Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

Document updated by:	Rachel Pegrum, Chair of Trustees Sam Walsh, Safeguarding Trustee
Date of Implementation:	October 2026
Version:	
Changes made:	**V2** New standalone Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy developed following the separation of the former combined Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults Policy. The policy has been reviewed and updated to provide a dedicated framework for safeguarding children and young people. Amendments include updated safeguarding roles and responsibilities, referral and reporting procedures, arrangements for managing disclosures and allegations, online safety guidance, relevant legislation, and associated organisational policies and procedures. Adult safeguarding is now addressed within a separate Safeguarding Adults Policy.
Date of Update:	October 2026
Date of Next Review:	November 2027
Approved by:	RAG Committee
Date of Approval:	October 2026

Ratification and Review

This policy has been ratified for implementation by the Board of Trustees. It will be reviewed annually or sooner to ensure that it continues to comply with WAL's legal and other obligations and meets the needs of the Organisation.

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1. Introduction

In this policy Women's Aid Luton (WAL) sets out our approach to working with children, the steps we take to keep them safe, and the procedures that must be used if there are any concerns about a child or about the behaviour of an adult. Throughout we use the legal definitions of 'a child' i.e. anyone aged under 18 years and the threshold of 'Significant Harm'.

Local guidance for staff and volunteers who are concerned about an adult at risk can be found on Luton Borough Council webpages. [1]

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis or when legislation or the needs present to review and update. Safeguarding reporting is on the agenda for every Board Meeting and at Refuge team meetings in addition to daily review of specific cases of clients causing concern.

2. Policy Aims

WAL is committed to promoting the welfare of the children and young people we work with, and to protecting and safeguarding them against potential or actual harm.
In UK legislation, the definition of a child is most commonly set out in the Children Act 1989, which states that a "child" means a person under the age of 18.

This definition is used across a wide range of legal contexts, including safeguarding, education, health, and criminal justice and is the definition applied within this policy.

WAL fully accepts and promotes the principle enshrined in The Children Act 1989, and other relevant legislation and guidance, that the welfare of the child is paramount.

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 are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

WAL will:

- ensure that our facilities and services, including the specialist service for children, are safe and nurturing environments in which children can develop and thrive; and these services/facilities are appropriately risk assessed.
- Listen to and support children and take all steps required to keep them safe.

[1] Safeguarding Bedfordshire - Luton Safeguarding Children Partnership

- Take all necessary steps to ensure that all staff, volunteers and trustees are safe adults including:
    - thorough recruitment and induction procedures of Trustees, staff and volunteers.
    - ongoing use of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
    - supervision of staff and volunteers.
    - mandatory training of staff, trustees and volunteers in their responsibilities for safeguarding.
- Inform women using our services of this policy and make it available, making clear our expectations of them, including in their rental agreements and rules for Outreach activities.
- Support women in their parenting so they can promote good outcomes for their children.
- Prevent contractors and visitors to The Refuge from having unsupervised access to children.
- Act promptly on any concerns or incidents of abuse, or concerns about the behaviour of an adult, using the procedures for recording, reporting and referring set out in this policy.
- Work with the appropriate statutory and other bodies to promote the safety and welfare of children and with the appropriate statutory bodies in any investigation into child abuse.
- Maintain confidentiality and secure record keeping as outlined in our Confidentiality Policy.
- Ensure that staff and volunteers understand and can use our Whistleblowing Policy.

It is WAL's policy to use and follow the approach, information, procedures manual and training provided by Luton Safeguarding Children Partnership as the basis of our approach to safeguarding. We will follow Inter-Agency Child Protection and Safeguarding Children's Procedures for understanding, identifying and responding appropriately to safeguarding concerns about any child living in the refuge or known through outreach services.

