

Safeguarding Children Policy

Policy Statement

Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing, and human rights, enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. It is fundamental to high-quality health and social care. It is important to understand that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, we all have a role to play in preventing abuse.

Safeguarding is work that helps adults at risk to keep their independence, wellbeing, and choice and to live a life free from abuse, including neglect.

For the purpose of this policy, we define a child as aged under 18 or 21 and under if they have been a looked after child.

Coventry Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (CRASAC) acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and CRASAC's requirements and ethos to protect children from harm.

The policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, gender, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic background, all children have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

CRASAC's Safeguarding Children Policy operates from the standpoint that:

- The child's needs are paramount, and the needs and wishes of each child, be they a baby or infant, or an older child, should be put first, so that every child receives the support they need before a problem escalates.
- All workers who come into contact with children and families are alert to their needs and any risks of harm that individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children.
- All workers share appropriate information in a timely way and can discuss any concerns about an individual child with Safeguarding Leads.
- All workers contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote a child's welfare and take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the child against specific plans and outcomes.

Definition of Child Safeguarding and Type of Abuse

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance 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

CRASAC acknowledges that some children, including disabled children and young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

For more information on the categories and indicators of abuse and neglect see [appendix one](#). Additional types of harm are listed in [appendix two](#).

CRASAC Commitment

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for all those working at CRASAC, including volunteers. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

As part of our safeguarding policy CRASAC will promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and ensure that:

- Recruitment and Selection processes incorporate Safeguarding processes (See Safer Recruitment Policy, Recruitment and Selection Policy, and DBS Policy)
- Everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding, through Induction, line management, and ongoing training
- Everyone is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify, and respond to safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people, including prevention of children's health and development, through Induction, initial Safeguarding training, and refresher training every three years
- A Safeguarding Lead is always available to staff during opening hours when clients are being supported
- Appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse, and support is provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern
- Confidential, detailed, and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored
- Robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

CSE Indicator Tool

CSE Indicator reference charts are available in all of the client consultation rooms. If a child or young person presents with multiple indicators and/or is identified as having additional vulnerabilities, the worker is required to complete the CSE risk assessment and take appropriate action following the steps as laid out in the **CSE Risk Assessment flowchart** [Appendix Three](#).

More information about the Horizon Team (CSE), **Child Exploitation Indicator Tool** and corresponding guidance are located on SharePoint: [CRASAC Global\Safeguarding\Child Exploitation](#).

Training

All staff and volunteers will receive Safeguarding training as part of their induction process. In addition, for volunteers, safeguarding training is included within their Volunteer Training course.

Staff will be required to attend mandatory Safeguarding training during their first six months with CRASAC and thereafter attend a refresher course every 3 years.

Safeguarding Leads

The overall Safeguarding Lead for CRASAC is the Chief Executive Officer. There are also named Safeguarding Leads across the organisation to support effective safeguarding.

Safeguarding Leads are available at any time to discuss Safeguarding concerns. If a Safeguarding Lead is not physically present on the premises, phone numbers and whereabouts are provided to workers in order that contact can be made should the need arise.

Each Safeguarding Lead is permitted to respond to any Safeguarding concern, regardless of the service the concern is raised in. Safeguarding Leads will react calmly and with consideration.

It is the Safeguarding Lead's responsibility to make a decision, in collaboration with a second safeguarding lead, regarding progress of the concern raised, to ensure relevant documentation is completed, and agreed actions are taken. It is also the responsibility of the safeguarding lead to provide practical and emotional support to the worker dealing with the concern if required.

Safeguarding Leads meet on a regular basis to monitor safeguarding systems, oversee concerns and share best practice.

Immediate Harm

If a concern of immediate harm is raised, the worker must immediately inform a Safeguarding Lead, who will ensure appropriate action is taken, including calling 999 if necessary and/or the clients emergency contact. If a Safeguarding Lead is not immediately available, the worker should take responsibility for ensuring the appropriate immediate action is taken, following the Safeguarding Reporting Flowchart and then update a safeguarding lead as soon as possible afterwards.

Raising a Concern

If a worker suspects an issue may be a safeguarding concern, the first step must be to discuss this with a Safeguarding Lead.

The Safeguarding Lead will listen, ascertain the facts, discuss the workers' concern, and approve or outline a course of action. Appropriate action will be then taken, usually by the worker raising the concern, using the steps agreed with the Safeguarding Lead.

Details of the SG Leads and potential actions are set out in the ***Safeguarding: Essential Information Appendix Four***.

How to report a staff member

If you have a safeguarding concern that a CRASAC staff member is **a risk** to others, contact either of the people below;

- Cara Brookes, Therapeutic Services Manager cara.brookes@crasac.org.uk
- Natalie Thompson, CEO Natalie.thompson@crasac.org.uk

Managers will then consult with another Senior Manager or Trustee to agree next steps, which may include the disciplinary process.

