

# PCAS

## Shropshire Peer Counselling & Advocacy Service

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### **SAFEGUARDING & PROTECTING CHILDREN POLICY & PROCEDURE**

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APPENDIX 1: Form for Reporting a concern about a child

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As staff throughout Shropshire PCAS may come in to contact with children and young people who are deemed to be vulnerable, it is important all volunteers and paid workers are clear about how they and the organisation should respond if somebody has concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child.

This policy and procedure should be read in conjunction with:

- Advocates' Code of Practice
- Confidentiality Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- PCAS Strategic Plan

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Shropshire PCAS.

### 1.1 The purpose of this policy and procedure is:

- to protect children and young people who are the children of adults who use our services;
- to provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection;
- to ensure those children who come to the attention of Shropshire PCAS receive the protection and support they need if they are at risk of abuse;
- to provide clear direction to staff and volunteers of Shropshire PCAS if they have concerns that a child is in need of protection.

Shropshire PCAS believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them and to ensuring adequate resources are in place to meet our safeguarding responsibilities.

### 1.2 Principles

*We recognize that:*

- the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989;
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues;
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

*We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:*

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them;

- adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers;
- developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures;
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training;
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made;
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers;
- sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.

### **1.3 Shropshire PCAS staff and volunteers**

To ensure the safety of service users and adults and children at risk, Shropshire PCAS will ensure robust recruitment procedures for all prospective paid staff and volunteers, which include:

- Completion of application form
- A formal interview
- Appropriate level of DBS check, up to and including Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks
- At least two references
- Comprehensive induction training
- Probationary period and review of performance
- Regular supervision

It is the responsibility of Shropshire PCAS to ensure that its staff and volunteers are trained at induction and updated regularly on this policy and procedure and those related to it. It is also the individual responsibility of each staff member to be aware of the procedure and for it to be followed in the event of actual or suspected abuse.

All employees and volunteers are required to read the Shropshire PCAS Safeguarding Policy as part of their first week's induction and to participate in Safeguarding Adults and Children training, refresher courses and updates during team meetings at least annually.

All Operational Shropshire PCAS staff will receive Safeguarding Adults and Children training, which will be repeated at least once every three years.

Senior and Team managers will receive enhanced Safeguarding training to enable them to provide leadership and advice to staff. Managers will be responsible for ensuring compliance with Local Authority Safeguarding policies and procedures within their geographical area.

The strategic lead within Shropshire PCAS is Simon Arthur, PCAS Manager.

The operational lead within Shropshire PCAS is Simon Arthur, PCAS Manager.

### **1.4 Communicating Safeguarding policies**

A key element in an effective safeguarding policy is the communication of attitudes, priorities, rules and procedures to ensure there is a common understanding of the issues, and that information is fed back where there is cause for concern or suggestions on how to improve policies.

As a minimum, the Shropshire PCAS safeguarding policy and procedure will be reviewed annually.

The Shropshire PCAS's Safeguarding Children policy and procedure is available on our website for clients, their families and carers to access. We notify our clients that they can see this via the website either at initial triage or first appointment. Clients without internet access will be sent a copy of the policy, upon request.

Managers have responsibility to ensure staff are fully aware and updated about changes in policies and procedures.

### **1.5 Risk Management**

Risk is identified, assessed and managed through Shropshire PCAS's Risk Management process. Identification and management of risk in relation to direct advocacy work, lone working, home visits and admittance to establishments such as residential services, is the responsibility of Managers in conjunction with staff and volunteers. An assessment of risk and any subsequent risk management plan will include an assessment of likelihood of an event occurring and any impact of that event on a range of stakeholders including service users, Shropshire PCAS staff, members of the public and service users and colleagues in other services.

All risk will be assessed and managed in conjunction with Shropshire PCAS's Personal Safety and Lone Working Procedure and Guidelines. Professional Boundaries are defined and addressed within the Shropshire PCAS's Advocates Code of Practice. **In order to eliminate a significant potential area of risk, staff and volunteers will not transport clients in their cars unless prior permission is given by the PCAS Manager.**

### **1.6 Legislative Background**

Relevant legislation shaping the Safeguarding of children and young people include:

- Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

The purpose of this Act is to restrict contact between children and vulnerable adults and those who might do them harm. The barring aspects of the Act came into force in October 2009.

