

RISING SUN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE and ABUSE SERVICE

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

December 2023

To be reviewed: December 2024

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Safeguarding and Child Protection

Statement

The Rising Sun Domestic Violence and Abuse Service (Rising Sun) Safeguarding Children Policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by The Children Act 1989 and 2004, and related guidance including The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (1999), Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (2018).

The staff and members of the Rising Sun take seriously our responsibility to promote the welfare and safeguard all the children and young people entrusted to our care.

The Designated Safeguarding Practitioner (DSP) who has overall responsibility for child protection practice in the Rising Sun is: Elaine Coia.

Clear information as to who this is must be fully available to all staff and visitors of the Rising Sun along with named Deputies: Fran Ellis, Anne Lyttle and Ingrid Sanfey.

Donna Convery is the trustee lead.

As part of the ethos of the service we are committed to:

- Maintaining children's welfare as our paramount concern
- Providing an environment in which all children feel safe, secure, valued and respected; confident to talk openly and sure of being listened to
- Providing suitable support and guidance so that children have a range of appropriate adults who they feel confident to approach if they are in difficulties
- Using learning to provide opportunities for increasing self-awareness, self-esteem, assertiveness and decision making so that children have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others
- Working with parents to build an understanding of the service's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children including the need for referral to other agencies in some situations
- Ensuring all staff are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and are aware of the service's procedures and lines of communication
- Monitoring children who have been identified as vulnerable or 'in need', including the need for protection; keeping confidential records which are stored securely and shared appropriately with other professionals.
- Developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies.

Policy

This policy is in line with:

Kent Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection Procedures (2018):

KSCB Eligibility and Threshold criteria (2018):

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018):

What to do if you are worried about a child being abused (2018):

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf

Related Rising Sun Policies and Procedures:

- Safeguarding Adults
- Whistleblowing
- Recruitment and Selection
- Professional Conduct
- Staff Development
- Partnership Working
- Volunteers
- Disciplinary
- Privacy Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Data Protection Policy

The Rising Sun staff's role and responsibility in Child Protection

Everyone involved in the service provision for children has a role to play in their safeguarding. As a member of staff at Rising Sun, you are in a unique position to observe any changes in a child's behaviour or appearance. If you have any reason to suspect that a child is being abused, or is likely to be abused, you have a 'duty of care' to take action on behalf of the child by following Rising Sun's Safeguarding Children Policy.

The Board of Trustees has a legal responsibility and moral duty to ensure that children and young people are safeguarded from all forms of abuse whilst in receipt of Rising Sun services and support.

The Designated Safeguarding Practitioner

The Designated Safeguarding Practitioner is responsible for:

- Co-ordinating safeguarding action within the service
- Liaising with other agencies and professionals
- Ensuring procedures are followed including reporting and referral processes
- Acting as a consultant for other service staff to discuss concerns
- Making or overseeing referrals as necessary
- Maintaining a single, central and confidential record system
- Representing or ensuring the service is represented at inter-agency meetings in particular Strategy Discussions and Child Protection Conferences
- Managing and monitoring the service's part in child protection plans
- Ensuring all staff have received appropriate up to date safeguarding training
- Checking that staff and volunteers are "suitable", ensuring DBS checks are carried out as required and that staff are signed up to the update system, and dealing with any DBS disclosures.

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- Chairing monthly meetings with the deputy DSPs to review any safeguarding issues or reports to ensure Rising Sun's processes have been followed and best practice maintained. Any changes, learnings or reminders should be fed back to the wider team at the next team meeting and in an email.
 - Feeding back any serious concerns to the Board of Trustees.

What is child abuse?

The Children Act 1989 refers to "Significant Harm" rather than abuse. However, abuse is any behaviour, action or inaction, which significantly harms the physical and/or emotional development of a child. A child may be abused by parents, other relatives or carers, professionals and other children, and can occur in any family, in any area of society, regardless of social class or geographical location.

Abuse falls into four main categories, available at:

http://www.proceduresonline.com/kentandmedway/chapters/p_rec_sig_harm.html

Types of abuse

The following definitions are based on those identified in Working Together to Safeguard Children and Keeping Children Safe in Education:

Abuse

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development, and may involve:

- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person;
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate;
- Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction;
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another e.g. where there is domestic abuse;

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- Serious bullying (including cyber bullying);
 - Causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger;
 - Exploiting and corrupting children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

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.

Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of sexual images, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

In addition; Sexual abuse includes abuse of children through sexual exploitation which 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.

A child under the age of 13 is not legally capable of consenting to sex (it is statutory rape) or any other type of sexual touching:

- Sexual activity with a child under 16 is also an offence;
- It is an offence for a person to have a sexual relationship with a 16 or 17 year old if they hold a position of trust or authority in relation to them;
- Where sexual activity with a 16 or 17 year old does not result in an offence being committed, it may still result in harm, or the likelihood of harm being suffered;
- Non-consensual sex is rape whatever the age of the victim; and
- If the victim is incapacitated through drink or drugs, or the victim or their family has been subject to violence or the threat of it, they cannot be considered to have given true consent; therefore offences may have been committed.

Child sexual exploitation is therefore potentially a child protection issue for all children under the age of 18 years and not just those in a specific age group.

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, maternal mental ill health or learning difficulties or a cluster of such issues. Where there is domestic abuse towards a carer, the needs of the child may be neglected.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent failing to:

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- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
 - Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
 - Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers);
 - Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

These definitions are used when determining significant harm and children can be affected by combinations of maltreatment and abuse, which can be impacted on by for example domestic abuse in the household or a cluster of problems faced by the adults.

In addition, research analysing Serious Case Reviews has demonstrated a significant prevalence of domestic abuse in the history of families with children who are subject of Child Protection Plans. Children can be affected by seeing, hearing and living with domestic abuse as well as being caught up in any incidents directly, whether to protect someone or as a target. It should also be noted that the age group of 16 and 17 year olds have been found in recent studies to be increasingly affected by domestic abuse in their peer relationships.

It should therefore be considered when responding to concerns that the UK government's definition of domestic abuse is: (according to the DA Act 2021)

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- physical or sexual abuse;
- violent or threatening behaviour;
- controlling or coercive behaviour;
- economic abuse;
- psychological, emotional or other abuse;

It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

In addition, Section 3 of the act provides that a child (a person under the age of 18 years), is for the purposes of the 2021 Act, recognised as a victim of domestic abuse if they see, hear, or experience the effects of the abuse

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-act-2021/domestic-abuse-statutory-guidance-accessible-version#chapter-2--understanding-domestic-abuse>

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

In addition, Working Together to Safeguard Children includes the concept of Contextual Safeguarding which recognises that, as well as threats to the welfare of children from within their families, children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. These

threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including: exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines; trafficking, online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation.

Potential Risk of Harm to an Unborn Child

In some circumstances, agencies or individuals are able to anticipate the likelihood of significant harm with regard to an expected baby (e.g. where there is information known about domestic abuse, parental substance misuse or mental ill health).

These concerns should be addressed as early as possible before the birth, so that a full assessment can be undertaken and support offered to enable the parent/s (wherever possible) to provide safe care to the baby.

What may give cause for concern?

- Bruising on parts of the body which do not usually get bruised accidentally, e.g. around the eyes, behind the ears, back of the legs, stomach, chest, cheek and mouth (especially in a young baby), etc.
- Any bruising or injury to a very young, immobile baby
- Burns or scalds
- Bite marks
- Any injuries or swellings, which do not have a plausible explanation
- Bruising or soreness to the genital area
- Faltering growth, weight loss and slow development
- Unusual lethargy
- Any sudden uncharacteristic change in behaviour, e.g. child becomes either very aggressive or withdrawn
- A child whose play and language indicates a sexual knowledge beyond his/her years
- A child who flinches away from sudden movement
- A child who gives over rehearsed answers to explain how his/her injuries were caused
- An accumulation of a number of minor injuries and/or concerns
- A child who discloses something which may indicate they are being abused.

This is not an exhaustive list; further information is available on the KSCB website; http://www.proceduresonline.com/kentandmedway/chapters/p_rec_sig_harm.html

Other Safeguarding concerns to be aware of:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/>

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is often carried out on girls between infancy and the age of 15, but typically before puberty starts. FGM is illegal in the UK and is a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. Where

a staff member of the Rising Sun is concerned that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out or may be carried out on a girl who is aged under 18, there is a statutory duty upon that individual to report it to the police.

What does this mean for you?

If you suspect FGM has been carried out, you have a duty to report it to the police. This became a mandatory duty on 15 October 2015 so to not report would be an offence. Referrals can be made using the usual inter-agency referral form via the Central Referral Unit.