Raising a concern about a colleague's wellbeing

If you have a safeguarding concern that a staff member of CRASAC is **at risk**, contact their line manager or Safeguarding Lead Manager and CEO. We will then consider actions in the **Safeguarding: Essential Information** and refer to other internal HR policies and processes as appropriate.

Recording Safeguarding Concerns

Once concerns have been raised by workers and discussed with a Safeguarding Lead, this must be recorded promptly on the safeguarding section on the LUNA database following the **Safeguarding Recording Processes** [Appendix Five](#).

The concern will remain open until such a time where the Safeguarding Lead and the worker are confident that the risk is being held by the appropriate statutory organisation.

Should a further risk arise that is not considered held by statutory services, a new safeguarding concern must be raised and recorded on the safeguarding tab and the same process followed.

Monitoring

The policy will be reviewed at least every three years, in line with good practice guidelines, or sooner if there are any relevant changes to legislation or good practice guidelines.

Sharing Information

Where a concern is raised about a child or young person, the worker must discuss informing a safe parent or carer, or other trusted adult, with a Safeguarding Lead.

Sharing Information will be done in line with English Law, CRASAC's Confidentiality Policy, and with regard to disclosure forms signed by the client.

All clients will be asked to provide an emergency contact at referral. If they are unable to provide this information an emergency contact agreement will be put in place. If the client is under 18 we will also ask them to provide the name of a safe consenting adult who is aware of their referral.

Related Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Confidentiality Policy
- Data Protection, Access to Files, and Confidentiality Policy
- DBS Policy

- Disciplinary Policy
 - Induction Process
 - Recruitment & Selection Policy
 - Safeguarding Adult Policy
 - Safer Recruitment Policy
 - Training and Development Policy
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Adopted by the Board of Trustees in: February 2026

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Categories and indicators of abuse & neglect

Category of Harm	Possible Signs & Indicators
Physical Abuse	
<p>May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.</p> <p>Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bruising, cuts, burns, marks, fractures • inconsistent explanations or unexplained injuries • subdued, aggressive or noticeable change in behaviour • flinching, fear • covering up injuries • frequent medical visits
Sexual Abuse	
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse.</p> <p>Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • injuries to thighs, buttocks, genital area • torn, stained or bloody underclothes • sexually transmitted infections • age inappropriate sexual behaviour or knowledge • self-harming • poor concentration or sleep • excessive fear of certain relationships • running away • access to money/items without explanation
Neglect	
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unkempt appearance • poor hygiene • hungry, stealing food, cramming food • malnutrition and dehydration • infections, illness • poor school attendance

Category of Harm	Possible Signs & Indicators
<p>Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent/carer failing to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment) protect a child from physical/emotional harm or danger ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers) ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment <p>It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> obesity or underweight not meeting developmental milestones frequent accidents poor attendance for medical or health needs
Emotional Abuse	
<p>Persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> withdrawal, sullen, quiet uncooperative and aggressive behaviour. distress: tearfulness, anger low self-esteem insomnia change of appetite, weight loss or gain self-harm isolation
Financial Abuse	

Category of Harm	Possible Signs & Indicators
<p><i>Financial abuse is the fifth category in Wales only.</i> It involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • theft of money or possessions • fraud • pressure about money or property • misuse of money or property • child workers without pay • belongings sold or gone missing • false benefit claims for the child • misusing child's allowances/grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child has no access to money needed for care • inappropriate withdrawals from bank accounts • creation / changes to wills or trusts • residential care is prevented when needed • disappearance of financial documents • missing personal belongings • child expresses worry about theft, coercion, or loss of possessions • carer is overly concerned about money • child lacks of normal items eg clothes, games or is prevented from doing activities

Additional Types of Harm

The categories of abuse and neglect listed for adults and children, from the statutory guidance in England and Wales, are not exhaustive. Abuse and neglect are complex issues and they can occur in many ways, such as those listed below.