Key principles include: unsuitable persons should be barred from working with children (or vulnerable adults); employers should have a straightforward means of checking that a person is not barred from working with children (or vulnerable adults); suitability checks should not be one-offs, they should be an element of ongoing assessment of suitability to catch those who commit wrongs following a suitability check.

#### **Every Child Matters and the Children Act 2004**

In September 2003 the Government set out in the Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' its proposals for the reorganisation of children's services – from hospitals and schools, to police and voluntary groups.

In particular, Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 details the duty of all agencies to ensure that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

#### **Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000**

This Act covers disclosures and child protection issues. It contains the list of convictions that bar offenders from working with children in 'regulated positions'.

## The Protection of Children Act 1999

Under this Act childcare organisations (defined as those that are ‘concerned with the provision of accommodation, social services or health care services to children or the supervision of children’) must make use of the Disclosure Service in their recruitment and reporting processes and urges other organisations working with children to also do so.

## Children Act 1989

This Act provided legislation to ensure that the welfare and developmental needs of children are met, including their right to be protected from harm.

## The Equality Act 2010

### Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

If a young person over the age of 16 is being deprived of their liberty, this must be approved via the Court of Protection.

The Mental Capacity Act does not prevent action being taken to safeguard children or adults at risk of abuse or exploitation and the Safeguarding Children policy must always be followed.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

Taken from “Working together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children” (March 2015) HM Government

### 2.1 Safeguarding

- 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; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

### 2.2 Different types of abuse

**Physical abuse** is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate.

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

**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 abuse. Once a child is born, 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); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

## 2.3 Other specific Safeguarding Concerns

**Prevent** - Radicalisation is comparable to other forms of exploitation and is therefore considered a safeguarding issue that all staff must be aware of. Vulnerabilities can make some people more susceptible to supporting or promoting extreme ideologies. Radicalisation can take place via the internet, social networks, print media, meetings, or a person acting alone. If you have concerns about anyone displaying an extreme view which might put them or others at risk, you must speak to your manager immediately.

The emphasis is upon supporting vulnerable children, young people, and adults. There is no expectation that PCAS will take on a surveillance or enforcement role as a result of fulfilling our Prevent duty. The Prevent Concern promotes a multi-agency approach, and PCAS will continue to work alongside Local Safeguarding Children and Adult Boards and Prevent Multi-Agency Groups.

**Female Genital Mutilation** - If you become aware of a case you should raise the matter as a safeguarding alert.

**Child Sexual Exploitation** - If you become aware of a child/young person who may be at risk of CSE, they should report this to your manager in the first instance. Indicators may include:

- Missing from home or residential setting for periods of time
- Regularly missing school/education
- Appearing with unexplained gifts
- Associating with other young people involved in CSE
- Having older boyfriends/girlfriends



If you have concerns:

1. You should refer to your Local Safeguarding Children's Board policy and protocols.
2. In matters where there are increasing concerns that a child/young person is involved in CSE and may be experiencing significant harm, this should be reported as a serious safeguarding incident.
3. Consideration must also be given as to the risk to other identifiable young people and the appropriate agencies contacted.

***Self-Harm and Suicidal Behaviours*** – If a young person displays self-harming and/or suicidal tendencies this falls under the safeguarding procedures. People working on behalf of PCAS must then follow the normal reporting routes.

***Missing Children*** – Concerns that a child or young person may have gone missing as a result of them suffering harm, being at risk of harm or being in need, must be reported following Local Authority protocols about a missing child or young person.

Alongside physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect this policy includes children affected by: domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence, young runaways, children exploited by gangs and trafficking and bullying. This list is not exhaustive. Any concerns should be reported to your line manager immediately.

## **2.4 Data Protection and Confidentiality**

The General Data Protection Regulation requires that personal information is obtained and processed fairly and lawfully; only disclosed in appropriate circumstances; is accurate, relevant and not held longer than necessary; and is kept securely. The Act allows for disclosure without the consent of the subject in certain conditions, including for the purposes of the prevention or detection of crime, or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders and where failure to disclose would be likely to prejudice those objectives in a particular case.