What are the indicators?

There are a range of indicators and risk factors, full details can be found via the links below. In general, there are risk factors related to culture, country of origin, previous practice in the family (mother, sisters etc.). There are then risk factors it may be about to happen for example, arrangements for extended holidays to stay or visit relatives in a high risk area (e.g. east Africa, Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan but also Egypt and parts of West Africa and the Middle East.)

Girls as young as 5 years old from families originating in risk areas may talk about a special ceremony or party involving girls of a similar age. Refusal to allow the child to attend PSHE/SEX education lessons might also be relevant.

Indicators that FGM has recently taken place can be physical discomfort, urinary problems etc. Indicators that this has happened in the past include recurrent infection or psychological issues. Older girls may not realise that the problems relate to the FGM that they experienced when they were young.

Further information is available via the NSPCC helpline on 0800 0283550

The full national guidance is available at this link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-guidelines>

A resource pack is available

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-resource-pack/female-genital-mutilation-resource-pack>

If staff have a concern about potential FGM, or any other cultural traditions, rituals or beliefs such as forced marriage, honour based violence, spirit possession or witchcraft abuse, then normal safeguarding procedures, including discussing with the named Designated Safeguarding Practitioner, should be followed.

Forced Marriage:

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not or cannot consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used to force them into the marriage. It is also when anything is done to make someone marry before they turn 18, even if there is no pressure or abuse. Forced Marriage is illegal in the UK.

[The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014](#) made it a criminal offence in England, Wales and Scotland to force someone to marry. This includes the following:

- Taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place)
- Doing anything intended to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, whether or not a form of coercion is used

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- Causing someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to marry to get married (whether they are pressured to or not)

The pressure put on people to marry against their will may be:

- Physical: for example, threats, physical violence or sexual violence
- Emotional and psychological: for example, making someone feel like they are bringing 'shame' on their family
- Financial: for example, denying money/ freedom unless they agree to the marriage
- In some cases, people may be taken abroad without knowing that they are to be married. When they arrive in that country, their passport(s)/travel documents may be taken to try to stop them from returning to the UK

Steps to take:

- If you believe a child or young person is at risk of a forced marriage it is a child protection issue and an urgent social services referral should be made
- there may be occasions when immediate emergency action is necessary to protect a child or young person from being forced to marry or from being abducted, for example police protection or emergency protection orders (EPOs). In this case, a strategy discussion should take place as soon as possible after the immediate protection is put in place to plan next steps.
- Applications for a Forced Marriage Protection order can be made
- Concerns should be raised/discussed with Designated Safeguarding Practitioner (DSP) in order to address specific safety and support needs and a cause for concern form completed and shared with all DSP's
- Ask relevant professionals to keep you updated, and include this under 'Actions Taken' on the Cause for Concern form. Update On Track with relevant information

Support available:

fmu@fcdo.gov.uk
Telephone: 020 7008 0151
From overseas: +44 (0)20 7008 0151
Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
Out of hours: 020 7008 5000

Useful links:

[The right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/the-right-to-choose)
[Forced marriage - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/forced-marriage)
[Apply for a forced marriage protection order: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/apply-for-a-forced-marriage-protection-order)
[Forced marriage: a survivor's handbook - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/forced-marriage-a-survivor-s-handbook)

Self-harming and Suicidal Behaviour Policy:

Any child or young person, who self-harms or expresses thoughts about this or about suicide, must be taken seriously and appropriate help and intervention, should be offered at the earliest point.

While not every child with depression or anxiety will feel suicidal, sometimes mental health problems can feel overwhelming for children and young people. If a young person talks about wanting to hurt or harm themselves, or expresses suicidal feelings, they should always be taken seriously.

Signs and Indicators:

Signs that a child or young person may be having suicidal feelings or thinking about suicide include:

- Becoming more depressed or withdrawn, spending a lot of time by themselves.
- An increase in dangerous behaviours like taking drugs or drinking alcohol.
- Becoming obsessed with ideas of suicide, death or dying, which could include internet searches.
- Saying things like “I’d be better off dead”, “No one would miss me”, “I just wish I wasn’t here anymore”.

Steps to take:

If you are in any way worried about a young person, it is important to get help right away.