Definition	Possible Signs & Indicators
Sexual Exploitation / Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	
<p>Child sexual exploitation (CSE) 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:</p> <p>(a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, including attention and affection, drugs, alcohol, or gifts and/or</p> <p>(b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.</p> <p>The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Children are often tricked and groomed into believing that the sexual activity is consensual, or they may be forced or intimidated.</p> <p>Anybody can be a perpetrator of CSE, no matter their age, gender or race. The relationship between the perpetrator and victim could be framed as friendship or as romantic. Children can be trafficked to be sexually exploited, by being moved around towns, cities or even internationally to be abused, often with more than one person. CSE does not always involve physical contact; it can occur through the use of technology.</p> <p>CSE is a phenomenon involving children. However sexual exploitation of vulnerable adults also happens and the same dynamics and signs and indicators are present for them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour • being frightened of some people, places or situations • being secretive • sharp changes in mood or behaviour • having money or things they can't or won't explain • physical signs of abuse, like bruises or bleeding in their genital or anal area • alcohol or drug mis/use • sexually transmitted infections • pregnancy • having an older boyfriend or girlfriend • staying out late or overnight • missing from home or care, or stopping going to school or college • having a new group of friends • hanging out with older people, other vulnerable people or antisocial groups, or a gang
Grooming	
<p>Grooming is when someone seeks to build a relationship, create trust and emotional connection with a child or vulnerable adult in order to manipulate, exploit and abuse them. The groomer may set up a relationship with</p>	<p>Child / Vulnerable Adult</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • secretive about how they spend time • having money or items like they can't explain • drinking or drug taking

Definition	Possible Signs & Indicators
<p>their victim which could appear to be romantic, educative or friendly.</p> <p>The groomer may use tactics such as pretending to be someone else, showing care, buying gifts, giving attention, taking the victim on outings. They may try to isolate the victim from their family and friends, create dependency, use blackmail to gain a hold over the victim, introduce the idea of 'secrets' to control the victim or frighten and intimidate them.</p> <p>People who are groomed can be sexually abused, sexually exploited or abused in other ways.</p> <p>Grooming can take place over a short or long period of time by a male or female, old or young person, a stranger or someone who is known. Victims can be groomed online, in person or both.</p> <p>People in the victim's life (e.g. parent/carer, friends, professionals) can also be groomed so that the groomer appears trustworthy or authoritative and so that they can gain access to the victim.</p> <p>People may not realise they have been groomed. They may have complicated feelings, like loyalty, admiration, love, as well as fear, distress and confusion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • upset, withdrawn or distressed • sexualised behaviour • spend time away from home or going missing <p>Groomer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sexualised talk, 'jokes', 'banter', questioning, images • physical contact e.g. hugging, touching, kissing, tickling, wrestling • not respecting privacy • spend excessive time with victim; gives special attention, favouritism, finds ways to be alone with the victim • not adhering to rules of the agency or activity • giving gifts (including cigarettes/alcohol/drugs) or money for no apparent reason • set up inappropriate relationships e.g. treating a child as a peer/spouse, treating an adult client like a friend • isolating victim from others • encouraging silence, secrets, criminal behaviour, lies
Human Trafficking	
<p>Human trafficking is a crime that involves the movement of people by the use of force, fraud, coercion or deception, with the aim of exploiting them. It is a form of modern slavery. It involves transporting people across nations as well as trafficking around the UK. It can be for commercial, sexual and bonded labour.</p> <p>Three elements form part of trafficking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The act of recruiting, transporting, transfer, harbouring or receiving persons • Use of the means of force, fraud, coercion, deception 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acts as if instructed by another • signs of physical or psychological abuse • untreated medical conditions • has money deducted from their salary • little or no contact with family or loved ones • not in possession of their own legal documents • seems held in the employer's home/workplace • works in excess of normal hours • appears frightened, withdrawn or confused • with a group of workers of a similar nationality, age, gender • speaks as if 'coached'

Definition	Possible Signs & Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of exploitation 	
(Child) Criminal Exploitation & County Lines	
<p>Criminal exploitation is a form of abuse where adults or children are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes. Through the use of violence or grooming and pressure, they may be forced into doing things like stealing or carrying drugs or weapons and be put into dangerous situations. This may involve being part of a gang which is linked to illegal activity (a gang could be a peer group or an organised criminal gang).</p> <p>County Lines is a term the police use for urban gangs that exploit children and vulnerable adults into moving drugs from a hub, normally a large city, into other areas such as suburbs and market and coastal towns, using mobile phone lines or “deal lines”. This can involve victims being trafficked away from their home area, staying in accommodation and selling and manufacturing drugs. Accommodation can include Airbnbs, private rental properties, budget hotels or the home of a drug user or other victim that is taken over by a criminal gang (called ‘cuckooing’).</p> <p>Perpetrators of criminal exploitation and county lines use different tactics to recruit and exploit children and vulnerable adults including bribing, befriending, threatening or coercing them.</p> <p>It can be difficult for victims to cut off ties with the gang, e.g. because their own safety or that of their friends and family is threatened, or because they have become addicted to drugs and alcohol supplied by gang leaders, or because they are forced to commit crime to settle actual or fabricated debts.</p> <p>Children and vulnerable adults involved in criminal exploitation and county lines are also at risk of all other forms of abuse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • going missing, unexplained absence from school, college or work • excessive travelling, being found out of their home area • unexplained access to money, clothes or mobile phones • signs of drug misuse, alcohol abuse • excessive use of internet, social media, texts, phone calls • relationships with controlling individuals or groups; gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks • using new slang words • suspicion of physical assault, unexplained injuries • carrying of weapons such as knives • self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being • committing petty crimes like shop lifting or vandalism
Radicalisation & Extremism	

