****

 **Safeguarding Children Policy**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

This Policy applies to anyone working for and on behalf of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

This includes the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner, all staff, volunteers, agency staff and students.

The Commissioner’s Office commits to:

* Protect and enhance the safety and well-being of all children and young people by actively promoting awareness, best-practise and carefully considered procedures
* Actively recognise that children and young people have a fundamental and equal right to be protected from harm regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation
* Understand and fully embrace responsibility for safeguarding the safety, protection and well-being of all children and young people involved with the Commissioner’s Office.
* Respond appropriately and take seriously any concerns raised by a young person or any person working for or on behalf of the Commissioner’s Office, that relates to the safety, welfare, working environment or discrimination against any person within this agreement. Consideration should also be given to the ensure that there is a clear course of action for any person within this agreement to raise concerns they have
* Respond immediately and appropriately where there is a suspicion that any young person under the age of 18 years old may be a victim of bullying, harassment, abuse (including physical, sexual, emotional) or neglect. This applies to any concern for the young person’s welfare outside of the stated work activity, as well as within it.

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England including the Children’s Act 2004 and “Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018”. [Working together to safeguard children (PDF)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/722305/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children_-_Guide.pdf) (DfE), 2018 provides the key statutory guidance for anyone working with children and young people. All procedures and policies pertaining to safeguarding should be regularly reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

This policy was last reviewed on:

Date: 07 September 2022

Signed:
Lisa Herrington, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Safeguarding Lead

1. **ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Commissioner’s Office is responsible for the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy. The Commissioner’s Office may designate a certain member of staff to oversee the implementation of this Safeguarding Policy within the context of specific project, working place or duration for practical reasons.

The Commissioner’s Office Safeguarding Lead is:

Head of Policy & Commissioning, Lisa Herrington

The Commissioner’s Office will ensure the Safeguarding Lead and staff are supported with appropriate and regular training in Safeguarding.

1. **Responsibilities of the Safeguarding Lead**

It will be the responsibility of the Commissioner’s Office Safeguarding Lead to take appropriate action following any expression of concern raised by anyone working for and on behalf of the Commissioner’s Office. The Safeguarding Lead must ensure:

* Details of the concern are recorded in writing
* A decision, in adherence with this policy, is taken as to whether to inform Social Services and/or the police (contact details below), depending on the nature of the allegation
* Any details relating to the concern are kept strictly confidential and stored securely
* The employee who reported the disclosure is informed of any action taken and any outcome, where appropriate.
1. **All staff responsibilities**

All members of staff will be taken through this safeguarding policy.

Relevant checks including by the Disclosure and Barring Service will be made ahead of any contact with a young person.

Any failure to disclose convictions may result in disciplinary action or dismissal. Any positive disclosures will be discussed with the Safeguarding Lead and CEO. All this information will be kept on the personnel file. The DBS number and date of processing will be held on a secure database.

A risk assessment will be completed if there is a positive DBS check sent back.

The Commissioner’s Office staff have a specific duty of care to ensure that any suspected incident, allegation or other manifestation relating to child protection is reported using the procedures detailed in this Policy.

If in any doubt about what action to take, employees should seek advice from the Safeguarding Lead.

1. **DEFINITIONS OF HARM**

For the purpose of this Policy, ‘harm’ is defined as:

* Neglect - the persistent failure to meet the basic physical and physiological needs of the young person that results in serious impairment of their health and development, including the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter and failure to respond to basic emotional needs, such as being cared for when sick;
* Abandonment **-** leaving a child unattended in circumstances that are inappropriate for their age and/ or level of ability;
* Emotional abuse – persistent, emotional ill treatment that has a severe adverse effect on the emotional development of children and young people. It may involve conveying to them that they are not wanted, not loved or worthless. It may involve inappropriate expectations being placed on the young person leaving them unable to cope. It may also involve the threatening, exploitation or corruption of children and young people;
* Physical abuse – hitting, kicking, shaking, slapping, and throwing, scalding, burning, poisoning, drowning, suffocating, or other action intended to cause physical harm or ill health to the child or young person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent, carer or other person responsible for a young person covers up the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child or young person within their care;
* Discrimination that is verbal or physical based on age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation;
* Sexual abuse or sexual exploitation- forcing or enticing a child or young person to participate in sexual activities, whether or not the child or young person is aware or has knowledge of what is happening. It includes child prostitution, encouraging children or young people to watch or participate in the production of pornographic material, online grooming, encouraging children and young people to behave in inappropriate ways. Sexual acts include penetrative (rape or buggery) and non-penetrative acts such as touching or stroking.

TheSexual Offences Act 2003defines ‘consent’ as ‘*if he agrees by choice and has the capacity to make that choice’.* The Act removes the element of consent for many sexual offences for:

* Children/young people under 16 (including under 13).
* Children/ young people under 18 having sexual relations with a person of trust (for example: teachers, youth workers, foster carers, police officers).
* Children / young people under 18 involved with family members over 18.
* Persons with a mental disorder impeding choice or who are induced, threatened or deceived.
* Persons with a mental disorder who have sexual relations with care workers.