- Thank the young person for telling you, but do not give immediate advice. Let the young person know that you will need to pass this information on to the relevant people.
- Inform school/social worker/family worker/parent/guardian/relevant adults of your concern.
- Inform your line manager, and complete a Cause for Concern form as soon as you can. This should be sent to Rising Sun Designated Safeguarding Practitioners (DSPs).
- Ask relevant professionals to keep you updated, and include this under ‘Actions Taken’ on the Cause for Concern form. Update On Track with relevant information.

Services Available:

There are a number of services that can offer support, both to yourself and the young person.

- NSPCC Trained counsellors can offer you advice over the phone on 0808 800 5000.
- Children and young people under 19 can also get support from Childline online or over the phone, 24 hours a day.
 - 1-2-1 chat with a counsellor online: <https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/1-2-1-counsellor-chat/>
 - A young person can call Childline for free on 0800 1111
 - A young person can create a Childline account to send an email at: <https://www.childline.org.uk/login/?returnPath=%2flocker%2finbox%2f>
 - All Childline contact options available through this link: <https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/>
- Papyrus offers a helpline to both professionals and young people 9am-12am, every day of the year 0800 4141, or email pat@papyrus-uk.org.
- Young Minds offers an emergency text line: text ‘YM’ to 85258 to get help.
- Samaritans can be contacted for support 24/7 at 116123, or email jo@samaritans.org.

Useful links:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/childrens-mental-health/depression-anxiety-mental-health/#>
<https://www.papyrus-uk.org/>
<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/my-feelings/suicidal-feelings/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/behaviours/help-for-suicidal-thoughts/>

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship.

CSE involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying, including cyberbullying and grooming.

Risk vulnerability factors, categories and indicators

All agencies, statutory and voluntary, should be alert to the predictive indicators of sexual exploitation. Children and young people are more vulnerable to abuse through sexual exploitation if they have experienced:-

- Child sexual abuse
- Domestic violence within their family
- Family breakdown
- Physical abuse and emotional deprivation
- Bullying in or out of school
- Family involvement in sexual exploitation
- Parents with a high level of vulnerabilities (drug/alcohol, mental health etc)
- Personal use of drugs and alcohol
- Personal mental health difficulties
- Being looked after in residential care
- Frequently going missing
- Social and emotional isolation

Rising Sun will make sure all staff are trained in CSE and familiar with Kent and Medway Sexual Exploitation Procedures.

Advice regarding CSE can be accessed via the link below. The CSE toolkit helps identify levels of risk if there are concerns around CSE:

<https://www.kelsi.org.uk/child-protection-and-safeguarding/cse>

Free online training about many safeguarding issues including CSE and FGM are available from the Kent Safeguarding Children Board. All you need to do is register at the link below

<https://www.kscmp.org.uk/training/multi-agency>

There are also live courses in both CSE and FGM available from KSCB. The CSE course is half day. The FGM is an hour and a half “what you need to know” session.

If staff have a concern about potential CSE, normal safeguarding procedures, including discussing with the named Designated Safeguarding Practitioner, should be followed.

Radicalisation

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

From 1 July 2015 all service provided for children are subject to a duty under Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, to have “*due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism*”. This is known as the “Prevent Duty”. In order for service providers to fulfil the Prevent Duty, it is essential that staff are able to identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and know what to do when they are identified. Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation should be seen as part of the wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other harms (e.g. drugs, gangs, neglect and sexual exploitation), whether these come from within their family or are the product of outside influences.

What is Radicalisation?

Radicalisation is defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism and extremism and, in some cases, to then participate in terrorist groups. It is important we all safeguard children, young people and families from extremism.

What is Radicalisation in safeguarding?

The government's Prevent Duty Guidance defines radicalisation as "the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups".

What are the signs of Radicalisation?

- a change in behaviour.
- changing their circle of friends.
- isolating themselves from family and friends.
- talking as if from a scripted speech.
- unwillingness or inability to discuss their views.
- a sudden disrespectful attitude towards others.
- increased levels of anger.

Risk factors

- Isolating themselves from family and friends.
- Talking as if from a script.
- Unwillingness to discuss their views or refusing to listen to different points of view.
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others.
- Increased levels of anger or becoming increasingly argumentative.

What to do if you think a child is being radicalised

- contacting your nominated child protection lead.
- calling the police anti-terrorism hotline on 0800 789 321.
- calling our radicalisation helpline.
- reporting suspicious activity online.