As per the Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Policy, PCAS staff should be honest with the client about the level of confidentiality they can realistically guarantee. When working with adults with children and young people, PCAS staff cannot promise complete confidentiality, e.g. "If you tell me something about either you or someone else at risk in some way, I'm going to have to talk to someone who can help". Refer to PCAS's Confidentiality and Consent Policies.

## **3. Code of Conduct and Professional Boundaries**

Professional Boundaries must be an integral part of supervision. It is an opportunity to reflect on the quality of the professional relationship established with children, young people or adults, the nature of the work and to ensure that any challenges in maintaining professional boundaries can be addressed in an appropriate manner such as the perception that a young person has developed a "crush" on you or another worker.

**Do not** visit service users outside of planned working hours; **invite** them to your home or to be part of your family or social network. Any exceptions to this must be discussed and agreed with your line managers.

**Ensure** that if you live and work/volunteer within your own community, you are clear about professional boundaries when any of your own family or children has friendships with service users' children or siblings and that this is discussed with your manager.

**Inform** your line manager if you have had a previous professional or personal relationship with service users in order to agree how best to manage confidentiality and risk and ensure that you operate in accordance with PCAS's Policies and Procedures.

**Bring** any risk of potential breakdown of professional boundaries, however unintentional, to the attention of your line manager.

**Only** give out your personal mobile, home telephone numbers or home email in **exceptional** circumstances or emergencies and only with the agreement of line managers as a result of a risk assessment.

**Never** agree to be part of service user or their family's social networking sites **or** agree to be efriends, unless this is an agreed part of the work and has been risk assessed by line managers (exceptions apply when they are also your family members).

**Do not** share personal blog addresses or other modes of personal communication, with service users with whom you are working.

**Ensure** you adjust privacy settings on your own personal social networking sites to prevent inappropriate content being shared with service users.

**You should not** approach service users in any social setting if they do not instigate the contact especially where their behaviour indicates that they do not want to be recognised or indeed identified as a user of the service.

**You must not** enter into a partner relationship with service users or members of their families. This constitutes a breach of professional boundaries and relevant codes of conduct/practice. If you become aware that the above situation has occurred in relation to a colleague, **you must** bring this to the attention of your line manager.

**You must** inform your manager of any ongoing or past child protection investigation(s) that have involved you, including any that you are aware of that relate to your own immediate family or any person that you are in a significant relationship with e.g. family members, partners, individuals who live in the same household;

**You must** inform your manager of anyone living in your household or at your address who becomes disqualified from working with children e.g. as a result of offences against a child, against an adult e.g. rape, murder indecent assault, actual bodily harm etc. (this is a legal requirement to staff in England and Wales working in early years provision, later years provision up to 8 years and in the management of such early or later years provision).

### ***Action: Managers***

- Discuss any potential challenges or blurring of boundaries, which may arise for any worker or volunteer who lives and works within the same community. Agree how any such difficulties will be addressed should they arise.
- Ensure that if staff or volunteers require regular telephone contact with service users that this is done through appropriate use of PCAS's issued equipment.
- Agree clear boundaries about the nature of an individual's work and their relationship to service users.
- Use the supervision process to help workers reflect on their professional relationship with children, young people and adults at risk and identify if there are any warning signs that professional boundaries may be in danger of being compromised.

### **3.1 Self -disclosure of personal experiences**

#### **Action: Staff/Volunteers**

It is not usually acceptable for a member of staff to self-disclose their personal experiences to a service user. There may be occasional exceptions to this where some self-disclosure is appropriate and professional judgement should be exercised. Boundaries relating to this must be discussed with your line manager.

#### **Action: Manager**

Ensure that you discuss issues of self-disclosure with staff so they are clear of the professional boundaries around this in relation to their role.

### **3.2 Continuing a relationship after the service or piece of work is complete**

#### **Action: Worker/Volunteer**

It is not normally acceptable for a member of staff to have contact with a service user in a personal capacity once the service or piece of work you have been involved in is complete. Any exceptions to this must be agreed with line management and identify why continued contact does not compromise professional boundaries in any way.

### **3.3 Gifts and Favours**

#### **Action: Staff/Volunteers**

You must not use a relationship with a service user or their family for personal gain. See PCAS's Gift Policy.