3. Legal Framework

The legal framework for safeguarding children includes the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. The Children Act 1989 established significant harm as a key part of the threshold criteria for courts to make care or supervision orders. The Children Act 2004 strengthened this framework by placing duties on specified agencies to cooperate and make arrangements to safeguard and promote children's welfare.[2]

Under Section 31(9) of the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Adoption and Children Act 2002: 'Harm' means ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development, including impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another; 'Development' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural

[2] Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004

development; 'Health' means physical or mental health; and 'Ill-treatment' includes sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment that are not physical.

When the impairment of health or development of a child is concerned, the child's health or development should be compared with what could reasonably be expected of a similar child.

There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the degree and the extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, the extent of premeditation, the presence or degree of threat, coercion, sadism, and bizarre or unusual elements of child sexual abuse. Each of these elements has been associated with more severe effects on the child and/or relatively greater difficulty in helping the child overcome the adverse impact of the maltreatment.

Sometimes a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm, e.g. a violent assault, suffocation or poisoning. More often, significant harm is a compilation of significant events, both acute and long-standing, which interrupt, change or damage the child's physical and psychological development. Some children live in family and social circumstances where their health and development are neglected. For them, it is the corrosiveness of long term emotional, physical or sexual abuse that causes impairment to the extent of constituting significant harm. In each case, it is necessary to consider any ill-treatment alongside the family's strengths and supports.

4. Recognising Abuse and Neglect

Staff and volunteers need to know what constitutes abuse and, because a child may not disclose that abuse is happening, they must be alert to other indicators (e.g. in children's behaviour) of possible abuse or neglect. Below are definitions of the four main types of abuse.

5. Definitions of Abuse

Physical Abuse
Physical Abuse 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.

Babies can be particularly vulnerable. Always be concerned about bruising in a pre-mobile baby and injuries to young babies.

Emotional Abuse
Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so 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 only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's development capability, as well as over protection 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 causing children 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 children, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse
Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect
Neglect is 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 misuse.

Once a child is born, Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food and clothing, 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 caregivers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

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

Possible Indicators of Abuse or Neglect

You will receive training on the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and the below is not an exhaustive list.

- Non accidental injury, bruising or marks
- Explanation inconsistent with injury
- Several different explanations for an injury
- Reluctance to give information about an injury
- A sudden change in behaviour – aggression, extroversion, depression, withdrawn

- Seeking attention
- Hyperactivity
- Poor attention span
- Appear frightened of parents or family members
- Abnormal attachment between parent and child
- Indiscriminate attachment
- Hyper alertness
- Reduced response
- Frozen watchfulness
- Nightmares
- Anxiety/irritability
- Abdominal pain/headaches
- Poor self esteem
- Over sexualised play/talk or drawings
- Excessive or inappropriate masturbation
- Self-harm/eating disorder
- Frequent visits to the toilet (urinary infection)
- Failure to thrive where there is no organic cause
- Poor hygiene
- Recurrent/untreated infections of skin or head lice
- Untreated health/dental issues
- Frequent absence from school or repeated lateness
- Delay in meeting normal developmental milestones.

Other Concerns

It is important to recognise poor mental health as an area of concern.

Self-harm is defined as 'when someone intentionally damages or injures their body,' it often stems from emotional distress and can be a coping strategy to express or manage this distress. Self-harm is not 'attention seeking behaviour,' and is an indication there is something deeper going on for the child or young person.

When a child discloses self-harm it's important to find out the following:

- What do they do to self-harm and how often?
- Do they feel able to keep themself safe?
- Have they had thoughts of suicide (many young people who self-harm also have suicidal ideation. This question is appropriate if the child is of a maturity level to understand the question).
- If so, do they have a plan for how they would kill themselves and how likely are they to act on it on a scale of 0-10?
- What are the reasons preventing them from acting on the plan?

Asking a child about their self-harm or if they're suicidal does not increase the risk they will harm themselves. This actually reduces the risk because it allows professionals to create a plan for how best to support them.[3]

[3] Refer to the Suicide Prevention Policy

Avoid phrases which add unhelpful stigma like ‘committing suicide,’ ‘successful suicide,’ ‘failed suicide,’ ‘hurting yourself,’ ‘attention seeking,’ ‘cry for help,’ ‘doing something silly,’ and ‘it’s not that serious.’ Instead use phrases such as ‘having thoughts of suicide,’ ‘acting on thoughts of suicide,’ ‘taking their own life,’ and ‘attempted suicide.’