If you are concerned about the radicalisation of a young person or other family members please refer the case to the County Channel Panel by completing the prevent referral form, or by contacting the Front Door Team on 03000 41 11 11.

All staff are advised to complete an online general awareness training package developed by The National Counter Terrorism Policing Headquarters (NCTPHQ), in conjunction with the College of Policing. The package includes information on how Channel (the multi-agency approach to protect people from being drawn into terrorist related activity) links to the Government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy. It covers the Prevent guidance on how to identify

people who may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and how to refer them into the Channel process.

If staff have a concern about potential radicalisation, normal safeguarding procedures, including discussing with the Designated Safeguarding Practitioner, should be followed. Staff can also contact Kent police on 101 to seek advice or e-mail the Kent Channel coordinator directly at channel@kent.pnn.police.uk

Finally, the Department for Education has dedicated a telephone helpline (020 7340 7264) to raise concerns relating to extremism. Concerns can also be raised by email to counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk. Please note that the helpline is not intended for use in emergency situations, such as a child being at immediate risk of harm or a security incident, in which case the normal emergency procedures should be followed.

Link to Kent Prevent information and coordinators:

<https://www.kscmp.org.uk/procedures/prevent>

Link to training

<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu/screen1.html>

Link to DfE Prevent Duty guidance

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/439598/prevent-duty-departmental-advice-v6.pdf

Link to Self-Assessment Form

http://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/31744/Education-Prevent-Assessment-SETU-Tool.pdf

Missing Children

Definition

A missing or runaway child will be defined as one where the missing episode has been reported to the police and is recorded on the police system.

Risks to missing children

Research by The Children's Society has led to an estimate suggesting that some 100,000 children go missing every year. Essentially, when they go missing, children are either running from a problem such as neglect or abuse at home, or to somewhere they want to be. They may have been coerced to run away by someone else. Whatever the reason for their running, The Children's Society estimates that approximately 25% of those children who go missing are at risk of serious harm.

There are particular concerns about the links between children running away and the risks of sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, violent crime and misuse of alcohol and drugs. Additionally, research shows that the level of risk to the individual child escalates with each episode they go missing and repeat episodes have been identified as a significant indicator of high risk to the child.

The immediate risks associated with going missing include:

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- No means of support or legitimate income - leading to high risk activities
 - Involvement in criminal activities including gang crime
 - Victim of Abuse
 - Victim of crime, for example through sexual assault and criminal exploitation
 - Risk of trafficking
 - Alcohol/substance misuse
 - Deterioration of physical and mental health
 - Missing out on education
 - Increased vulnerability.

Longer-term risks include:

- Long-term drug dependency / alcohol dependency
- Crime
- Homelessness

The following principles should be adopted by all agencies involved with children who may go missing:

- All individuals have a responsibility to report a child if they are missing. If a parent or carer does not report a child missing within a reasonable timescale when their whereabouts are unknown, this should be seen as displaying compromised parenting and should be considered as a potential safeguarding concern.
- It is imperative that services working with children are able to and actively identify those who are commencing a pattern of running away behaviour and provide the appropriate interventions at the earliest opportunity to prevent future incidents which may place them, or others, at risk.

Response

If a Rising Sun team member becomes aware that a child may have run away or gone missing, for example they do not show up for a meeting, they should try to establish with the parents / carers, school contacts or other relevant agencies, what has happened.

If this is not possible, or the child is missing, the team member together with the Designated Safeguarding Practitioner or deputy should, assess the child's vulnerability and inform the police if required (see additional information below).

When the child is returned the team member should assess any immediate needs, welcome them back and inform all professionals. They should then carry out a return interview to attempt to gain insight into why they went missing and look at what to do to reduce risk of future missing episodes.

Return Interviews

Regardless of how long a child has been missing, upon their return an independent return interview should be offered to all children who have been missing from project. The return interview should be carried out within 72 hours of the child being located or returning from the missing episode.

The purpose of the return interview is to:

- Identify factors which led to the missing episode
- Prevent further missing episodes
- Inform any subsequent missing person investigation
- Share intelligence and information

Prior to any interview conducted with a child the interviewer should inform them who this information will be shared with, when and why and gain consent before sharing. If consent is not given to disclose but in the interests of safeguarding the child or other children it is necessary to share the information, then it should be disclosed.

