control over how they want to live
- Promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the individual
- Raising public awareness so that communities as a whole, alongside professionals, play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect
- Provide accessible information and support to help people understand what constitutes abuse and neglect, and how to respond

- Address what has caused the abuse or neglect

Safeguarding of children and adults at risk are governed by separate Government legislation and separate Surrey County Council safeguarding boards. Therefore the policy will consider the safeguarding of children and adults at risk independently, before addressing where there is overlap between the two safeguarding areas.

Author and feedback

The Haslemere Youth Hub welcomes comments and feedback on its policies and procedures. Please contact the Lead Safeguarding Manager, Nadeana Simpson-Hadden, if you have any comments.

How to make a referral relating to children or adults at risk

You have a **Safeguarding concern**

This could be a suspicion, an allegation, an observation or a disclosure of abuse or risk of abuse

Is there an immediate risk of harm?

Yes

Call **Emergency Services on 999** and following the call to Emergency Services, report the concern to one of the designated safeguarding officers (See page 5)

If you are a member of staff, then also complete an internal reporting form which is on Backstage under *Report It* to be sent to the safeguarding team.

If you are an elected member, call **Emergency Services on 999** and report the concern to one of the designated safeguarding officers (See page 5)

No

If you are a member of staff, talk to your Safe Guarding Manager and if it is decided there is a concern (The Safeguarding Team can be contacted for advice if needed), or a social worker if known to social services.

If you are an elected member, report the concern to the designated safeguarding manager.

Our Lsndlord

Waverley Borough Council safeguarding officers

Name	Role	Team	Contact details
Katie Webb	Community Services Manager	Community Services	01483 523340
Julie Shaw	Family Support Team Manager	Housing	01483 523245

Raising Alerts

To ensure timely response to Safeguarding concerns, alerts should be made by telephone to **Nadeana Simpson-Hadden** on

Safeguarding children

Introduction

The Haslemere Youth Hub has a legal duty to work together with other employed and voluntary people to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. For the purposes of this document children are considered as between 0 -18 years of age.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Children need to be loved and valued and be supported by a network of reliable and affectionate relationships. If children are denied this, they are at an increased risk of an impoverished childhood, and at an increased risk of disadvantage and social exclusion in adulthood. Abuse and neglect pose particular problems.

When safeguarding children it requires that the focus should be to promote children's wellbeing and welfare through supporting families. It recommends that safeguarding must address the needs of a child as much as the risk to a child in order to give children and families positive outcomes.

The Haslemere Youth Hub Safeguarding Policy for Children at Risk has been developed in accordance with Surrey County Council guidance regarding:

- the safeguarding training programme
- recruitment procedures that will safeguard children and promote welfare – for example: Disclosure and Barring checks for specified employees and thorough selection procedures
- details of the designated safeguarding officers
- the procedures that staff must follow if they believe a child or young person may be at risk
- The use of the Early Help Assessment. If there is a concern about children, but the child is not at risk of significant harm, this needs to be dealt with via the Early

Help Assessment process. Most enquiries about children's welfare are to do with concerns regarding children with additional needs. These needs may require a multi-agency response. The Early Help Assessment will help to clarify the child's specific needs and in collaboration with parents, ensure appropriate actions including the identification of a lead professional to continue to assist the family if necessary.

It is a statutory duty under the Children Act 2004 for each local authority to have a Safeguarding Board. Government guidance: *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (see above) added further duties. The Surrey Safeguarding Children Board is led by Surrey County Council. All Borough Councils are partner agencies of the Board along with other statutory and voluntary agencies.

Key principles

Effective safeguarding arrangements in every local area must be underpinned by two key principles:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation must play its full part
- A child-centred approach: for services to be effective they must be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

'Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility' is the founding principle of safeguarding children. It asserts that everybody has a role to play in protecting children from harm and keeping them safe. If a person comes into contact with a child whom he or she has concerns about, he or she must take action to safeguard the child. It is unlikely that a single individual's insight into a child's situation will form a complete picture and by raising concerns, however small, and sharing information, it will allow for more informed decision making and decisive action to be taken.

A Child Centred Approach

Effective safeguarding of children can only be achieved by putting children at the centre of the system, and by every individual and agency playing their full part, working together to meet the needs of vulnerable children.

Children have clearly expressed what they want from the safeguarding process:

Vigilance

To have adults notice when things are troubling them



Understanding and action

To understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon.

Stability

To be able to develop an on-going stable relationship of trust with those helping them

Respect

To be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not

Information and engagement

To be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans.

Explanation

To be informed of the outcome of assessments and decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response

Support

To be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family

Advocacy

To be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views.