### **3.4 Concern about a breach/potential breach of professional boundaries**

#### **Action: Staff/Volunteers**

Concerns about a breach or potential breach of professional boundaries by you or a colleague or external agency must be shared with your manager. This should happen regardless of whether the breach of professional boundaries was due to initial intentions being well meaning. A breach of the Professional Boundaries may place a child/young person at risk of harm and you have a duty to act upon your concerns to safeguard children and families.

Where you feel unable to report the concern/s to your manager, you should refer them to the chair of the board of trustees.

If you cannot raise issues through your management or you consider the breach of professional boundaries not to have been dealt with appropriately, you should report via the use of the Whistleblowing Procedure.

### **Action: Line Manager**

All potential breaches of professional boundaries should be taken seriously. The breach may not be a single event but a series of events and interactions, which together cause the individual to cross the boundary between what would be considered a professional relationship to a non-professional relationship.

Staff must be supported to address any concern about a breach of professional boundaries without the automatic risk of disciplinary proceedings. However, staff should be made aware of all possible consequences depending on the severity and nature of the breach including possible disciplinary action; dismissal; referral to Regulatory bodies, relevant Local Authorities, Disclosure and Barring Service and/or the police as appropriate.

Conduct an investigation to establish the facts and decide whether there is a disciplinary case to answer – refer to Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

All breaches of professional boundaries are to be recorded on individual staff files including any outcome of action taken. In cases where there is found to be 'no case to answer' the outcome should still be recorded.

If concerns arise regarding a colleague from another organisation consult with your manager to consider how these matters are appropriately raised in a timely manner.

## **4. CHILD SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS**

### **4.1 Ways that abuse might be brought to your attention**

There may be times when you are concerned that there is either a risk of harm, or an actual harm being perpetrated on a child or young person, who is known to someone we are working with.

- a child might make a direct disclosure about him or herself
- a child might make a direct disclosure about another child
- a child might offer information that is worrying but not a direct disclosure
- a member of staff might be concerned about a child's appearance or behaviour or about the behaviour of a parent or carer towards a child
- a parent or carer might make a disclosure about abuse that a child is suffering or at risk of suffering
- a parent might offer information about a child that is worrying but not a direct disclosure.
- you may be concerned of a potential abuse based on physical, emotional, behavioural indicators.

### **4.2 Talking to a child/young person who has told you that he/she or another child is being abused**

If a child or young person has spoken to you about abuse, it may have been very difficult for them to have taken the risk of confiding in you. They may fear that you won't believe them, or they may have been threatened with something bad happening to themselves or someone they love if they tell someone. If the abuser is a trusted adult, many people feel frightened of what may happen to the abuser, and yet they also want the abuse to stop.

They are likely to have complicated and confusing feelings which will heighten their anxiety.

- Reassure the child/young person that telling someone about it was the right thing to do.
- Tell him/her that you now have to do what you can to keep him/her (or the child who is the subject of the allegation) safe.
- Do not try to investigate or quiz the child. Let the child tell his or her whole story, making sure that you are clear as to what he/she is saying, asking the child to repeat a statement if you are unclear. Remember that an allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation, so don't do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation, such as questioning the child or attempting to investigate the allegation yourself.
- Even if you are shocked by what he/she is telling you, try not to show it
- Do not trivialise or minimise any aspect of abusive behaviour or make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Ask the child what he/she would like to happen as a result of what he/she has said, but don't make or infer promises you can't keep.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and who else needs to know about it.
- Remind the child/young person that their confidentiality cannot be kept in this instance because either they or someone else is at risk of harm.
- Give the child/young person the ChildLine phone number: 0800 1111.