If safeguarding concerns are raised during the return interview a safeguarding referral should be made to Kent Social Services. Particular attention should be paid if a child is suspected of being involved in or at risk of trafficking or exploitation as they may be fearful of giving information.

Additional information

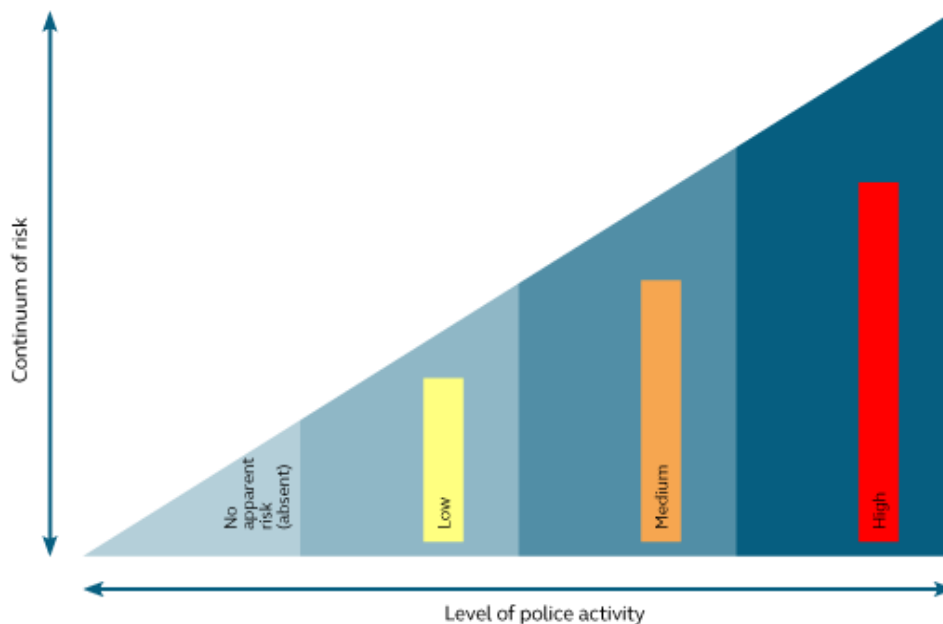
Many children will exhibit normal adolescent behaviour in testing boundaries and it is not helpful to consider every incident of lateness or absence for all children as high risk. However, some children will need to be treated as missing immediately due to their vulnerability. This protocol is based upon the principles of individual risk assessment, by carers and agency professionals and by the Police in classifying and responding to the incident.

The police will only become involved after the reporting individual has completed all reasonable checks to locate the individual. Missing children remain the responsibility of the person / organisation which has legal parental responsibility for the child, even after they have been reported missing.

All reports of missing children sit within a continuum of risk from 'no apparent risk (absent)' through to high-risk cases that require immediate, intensive action.



Missing definition



If the child is categorised by the Police as 'absent', the person calling the Police will be asked if there are safeguarding concerns or risks, to inform the Police response. If there are no safeguarding concerns or risks they will be advised to call the Police if there is a change in circumstances, which would increase the risk level, or if the person returns.

Some children absent themselves for a short period and then return, with their whereabouts known to their parent/carer. Sometimes children stay out longer than agreed, either on purpose to test boundaries, or accidentally. A child, who has failed to return home but their whereabouts are known and/or staying at a known location with a friend or family where there is no identified risk, would not be treated as either 'missing' or 'absent' under police definitions.

If the parent/carer assesses that the child is at risk due to any factor/s known to them, then the child should be reported to the Police without delay and the believed risk communicated. The Police will respond to this as a 'concern for safety'. It should be recognised that police powers to return an individual to a care address are limited unless they are on a care order or Police Protection Order is considered necessary.

ALL CHILDREN AGED 13 YEARS AND UNDER WILL BE CATEGORISED AS 'MISSING' AND NOT CATEGORISED AS 'ABSENT' UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

Where a person under the age of 18 is reported missing in circumstances where it is suspected they are subject of CSE/CE, then ordinarily they should be recorded as High Risk, unless the Response Inspector (Bronze 4) documents a case for management at a lower risk level.

The Police will ask the following standard set of questions whenever an individual is reported missing:

- Child's full name
- Full description of individual (Inc clothing and distinctive marks)
- Who are their known associates?
- Has the individual been reported missing before?
- Has the child made any preparations for being missing/absent?
- Is their behaviour out of character?
- Do they have access to a mobile phone?
- Do they use social network sites? (Facebook etc.).
- Do they have access to a vehicle?
- Do they have cash/access to cash?