If a young person discloses self-harm or suicidal ideation, we are unable to keep this confidential from their parent. It may also result in a referral to Children’s Services depending on the severity and whether the information had been previously known.

Children may be at risk of abuse or neglect because e.g. of a parent’s misuse of drugs or alcohol or mental health problems. Refer to WAL’s Safeguarding Adults Policy if you have any safeguarding concerns for a child’s mother who is a WAL service user.

Children will also need safeguarding if they are:

- deemed by an adult to be possessed of a spirit
- at risk of forced marriage
- at risk of female genital mutilation
- at risk of child sexual exploitation
- experiencing or exposed to domestic abuse
- abused by other children
- at risk of abuse or neglect because of their disability
- experiencing bullying and/or cyber bullying
- at risk of radicalisation.

Safeguarding children online is essential to protect them from risks such as harmful content, cyberbullying, grooming and exploitation. Staff should promote safe internet use, help children recognise and report concerns, and respond promptly to any online safeguarding issues. Further guidance is provided in Appendix Two.

6. Staff and Volunteer Responsibilities

All staff and volunteers, regardless of your particular role, must work to promote the welfare and safety of all children who are living in the refuge and/or participating in WAL events or activities.

You must ensure that your own practice is safe, and your behaviour is always appropriate. You must follow WAL ‘s Code of Conduct Policy.

As a staff member or volunteer you may be the first person to be alerted to abuse or suspected abuse or neglect. You are not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. You must use the guidance below to respond to the situation appropriately.

Failure to meet your responsibilities may lead to disciplinary action or a volunteer leaving.

Immediate action required to ensure a child's safety

Immediate action may be necessary to keep a child safe by either getting emergency medical attention or by statutory agencies removing the child from their family.

If you think that immediate medical attention is required, you should follow the refuge's usual practice for medical emergencies.

If a child is in immediate danger the Police should be contacted via 999, as only they have the power to remove a child immediately if protection is necessary.

Once the immediate action has been taken you must record the incident on our recording system within 24 hours of the event.

7. Managing a disclosure

- Thank the child or young person for sharing.
- Make sure you don't promise confidentiality - be clear you will have to pass it on to management to ensure the child will receive support, signposting and resources.
- Use open questions to explore the child's experience.
- Listening non-judgmentally means to remain neutral, e.g. not to start condemning the alleged perpetrator as the child may well love that person.
- Ensure your body language is open, relaxed and comfortable. Try to avoid showing shock, disgust or anger. Keep facial expressions as neutral as possible.
- Listen and hear the young person's experiences and validate them. Studies have shown this is one of the most important parts of a disclosure. Sometimes what a child needs is a space to share and someone to truly hear them.
- Encourage the child with phrases like 'okay tell me more…' but don't fill in the silences with chatter - it's important to give the child time to think. use empathy not sympathy e.g. 'that sounds like a lot to handle,' rather than 'you poor thing!'
- Outline your next steps so the child is aware of what's going to happen next.
- Report concern to Children's DSL as soon as possible either in person, on the phone or via email. Record the disclosure on the recording system within 24 hours of the disclosure being made.

What to do if you suspect abuse or neglect but there has been no disclosure.

Through your own observations, or information you have received, you may become concerned about a child who has not spoken to you about abuse or neglect. It is good practice to ask a child why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused or respond to a child wanting to talk to you. This practice can help clarify vague concerns and result in appropriate action.

- Ask open-ended questions about the nature of the concern e.g. bruises, marks, change in behaviour etc. "Tell me about…"

- Believe the child and reassure them that they were right to talk to you.
- If you are concerned about a child, you must share your concerns with the DSL.
- Record the facts and conversation in writing on our recording system and use the exact words spoken.