Good Practice when working with children

When working with children it is important to follow the good practice outlined below:

- Adults should not behave in a manner, which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children, or act as a role model.
- Adults must not work on their own with children. If a situation occurs when this arises, due to sickness or an emergency, always inform colleagues or parents/carers to ensure that someone can be present or nearby.
- It is inappropriate to offer lifts to a child or young person. There may be occasions where the child or young person requires transport in an emergency situation or where not to do so may place a child at risk. If circumstances permit, the parent/carer or line manager should be informed before the lift is provided.
- The event must always be recorded and reported to a senior manager and parents/carers.

- Physical contact is discouraged and should only take place only when it is absolutely necessary and in a safe and open environment i.e. one easily observed by others.
- Always report any accidents/incidents or situations where a child becomes distressed or angry to a senior colleague.

What to do if a child or third party makes an allegation

If a child or third party makes an allegation or discloses information which raises concern about significant harm, the initial response should be to listen carefully to what the child or third party says so as to:

- clarify the concerns
- offer reassurance about how the child will be kept safe and
- explain that what they say cannot be kept in confidence and will be passed to Children's Services and/or the police

If the allegation is raised by a child, the child must not be pressed for information, led or cross examined or given false assurances of absolute confidentiality. Such well-intentioned actions could prejudice police investigations, especially in cases of sexual abuse. An interpreter should be used if necessary.

If the child can understand the significance and consequences of making a referral to Children's Services, he or she should be asked his or her view by the referring professional. Although the child's view should be considered, it remains the responsibility of the professional to take whatever action is required to ensure the safety of that child and any other children.

Professionals should generally seek to discuss any concerns with the family and where possible, seek their agreement to making referrals to Children's Services, but there will be some circumstances where professionals should not seek consent if it could:

- place a child at increased risk of significant harm
- place an adult at risk of serious harm
- prejudice the prevention or detection of a serious crime
- lead to unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of Significant Harm

Professionals should record in writing, on the referral form, whether they have discussed the referral with the family. They should also record the reasons if they decide not to inform the family of these matters.

The procedure below is designed to help professionals to understand what to do if they have concerns about a child who has additional needs and what to do if a child has been or is likely to be significantly harmed.

When to refer

It is important that employees make a referral if it is believed or suspected that:

- A child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm *or*
- A child's health or development may be impaired without the provision of services *or*
- With the agreement of the person with parental responsibility, a child would be likely to benefit from family support services

There are a number of categories of abuse that could be defined as significant harm.

Allegations against staff, carers and volunteers

An investigation is required if there is an allegation or concern that any person who works with children, in connection with his or her employment or voluntary activity, 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 s/he is unsuitable to work with children

Although some behaviours may not constitute a criminal offence, consideration will need to be given as to whether they may indicate unsuitability to work with children. These include concerns relating to inappropriate relationships between members of staff and children such as:

- having a sexual relationship with a child under 18 in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if consensual
- 'grooming' i.e. meeting a child under 16 with intent to commit a relevant offence

- other 'grooming' behaviour giving rise to concerns of a broader child protection nature - for example: inappropriate text/email messages or images, gifts, socialising etc.
- possession of indecent photographs/pseudo-photographs of children

Any allegations or concerns about a member of staff, councillor or volunteer should be immediately referred to **Nadeana Simpson-Hadden** who should act in accordance with the Surrey Safeguarding Policy. If the allegation concerns a councillor, then a Waverley Officer should also be informed. If the alleged behaviour harmed a child, is a possible criminal offence or the behaviour indicates that they are unsuitable to work with children, the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** at Surrey County Council must also be informed within one working day of the allegation. If allegations are made directly to the police and if an organisation removes an individual (paid worker or unpaid volunteer) from work such as looking after children (or would have, had the person not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to children, the organisation must make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service. It is an offence to fail to make a referral without good reason.

The Local Authority Designated Officer is responsible for advising on and monitoring such allegations and can be contacted on 01372 833321.

The actual process for making a referral is set out under *How to make a referral relating to children or adults at risk*

Safeguarding Reporting Form



The Haslemere Youth Hub Safeguarding Reporting Form

1. Referral taken by

Job Title:	Telephone:
Date of referral:	Time:

Referrer details

Name	Job title
Place of work - address incl postal code	
Telephone	Email

2. Person details

Last name	First Name
Date of Birth	Male/Female
Ethnicity (see code)*	Religion
Adult /Child	
Address	

3. Household details

Last Name	First Name	Date of Birth	Male/Female	Ethnicity	Relationship to person

Please state principal carer and/or those with parental responsibility if appropriate and address if different:

Telephone number:	Mobile number:
Please state if person referred has a disability or special needs?	