### **4.3 Helping a child/young person in immediate danger or in need of emergency medical attention**

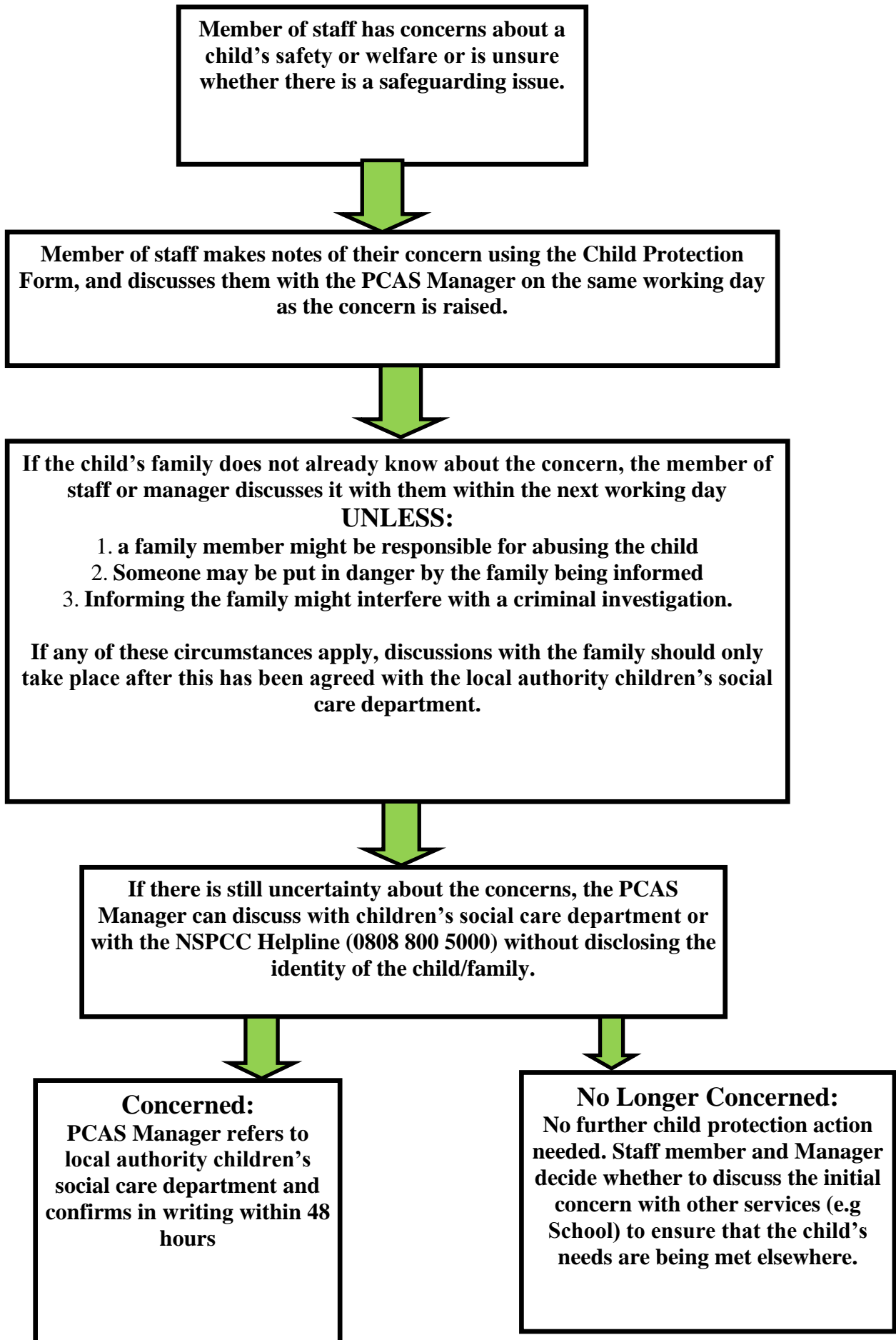
- If the child is in immediate danger and is with you, remain with him/her and call the police.
- If the child is elsewhere, contact the police and explain the situation to them.
- If he/she needs emergency medical attention, call an ambulance and, while you are waiting for it to arrive, get help from a first aider where possible.
- You must also contact your supervisor/manager or named person for child protection to let them know what is happening.

Once any immediate danger or emergency medical need has been dealt with, follow the steps set out in section 5 below.

## **5. RAISING A CONCERN**

All safeguarding issues should be dealt with on the same day as the concern has been brought to your attention, unless agreed otherwise by a supervisor or manager. As part of the decision making and safeguarding processes, where a young person is 16 or over, the application of the Mental Capacity Act must be considered.