What to do if you have information about abuse by an adult who works at the refuge

If you have information which suggests that any staff member or volunteer at the refuge has behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child, possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child, or behaved towards a child/ren in a way that indicated s/he is unsuitable to work with children, you must alert the DSL verbally or via email as a matter of urgency. You must not take it upon yourself to withhold the allegation or attempt to decide its validity.

If the CEO is implicated in the concerns, you should contact the Chair of The Board of Trustees, or another Trustee, who will advise you and take appropriate action.

8. Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Leads

Chief Executive Officer

The CEO of WAL is responsible for the operation implementation of WAL's Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy & Procedures. The CEO may delegate duties and responsibilities to the DSL and senior staff to ensure full implementation of the policy within their respective areas.

The CEO will ensure that:

- Safeguarding systems are established and maintained to report safeguarding concern(s)
- Effective training is identified, programmed and carried out regularly
- Persons designated with specific responsibilities for safeguarding are trained and competent and are provided with the resources to ensure the implementation of this policy
- They are personally aware of their safeguarding duties and responsibilities not only as the CEO, but as a manager and employee and that these obligations are fulfilled.
- They alert the trustees and/or commissioners to any safeguarding allegations relating to employees, volunteers, or any closely connected with activities of WAL
- They alert trustees if there is a breach of procedures which puts beneficiaries at risk, including a failure to carry out DBS checks which would have identified an individual that was prohibited from working with children or adults.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL has overall responsibility for safeguarding across the organisation, ensuring that concerns are reported and managed appropriately. The DSL will support staff to

understand and fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities and promote a culture where safeguarding is recognised as everyone's business.

The DSL will ensure that:

- That all employees and volunteers are provided with necessary and appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure that they can effectively safeguard the people they support.
- That all employees follow adult safeguarding arrangements and procedures.
- Effective reporting and appropriate training and level of investigation into any safeguarding incidents and allegations, ensuring appropriate action and follow up.
- They are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and duties as individuals and employees
- That any breach of procedure or allegation against a staff member is reported to the CEO or Safeguarding Advisor to the Board.

The DSL must:

- Ensure that the staff and volunteers follow this policy and procedure and understand our policies on how we deal with data (Privacy Standard Policy and Whistleblowing Policies) to support our commitment to keep children and young people safe.

- Be responsible for ensuring that the contact details for the Chair of the Board of Trustees and Board Advisor for Safeguarding are available.

- Provide guidance and supervision to staff and volunteers to promote their safe working practices and to support staff in dealing appropriately with any concerns on the welfare of the other adults.

Safeguarding Personnel

Lead and Deputy for Safeguarding

The responsibility for child safeguarding is demanding and requires appropriately experienced personnel who are available to provide advice, support and decision-making.

Lead for Safeguarding
Name: Claire Holcombe
Job Title: Service Manager
Email: Claire@womensaidinluton.org
Mobile: 07772 697391

Deputies for Safeguarding
Name: Gaby Price
Job Title: Chief Executive Officer
Email: gaby@womensaidinluton.org
Mobile: 07525 595982

Name: Clare Edwards
Job Title: Refuge Team Leader
Email: Clare.e@womensaidinluton.org
Mobile: 07984233954

Responsibilities
The Lead and Deputies are responsible for:

- Monitoring and recording safeguarding concerns.
- Receiving and responding to safeguarding reports.
- Making referrals to Children's Social Care and Police.
- Liaising with partner agencies.
- Supporting staff and volunteers.
- Maintaining safeguarding records.
- Monitoring safeguarding activity.
- Arranging safeguarding training and updates.

The Deputy Safeguarding Lead will support and deputise for the Lead when required.

Line of Accountability for Safeguarding

Responsibility for safeguarding at Board level rests with the Board of Trustees.

Safeguarding forms part of the organisational governance structure and risk management processes and is represented within the organisational risk register. The Safeguarding Trustee provides strategic oversight and assurance to the Board regarding safeguarding arrangements.