4. Other professionals involved (to include GP and school details) where known			
Name	Job Title	Address	Telephone

5. Please state, if person is a child, whether the HUB has been contacted and any advice given

6. Has an Early Help Assessment (EHS) been completed.			
Yes	No	Don't know	Please attach if yes.

7. Reason for referral
What are your safeguarding concerns for this person?
What are these concerns based on? (What information have you gathered)
What services have already been offered by WBC and/ or other agencies and what were the outcomes?

8. Please state which senior manager at WBC has the case been discussed with?

9. Please state if you have made a referral to any of the following agencies:			
Children's Services	Yes/ No	Adult Social Care	Yes/ No
Community Mental Health	Yes/ No	Police	Yes/ No
Chapter 1 (Domestic Abuse Outreach)	Yes/ No		
Other (please specify)			

The Children Acts 1989 and 2004

The *Children Act 1989* and *Children Act 2004* along with the statutory guidance, *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015* provide the current framework for safeguarding children.

This legislation places an overarching responsibility on Surrey County Council, as the lead authority for children, for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children in their area, but makes clear that other agencies also have a role to play.

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a statutory duty on various agencies, including districts and borough councils, to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are discharged taking account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This includes any services or function they contract out.

This Act led to the establishment of the Surrey Safeguarding Children's Board and required Surrey County Council to secure the co-operation of partners in setting up arrangements to improve the well-being of children in Surrey.

Working Together to Safeguard Children

This replaced the Area Child Protection Committee and sets out how organisations and individuals should work together to achieve this using the key principles:

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part.

The approach must be child-centred: in order to be effective, there needs to be a clear understanding of the needs of the child.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf

The Care Act 2014

The Care Act 2014 sets out the legal framework for how local authorities and other statutory agencies, including district and borough councils, should protect adults with care and support needs who are at risk of abuse or neglect. It consolidates existing law and puts similar arrangements in place to those safeguarding children.

The Act required Surrey County Council, as the lead authority for vulnerable adults, to establish a Safeguarding Adults Board to bring together the key local partners to focus on safeguarding strategy and practice. The Act also places a duty on Surrey County Council to carry out safeguarding enquiries where it is suspected that someone is suffering or at risk of abuse or neglect conducting Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) where there is a cause for concern about a particular case, to learn lessons for the future.

All these initiatives are designed to ensure greater multi-agency collaboration as a means of transforming adult social care.

This guidance is updated from time to time; therefore the most up to date guidance will apply in relation to the operation of this policy.

Safeguarding children from abuse

Physical abuse

This is a form of significant harm which may include 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.

The following are often regarded as indications of concern;

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury
- Several different explanations provided for an injury
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment
- The parents/carers are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries.

If you notice that a child or young person has injuries such as bruising, bite marks, burns and scalds, or scars and are concerned about the cause, it should be reported using the procedures set out in.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is a form of significant harm which involves 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 children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued. 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 also feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capabilities, 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, serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Staff must also be aware and report concerns relating to domestic abuse The definition of domestic abuse was changed by Government in September 2012 and is now defined as:

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 member regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is a form of significant harm which 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 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 activities, encouraging children to behave in a 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.

Staff must also be aware of **Child Sexual Exploitation** as an emerging, high priority concern. CSE is defined as:

...involving exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of their performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. It can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; e.g. being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

Sexual exploitation can have a serious long term impact upon every aspect of a child or young person's life, health and education. It also damages the lives of families and carers and can lead to families breaking up.

It is a multi-agency responsibility of partner agencies to identify those children and young people at risk of exploitation, to protect them and safeguard them from further risk of harm and to prevent children from becoming victims of this form of abuse.

County Lines

County Lines refers to urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas and market and coastal towns using dedicated mobile phone lines or *deal lines*. This criminal activity often involves child criminal exploitation (CCE) as gangs use children and vulnerable people to move drugs and money.

New guidance has been developed by the Home Office to support frontline staff – particularly those who work with children, young people and potentially vulnerable adults – in identifying potential victims of this type of criminal exploitation. It sets out the signs to look for in potential victims, and what action staff should take so that potential victims get the support and help they need. The document supplements an organisation's existing safeguarding policies.

Any practitioner working with a vulnerable person who they think may be at risk of county lines exploitation should follow their local safeguarding guidance and share this information with local authority social care services.

If you believe a person is in immediate risk of harm, you should contact the police.

The guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines>

Neglect

Neglect is a form of significant harm which involves 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 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)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

If physical, emotional, sexual or neglect significant harm is suspected, or you have any other concerns regarding significant harm, it is important to report them immediately using the referral method outlined below. A piece of information, no matter how small, could mean that a child at risk is identified. Several small pieces of information from different agencies have in the past identified horrific cases of abuse that would not have been identified by one single agency.