## 5.1 Escalation procedure



## **5.2 Within normal working hours 9am-5pm**

Managers should ensure that staff are aware of how to contact them, or a colleague at a management level, in an emergency, during the working day, including ways of interrupting meetings.

If an immediate Manager is unavailable, the concern should be escalated by the member of staff in possession of the information up through the organisation to a Board Member. Any decision to take further action will be made by the relevant Manager. This may be following discussion with the chair of the board.

## **6. Responding to Safeguarding allegations about adults who work in or with PCAS.**

A safeguarding allegation is one where information comes to light from any source, which suggests that an adult working for or on behalf of PCAS has or may have:

- Caused significant harm to a child or vulnerable adult
- Committed a criminal offence against a child or adult or
- Behaved in such a way that calls into question their suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults.

This includes historical information about abuse an adult may have experienced as a child whilst in receipt of services from PCAS.

The management of an allegation of abuse may involve one or all of:

- a police investigation of a possible criminal offence
- enquiries and assessment by children's social care about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services
- consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

### **6.1 Action from member of staff or volunteer who has a concern about an adult working for or on behalf of PCAS who works with or is in contact with a child or young person.**

There may be occasions when a concern is raised about an existing adult working for or on behalf of PCAS who will not have had any issues identified prior to employment, i.e. a clear DBS (enhanced) check and satisfactory references. However, since being employed, the adult's behaviour is now raising some concerns with another colleague, partner or external third party. This could be through 'normal' conversation or becoming aware of patterns of behaviour or through 'hearsay'. These concerns should not be ignored and you should take steps in line with this policy.

Inform your manager and the chair of the board immediately. Action must have been taken and recorded within 24 hours (including weekends and bank holidays).

It is not your job to investigate the allegation. Your job is to listen, ensure you have the basic details so you can record what was said, and respond appropriately. For further information see Guidelines for responding to Allegations against Adults.

If for any reason you do not feel able to alert a manager then the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure must be followed.

## **6.2 Action: Responsible Manager**

Upon receiving information, ensure the safety of any child or young person. If a crime has clearly been committed, police and the local authority child protection services/Trusts/Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will need to be contacted as a matter of urgency. If there are other children who could be at risk (e.g. other children in the household/service) these details must also be shared.

Advice and guidance should be sought from the Management Team and the chair if the board should be advised of the allegation. In consultation with the LADO/local child protection services/Trusts, a risk assessment should be conducted within 24hrs to decide whether the person concerned can continue in their role.

Do not inform the member of staff/volunteer against whom the concern/allegation has been made of the nature of the allegation until consultation has been undertaken with the relevant local authority and where necessary police. The responsible Manager must ratify any decision.

If the allegation concerns a volunteer, then a decision must be made as to whether to suspend their volunteering activities. This must be confirmed in writing.

Any officer tasked with undertaking further enquiries or conducting an investigation under disciplinary procedures must be competent in child protection matters and be of sufficient seniority to enter into discussion with external agencies. Any action must be agreed with the chair of the board or their designated deputy. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or Social/Health Care Trust. These procedures must be followed in conjunction with PCAS's Disciplinary Procedures.

As soon as possible, agree with the Health/Social Care Trust/Child Protection Agency who will ensure that parents/carers or children are kept informed about the allegation and how they will be kept updated on any progress of the case and its outcome.

Any other local authority with responsibility for the child and any relevant partner agencies must also be notified of the allegation and/or investigation within 24hrs. In some circumstances, the Local Authority or Health and Social Care Trust where the staff, volunteer, or carer resides may become involved if the allegations have implications for the care of their own children.

Ensure the appropriate reporting form has been completed and signed off by the relevant Manager, as soon as possible (always within 24 hours)

The reporting form must be monitored and regularly updated by the responsible Manager when there is significant new information, and/or reviewed quarterly and when the outcome of the investigation is known.

Ensure that staff involved with an investigation are aware of the support options available.

Senior managers are responsible for ensuring that any support offered is kept separate from the managers involved in the investigation.

Notify the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at the conclusion of any internal investigation.

At the conclusion of a case all required regulatory referrals or notifications must be made. The responsible manager will make a decision whether the person will be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service.