Name: Sam Walsh
Role: Safeguarding Trustee
Email: sam@womensaidinluton.org

Name: Rachel Pegrum
Role: Chair of Trustees
Email: rachel@womensaidinluton.org
Staff and Volunteers

All staff, including relief, casual and temporary employees and volunteers have an obligation to help safeguard adults, children and young people we support.

Employees should:

- Ensure they are familiar with all safeguarding procedures.
- Follow all safeguarding and concerns in accordance with this policy
- Advise their manager of any incidents and concerns in accordance with this policy.
- Attend and participate in any training courses and updates arranged for them.
- Attend and participate in any training course and updated arranged for them.

9. Making Child Protection Referrals

Professionals may seek advice and consultation about the appropriateness of a referral by contacting Luton Children's Services or, if the case is open, from the allocated social worker. The number for Children's Services is 01582 547 653 or 0300 3008 123 (out of hours).

Disclosed or suspected abuse concerns relating to an individual or family, must be referred to Children's Services regardless of where that information has come from, in order that enquiries can be undertaken by the appropriate agency followed by any necessary action.

The child's mother should generally be informed if a referral is being made, unless to do so might place the child at increased risk of significant harm by:

- the behavioural response it prompts e.g. a child being subjected to abuse, maltreatment or threats/forced to remain silent if alleged abuser informed
- leading to an unreasonable delay
- leading to the risk of loss of evidential material
- placing a member of staff from any agency at risk.

If the child's mother cannot be informed for any reason, including because they are the source of the risk, this must not prevent a referral being made. Children's Services will decide how and when the mother should be approached and by whom.

Information required when making a referral to Children's Services

Be prepared to give as much information as possible (in emergency situations all of this information may not be available). Unavailability of some information must not stop you making a referral.
Following a telephone referral this must be confirmed in writing by using the Online Referral Form via Luton Borough Council's Website[4] and submitted to Children's Services within 24 hours.

Where a case is already known to Children's Services, contact should be made with the allocated social worker. If you have information, which suggests an urgent child protection matter, you should speak without delay to the allocated social worker or their Practice Manager.

Children's Services must acknowledge written referrals, within one working day of receiving it. If no response is forthcoming within 3 working days, Children's Services must be contacted again to establish the current status of the referral.

Dealing with the outcomes from a referral

The recipient in Children's Services will discuss with the referrer what the child and parents will be told, by whom and when.

[4] Referral to children's social care

The DSLs are responsible for deciding how best to handle the situation within the refuge. Information relating to child protection concerns should be shared on a "need to know" basis. However, the sharing of information is often vital in child protection and therefore the issue of confidentiality is secondary to a child's need for protection. The DSL will decide, in discussion with the CEO/Chair if necessary, who needs to know what. They will provide support, guidance and clarification to staff and volunteers on both how to handle the situation and how best to maintain confidentiality.

The DSLs are responsible for keeping in an agreed secure place all written record of discussions with the child and the parent (where appropriate), any with the CEO and the information which was provided to Children's Services. Complete record of decisions made by Children's Services and by the refuge, and the reasons for these decisions, must be kept.

10. Dealing with allegations against WAL staff, volunteers and trustees

Any allegation(s) that a member of WAL staff, a trustee or volunteer has

- behaved in a way that has, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against a child
- behaved toward a child in a way which indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

must be dealt with in accordance with the Luton Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance.

The DSL must seek advice from the CEO. Steps will be taken to ensure that the person against whom the allegation is made is removed from the situation immediately. This may be done by either agreement or suspension from the organisation until the matter has been fully investigated.

The CEO must refer all allegations against a member of staff or a volunteer that appear to meet the criteria to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day.

The CEO must be informed by either the DSL, or if the allegations are about them, directly by the member of staff, volunteer or trustee who is aware of the allegations.

11. WAL's Training Strategy for Safeguarding

WAL will follow the Training Strategy set out by the Luton Safeguarding Children Partnership, including PREVENT training, to ensure that all staff and volunteers can meet their respective responsibilities for promoting the welfare of children and for safeguarding them.