Definition	Possible Signs & Indicators
<p>Adults and children can be exposed to information which may be considered radical or extreme.</p> <p>Radicalisation is the process through which a person comes to support extremist ideologies. It can result in a person becoming drawn into terrorism and it is a form of harm. The process of radicalisation may involve being groomed (online or in person), exploited, exposed to violent material, manipulated, harmed or threatened. Anyone can be radicalised but some people may be more vulnerable if they are more easily influenced or impressionable, isolated, they feel rejected or discriminated against or experience community tension amongst different groups.</p> <p>Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 as the vocal or active opposition to British fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. It also includes calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist. Extremism can involve targeting vulnerable people by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in society.</p> <p>The government has established a Prevent Duty (under s26 Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, 2015) to reduce the numbers of people supporting extremism or becoming radicalised and to prevent them being drawn into terrorism. It is a statutory duty for local authorities, educational provisions, the health sector, police and prisons which means they must have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism." However, all organisations that work with children and vulnerable people have a responsibility to protect them from harm and becoming radicalised and/or being exposed to extreme views.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • isolating self and spending time alone via social media • feelings that they have no purpose in life; don't belong; low self esteem • change in emotions and behaviour • change of routines, in appearance or online activities • fixated on an ideology, belief or cause • intolerant of difference such as race, faith, culture, gender or sexuality • justifying violence to others • change in language or use of words; closed to new ideas; 'scripted' speech • have materials or symbols associated with the cause • attending events, rallies etc of an extremist nature • sense of grievance (e.g. anti-West, anti-Muslim); sense of 'them and us' • conflict with family/friends or lose interest in people who do not have same beliefs • try to recruit others to join the cause'
Online Safety	

Definition	Possible Signs & Indicators
<p>Technologies and the internet are an important source of communication, education and entertainment. Some people will use them to harm children and vulnerable adults. Technology can be used extensively to groom and harm people and be involved in sexual exploitation, radicalisation, cyber-bullying, criminal exploitation etc. Abusers can adopt an identity to befriend possible victim's, people can be manipulated into sharing sensitive information and images, hackers can access online accounts and financial information.</p> <p>'Sexting' or youth produced sexual imagery is the use of technology to share indecent images or videos of a sexual nature which young people have taken of themselves – sharing images of children in this way is illegal. Online safety can fall into these areas of risk:</p> <p>content: exposure to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material (e.g. sexual or violent material, offensive material which serves to breed hatred, fabricated news, radical and extremist views)</p> <p>contact: subjected to harmful online interaction with other users (e.g. adults posing as children or as 'friends', commercial advertising)</p> <p>conduct: personal online behaviour that increases causes harm (e.g. making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meeting older or new friends they've met online • receiving gifts or money • withdrawn and secretive • new phone or more than one phone • receiving large numbers of calls or messages • worried about being away from their phone • excessive time on phone or online
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	
<p>FGM is a term given to a range of procedure whereby a female's genitals are cut, injured, removed or changed without a medical reason or other health benefit. It is commonly carried out without anaesthetic, medicines, sterile equipment or medical training. FGM is carried out on females of any age, from newborns to older teenagers and adult women.</p> <p>The practice is carried out in certain parts of the world and also in the UK from those communities that practice it, although it is illegal in the UK and in many other countries. It is done for cultural reasons, with those that</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long visit abroad; 'ceremony' to be 'woman' • relative or 'cutter' visiting from abroad • female relative being cut • prolonged absence from school • difficulty walking, standing or sitting • spend longer in the toilet • pain urinating or menstruating • appear withdrawn, anxious or depressed • reluctant to have normal medical exams • severe pain, shock, bleeding, infections, organ damage, blood loss

Definition	Possible Signs & Indicators
<p>practice it arguing that it benefits the woman or girl, keeps her 'clean', retains her virginity or makes her 'marriageable'. In fact, it causes extreme pain, infection, and life-long physical and psychological damage to healthy functioning for women and girls.</p> <p>It is a criminal offence (Female genital Mutilation Act 2003) in the UK to either perform FGM (including taking a child abroad for FGM) or to enable/facilitate FGM on a British National or a permanent British resident, with the crime incurring a maximum 14-year imprisonment.</p> <p>Certain professionals have a mandatory reporting duty if they are aware of FGM occurring for a child (under age 18).</p>	

Appendix Three

CSE Risk Assessment Flowchart

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Appendix Four

Safeguarding: Essential Information

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Appendix Five

Safeguarding Recording Processes

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