## 7. Reporting of Serious Safeguarding Incidents

A serious safeguarding incident is defined as:

- Unexpected or avoidable death of child/young person/adult at risk or in connection with an adult in receipt of services from PCAS
- Serious harm to child/young person/adult at risk, where a life-threatening outcome required intervention by 's staff/volunteers,
- Actions of a service-user which has caused death or serious injury serious harm to another child or adult.
- A 'Near Miss' where an unplanned event or incident did not result in serious injury, harm or illness, but had the potential to do so and only a fortunate/timely break in the chain of events prevented a serious outcome for the child/vulnerable adult.
- An incident likely to result in adverse media attention and/or potential reputational damage for PCAS
- An incident that is serious enough that it may lead to a Serious Case Review, and/or any case which indicates organised crime or large-scale abuse
- A safeguarding incident likely to raise concern about PCAS's policies or procedures
- A safeguarding incident which raises concern about possible radicalisation of any member of staff/volunteer/adult/child/vulnerable adult

### **Action: Line Manager**

If a member of your team is involved in a serious safeguarding incident and/or any of the above situations apply, you must discuss this with the chair of the board and record as appropriate.

If the incident also relates to Health and Safety, an Incident Reporting Form should be completed.

## 8. E-safety & Social Media

### 8.1 E-Safety on PCAS Premises

#### **Action: Staff/Volunteers**

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to maximise safety when Information Systems (IS) and Social Media are accessed on PCAS premises. The Mobile Working Policy provides detailed guidance on use of equipment, email and social media and provides guidance on Online Security and Identity Theft.

## 8.2 Taking and retaining digital images and the use of camera phones

### *Action: Staff/volunteers*

- Where events are taking place and parents, for instance, want to take photographs of their children, staff must apply professional judgement, consistent with our Safeguarding Code of Conduct and this policy and procedure as to whether photography is appropriate in given circumstances, with the agreement of all parties, and after assessing any risk. In relation to staff and volunteers they must only use PCAS's equipment for this purpose.
- Staff and volunteers must gain permission from their manager on taking and storing digital images and only use PCAS's approved equipment. Personal equipment is prohibited.
- All such work in a service context with individual service users must take place within an agreed and supervised plan.
- Photographic data related to work with service users must be stored in a confidential area. If photographs form part of the service user record they must be kept on the service users' record. Any other photographs must have an identified retention period, which reflects the purpose for retaining the images and is in line with Data Protection regulations. When the retention date is reached, they must be securely deleted from electronic storage and corresponding paper/soft copies securely shredded.

### *Action: Managers*

Managers must give staff and volunteers' information and guidance on what is and is not acceptable in the use of digital images and the use of camera phones.

## 9. Recording Information

- Use the form at the end of this policy to record the information and actions taken.
- Do not take photos.
- Record the information being given, verbatim where possible.
- Record the information at the time of the conversation, or as soon as possible afterwards.
- Record the information objectively. However, do identify where you have been subjective, or where you have interpreted information, particularly if the person has difficulty communicating clearly.
- category Event Record – Safeguarding Alert, and a copy of the safeguarding alert or other relevant records should be recorded on a separate document attached to the case and saved with the name prefixed with the word SENSITIVE to highlight its nature.
- Where there is a referral to advocacy support for a safeguarding issue, all details of the advocacy intervention must be fully recorded.
- File notes will record outcomes of safeguarding issues, enabling monitoring and reporting of advocacy activity related to safeguarding, as required by Management and service commissioners.

## **10. Whistleblowing**

10.1 A staff member concerned about safeguarding issues should always report to their manager. If they do not feel that the manager is following correct procedures, or if they feel there are safeguarding concerns within the organisation, then they must refer to PCAS's Whistleblowing Policy.

10.2 PCAS staff have a responsibility to raise issues or concerns in relation to PCAS services and services provided by other organisations. All potential alerts should be escalated in line with this policy.

## **11. Managing Your Own Feelings**

11.1 Hearing accounts of abuse can be distressing and difficult to deal with. Even when you have listened supportively and empathically to the person concerned and have followed all the guidelines in the Safeguarding Policy, you may still be left feeling helpless, anxious or upset.

11.2 It is important that you know you can get support for yourself by talking to your manager who will be able to support you in accessing organisations or individuals who could provide support to you if you think that would be helpful.