All staff and volunteers will attend a Level one awareness safeguarding course. They must also participate in appropriate refresher training identified by the DSL/CEO to

ensure their practice remains safe. All staff working closely with children will attend a Level three safeguarding course.

The DSL and CEO have specific responsibilities as the Safeguarding Leads, and all members of staff who attend Child Protection Conferences and are members of Core Groups should be trained to Level three and four.

The DSL is expected to keep up with national developments relating to the welfare and protection of children and young people and to subscribe to Luton Safeguarding Children Partnership's free subscription service.

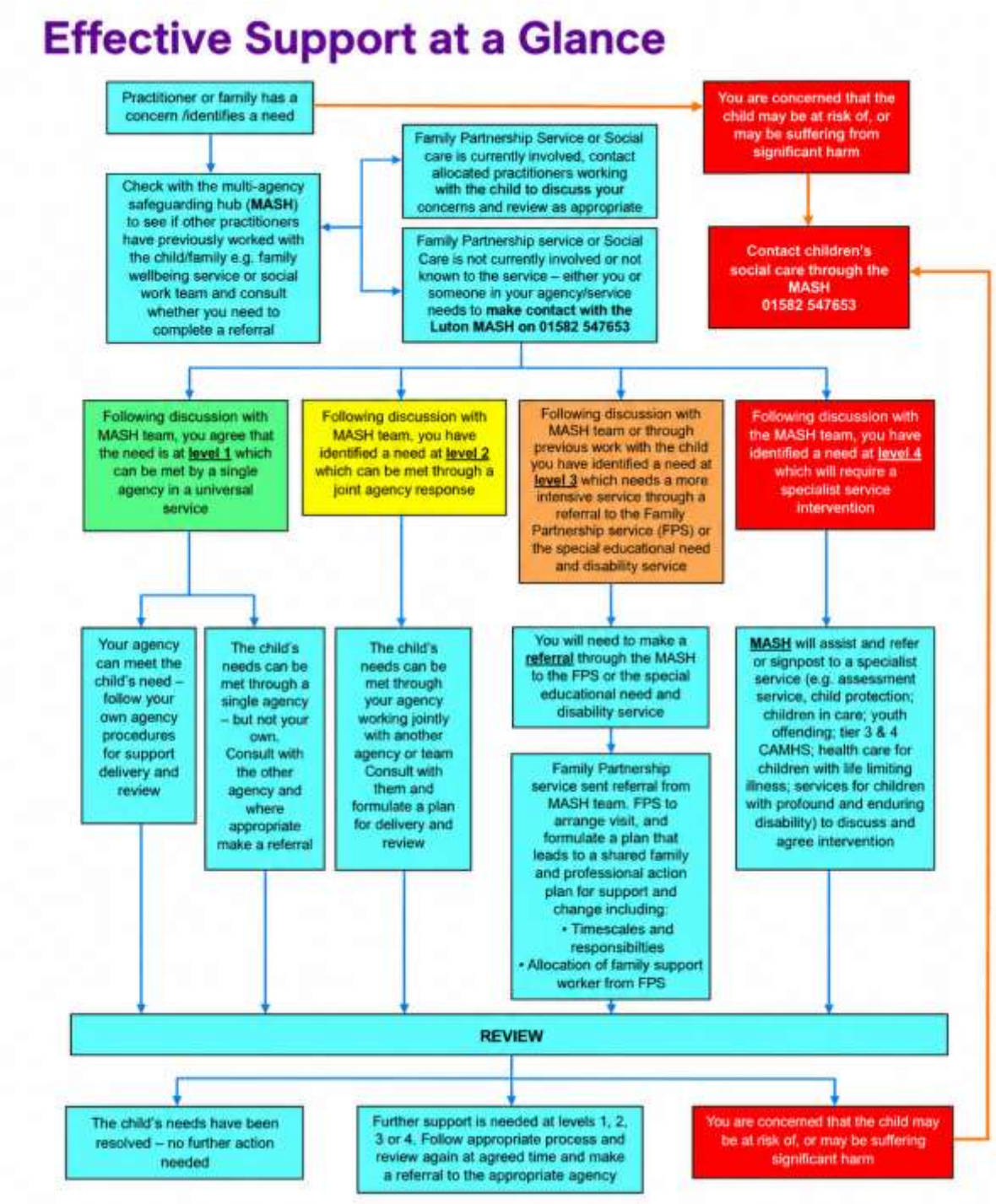
The CEO has particular responsibilities for:

- ensuring this training strategy is implemented
- maintaining complete records of training in safeguarding for staff and volunteers
- reporting on progress and alerting The Board to any difficulties in implementing this strategy.

12. Related Legislation Policies & Procedures & Protocols:

- The Data Protection Act 1998
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working together to safeguard children -Statutory guidance (2023)
- The Common Law Duty of Confidentiality
- LSCB Multi Agency Protocol for Safeguarding Children
- WAL Employee Handbook (Internal)
- Recruitment Policy (includes Safer Recruitment procedures) – (Internal)
- Online Safety Act 2023
- Confidentiality Policy
- Case Management Policy

Appendix 1 – Luton Safeguarding Children's Board Guidance



Appendix Two – Online Safety

Why do we need to include Online Safety?

Modern digital technology has made access to information and communication increasingly easy for everyone. This is especially so for those who cannot always go out to socialise and rely on websites for social networking, watching films, downloading music, buying lottery tickets, shopping etc. Government guidance is clear, that all organisations working with children, young people adults at risk, families, parents, and carers have responsibilities. It is also important to remember, children, young people and adults at risk can also abuse and such incidents fall into the remit of this policy.

Online Safety Code of Conduct:

We expect everyone in our organisation to agree and sign up to our Online Safety code of conduct to:

1. use the internet and other forms of communication in a sensible and polite way.
2. only access websites, send messages or access and use other resources that will not hurt or upset anybody.
3. seek permission if they want to use personal information or take photographs of other people.
4. report any concerns to the Lead or Deputy
5. not maintain confidentiality if there is a concern about the welfare of a child, young person, or adult at risk.

What are the Risks?

There are many potential risks including:

- accessing inappropriate or illegal websites.
- receiving unwanted or upsetting texts, e-mail messages or images.
- being “groomed” by another with a view to meeting the child, young person, or adult at risk for their own illegal purposes including sex, drugs or crime.
- sharing nudes or semi nudes.
- viewing or sending unacceptable material such as inciting hatred or violence.
- sending bullying messages or posting malicious details about others.
- ignoring copyright law by downloading e.g. music, videos, homework cheat materials etc.
- overspending on shopping and gambling sites.
- being at risk of identity fraud for money transactions.
- inappropriate relationships or prostitution.

What else might be of concern?

A child, young person, or adult at risk who:

- is becoming secretive about where they are going to or who they are meeting.
- will not let you see what they are accessing online.
- is using a webcam in a closed area, away from other people.
- is accessing the web or using a mobile for long periods and at all hours.
- clears the computer history every time they use it.

- receives unexpected money or gifts from people you don't know.
- does not appear to have the money they should have.

A person who:

- befriends a child, young person, or adult at risk on the internet or by text messaging.
- has links to children, young people and/or adults at risk on their social media pages especially if they work in a position of care such as a sports coach or care worker.
- is secretive about what they are doing and who they are meeting.

Social media

The Online Safety Act 2023 and associated government guidance A Guide to the Online Safety Bill now makes social media companies more responsible for their users' safety on their platforms. This means children and adults will be protected online by making social media platforms:

- remove illegal content quickly or prevent it from appearing in the first place. This includes removing content promoting self-harm.
- prevent children from accessing harmful and age-inappropriate content.
- enforce age limits and age-checking measures.
- ensure the risks and dangers posed to children on the largest social media platforms are more transparent, including by publishing risk assessments.
- provide parents and children with clear and accessible ways to report problems online when they do arise

Such content should be reported to the service provider and if they do not respond appropriately the matter can be reported to Ofcom.