In relation to young people under the age of 13, consent is irrelevant. The law says ‘a child under the age of 13 does not, under any circumstances, have the legal capacity to consent to any form of sexual activity’.

**The Police must be informed immediately of any sexual activity involving a child under 13 years of age.**

1. **SAFEGUARDING ADVICE**
* Remember not to be a young person’s friend. Always maintain a professional manner when working with them.
* You should notaccept a child as a friend, invite or message them on any social networking site that you use.
* Always keep a record of any text or email exchanges with a young person. Always use a work phone where available in any indirect contact you may need to have for work purposes.
* Always be aware that your comments or actions may be perceived differently than intended, so be sensitive to the situation.
* Do not meet a child alone, this is for the safety and well-being of the young person but also yourself. If you are alone with a child or young person, this should be for a short time in a public place or in a visible area of company premises.
* A child under 18 should be accompanied at all times including lunch and rest times, with the exception of bathroom breaks.
* Avoid detailed discussions about your personal experiences, and any discussion of drugs, alcohol or sex.
* Never speak to the media about a young person.
1. **REPORTING PROCEDURES**

**In an emergency:**

It is vital to take every action which is needed to safeguard the child or young person. *Immediate* action is necessary in the following situations:

* If emergency medical attention is required, phone the emergency services or take the child/ young person to the nearest Accident and Emergency department.
* If the child or young person is in immediate danger the police should be contacted by calling 999.

Do not wait for the Safeguarding Lead in an emergency. You should inform the Safeguarding Lead as soon as the child or young person is in receipt of care from a health professional or the police.

**At all times:**

* Any suspicion, allegation or disclosure of abuse or harm should be reported immediately or as soon as practicably possible on the day of the occurrence to the Safeguarding Lead:

Lisa Herrington, Head of Policy and Commissioning

* If you case you are unable to contact the Safeguarding Lead, please contact an individual from the below list:

Alison Bolton, Chief Executive

Kelvin Menon, Chief Finance Officer

Nathan Rees, Head of Communications and Engagement

**Reacting to a disclosure**

Individuals in contact with a young person should consider that disclosure or evidence for concern may occur in a number of ways; this could include a comment made by a child, physical evidence such as bruising, a change in behaviour or inappropriate behaviour or knowledge.

* Listen carefully, rather than asking leading questions.
* Never *promise* any particular action or NOT to disclose any information shared.
* Allow silence and allow a child or young person to be upset.
* Try to relate to the age, understanding or special needs of the child or young person.
* Write down carefully the information you have been given as soon as possible, always within 24 hours and only including what you have been told.
* Discuss this as soon as possible with the Safeguarding Lead.
* Any concerns about informing the child or young person’s parents must be discussed with the Safeguarding Lead, unless the child or young person is in immediate danger.
1. **ADDITIONAL RELEVANT POLICIES/ PROCEDURES**

This Safeguarding Policy is complemented by the following links to safeguarding information for practitioners in Surrey:

* [Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership protocols, guidance and procedures](https://www.surreyscp.org.uk/)
* [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2)
* [Information Sharing Advice for Practitioners’ guidance 201](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice)8
1. **CONFIDENTIALITY AND WHISTLE BLOWING**
* Under no circumstances will information be kept confidential that raises concern about the safety and welfare of a child or young person. All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and young people in accordance with the Information Sharing Policy published by HM Government, adopted by the Children’s Trust and endorsed by SSCP. The Data Protection Act 1998 and General Data Protection Regulations are not a barrier to sharing information where a failure to do so would place a child at risk of harm.
* Staff must not promise a child that they will keep secrets/ not disclose potentially harmful information.
1. **HELPFUL CONTACTS**
* **Surrey Police**

In an emergency, always dial 999. Call 101 for non-emergency enquiries. If you have a hearing or speech impairment, use textphone service on 18001 101

* **Children’s Single Point of Access** (C-SPA), a front door to Surrey County Council services for children, provides residents and people who work with children in Surrey with direct information, advice and guidance about where and how to find the appropriate support for children and families.  C-SPA is available 9am-5pm, Monday – Friday.

Phone: **0300 470 9100**

Email:**cspa@surreycc.gov.uk**

* **Emergency Duty Team (EDT),** provides an emergency social care service for urgent situations which are out of normal office hours.  If your call is not answered, please do leave a message and your contact details for someone to get back to you.

      EDT is available **5pm-9am, Monday – Friday, Weekends 24 hours a day.**

**Phone: 01483 517898**

**Email:** **edt.ssd@surreycc.gov.uk**

* **NSPCC Helpline** (24hrs)
Telephone: 0808 800 5000