## **12. Key Points**

- You must not keep information to yourself.
- You should discuss any concerns with your line manager or another senior manager within PCAS, as described in the escalation procedure.
- It is not the job of individual staff within PCAS to assess if harm is actually taking place.
- Other agencies have a statutory responsibility to investigate allegations of adult and child abuse.
- Our role may be to provide information, where appropriate, to any criminal or Safeguarding investigation.
- You cannot be wrong by raising a concern.

## **13. Review**

It is the intention of PCAS that policies and procedures remain current and 'fit for purpose' to reflect changes in legislative, organisational, operational and management arrangements; following formal review of any safeguarding alert and in response to feedback.

If an employee has any concerns about this policy or wishes to provide feedback on the process, this can be addressed through their Manager, which covers all of the statutory advocacy disciplines, and who can review the safeguarding procedures and propose refinements and improvements in line with legislation and good practice.

Every 2 years, and following any major changes in Policy or Legislation, PCAS will seek to review the Policy.

New contracts and partnerships will be assessed under the audit within 6 months to ensure their compliance with PCAS and local safeguarding requirements. If PCAS's safeguarding practices lead to the raising of concerns or formal complaints, these will be addressed through the formal Complaints Procedure. In doing so, PCAS will use the learning from those complaints to refine and improve its practice and procedures. All complaints are reviewed by the Manager and PCAS's Board of Trustees to ensure that both our systems of Operations and Governance are aware of, and play a key role, in improving standards of practice, including the safeguarding of adults at risk and children.

## **14. Related Policies and Procedures**

*Safeguarding Adults Policy*

*Whistleblowing Policy*

*Confidentiality Policy*

*Data Protection Policy*

*Personal Safety and Lone Working Procedure & Guidelines*

*Advocates' Code of Practice*

*DBS Policy*

*Complaints Policy*

*ICT Acceptable Use Policy*

*Gifts Policy*

*Code of Conduct*

# APPENDIX 1 Form for Reporting a concern about a child

## 1. *Reporting a concern about a child*

Name of Child		
PCAS reference	Age	Date of Birth
Gender	Language	Additional needs
Name of Parent(s)/Carer(s)		
Child's home address and that of Parent(s)/Carer(s) if different from the child's		

Your Name	Your role	Date and time of incident (if applicable)
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Are you reporting your own concerns or responding to concerns raised by someone else? <input type="checkbox"/> Reporting own concerns <input type="checkbox"/> Responding to concerns raised by someone else
If you are responding to concerns raised by someone else, please provide their name and position within the organisation
Please provide details of the incident or concerns you have, including times, dates, description of any injuries, whether information is first hand or the accounts of others, including any other relevant details:
The child's account/perspective:
Please provide details of anyone alleged to have caused the incident or to be the source of any concerns:

Provide details of anyone who has witnessed the incident or who shares the concerns:
<p>Please note: concerns should be discussed with the family <b>unless:</b>  the view is that a family member might be responsible for abusing the child  someone may be put in danger by the parents being informed informing the family  might interfere with a criminal investigation.</p> <p>If any of these circumstances apply, consult with the local authority children's social care department to decide whether or not discussions with the family should take place.</p> <p>Have you spoken to the child's parents/carers? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If so, please provide details of what was said. If not, please state the reason for this.</p>
<p>Are you aware of any previous incidents or concerns relating to this child and of any current risk management plan/support plan?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If so, please provide details:</p>
Summary of discussion with supervisor/manager:
<p>Has the situation been discussed with the named person for child protection?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If so, please summarise the discussion:</p>
<p>After discussion with the supervisor/line manager and named person, do you still have child protection concerns?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Have you informed the statutory child protection authorities?</p> <p><b>Police</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  Date and time  Name and phone number of person spoken to</p> <p><b>Local authority children's social care</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  Date and time  Name and phone number of person spoken to</p> <p>Action agreed with child protection authorities:</p>

What has happened since referring to statutory agency? Include the date and nature of feedback from referral, outcome and relevant dates:

If the concerns are not about child protection, details of any further steps taken to provide support to child and family, and any other agencies involved:

Name & Position	Date & Time	Signed