The following questions are used as Critical Questions, to assist the Police in determining whether the individual is 'missing' or 'absent'.

- Is the child on any essential medication?
- Does the child suffer from any physical (disabilities) or mental health issues?
- Has the child previously self-harmed or made threats to self-harm or injure another person?
- Would you consider the child is being sexually or criminally exploited?
- Are there any additional vulnerabilities (creating a risk to the child or the public)

No apparent risk (absent / away from placement)

There is no apparent risk of harm to either the child or the public.

Actions to locate the child and/or gather further information should be agreed with the person notifying the Police.

Low risk (missing)

The risk of harm to the child or the public is assessed as possible but minimal.

Proportionate enquiries should be carried out to ensure that the individual has not come to harm.

Medium risk (missing)

The risk of harm to the child or the public is assessed as likely but not serious.

This category requires an active and measured response by the police and partner agencies in order to trace the missing child and support the person reporting.

High risk (missing)

The risk of serious harm* to the child or the public is assessed as very likely.

This category almost always requires the immediate deployment of police resources – action may be delayed in exceptional circumstances, such as searching water or forested areas during hours of darkness.

There should be a press/media strategy and/or close contact with outside agencies. Family support should be put in place where appropriate.

*Risk of serious harm has been defined as (Home Office 2002):

'A risk which is life threatening and/or traumatic, and from which recovery, whether physical or psychological, can be expected to be difficult or impossible.'

Criminal Exploitation of Children

Definition

The Home Office defines Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) as:

Child Criminal Exploitation...occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual.

Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Criminal exploitation often happens alongside sexual or other forms of exploitation.

Child Criminal exploitation is broader than just county lines and includes for instance children forced to work on cannabis farms, to commit theft, shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Trafficking is where children and young people tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their homes and are moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Potential victims can be exploited in a number of ways, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude and criminal exploitation. Children may be forced to work in cannabis factories, move drugs, money or weapons across county lines or within their locality, launder money through their bank accounts or carry out crimes of theft or violence, particularly against other young people.

County lines is a form of Child Criminal Exploitation. It is a term used to describe the activities of gangs and organised criminal networks who are involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas (within the UK), using dedicated mobile phone lines or other forms of "deal line". These gangs are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move (and store) the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

How children are affected

All criminally exploited children are at risk of neglect, emotional harm, sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as substance misuse and extreme forms of violence. Sexual violence can be used as a form of punishment.

Younger siblings may be recruited through fear, violence and intimidation against the family of older children who have already been exploited.

The trauma caused by intimidation, violence, witnessing drug use or overdoses and continued threats to themselves or to family members can lead to significant mental and physical ill-health of exploited children.

Who is at risk?

Any child or young person may be at risk of criminal exploitation, regardless of their family background or other circumstances. For some, their homes will be a place of safety and security; for others this will not be the case. Whatever the child's home circumstances, the risks from exploitation spread beyond risks to the child. Their families or siblings may also be threatened or be highly vulnerable to violence from the perpetrators of criminal exploitation.

Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

- Can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years;
- Can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years;
- Can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual;
- Can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- Can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults; and
- Is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Perpetrators are known to target vulnerable children and adults; some of the factors that heighten a person's vulnerability includes:

- Having prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse;
- Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic violence or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example);
- Social isolation or social difficulties;
- Economic vulnerability;
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status;
- Connections with other people involved in gangs;
- Having a physical disability or learning disability;
- Having mental health or substance misuse issues;
- Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories);
- Being excluded from mainstream education, in particular attending a Pupil Referral Unit. It is important when schools are considering exclusions they also consider the safeguarding risks to the child.

It is thought that 14-17 years is the most common age for children to be exploited but there are reports of children below the age of 11 years being targeted.

Male children are most commonly identified as being criminally exploited, but female children are also used and exploited. It may be that female children are identified by agencies for other reasons other than criminal exploitation but are also being criminally exploited.

Signs and Indicators

Some potential indicators of county lines involvement and exploitation are listed below, with those at the top of particular concern:

- Persistently going missing from school or home and / or being found out-of-area;
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones;
- Excessive receipt of texts / phone calls and/or having multiple handsets;
- Relationships with controlling / older individuals or groups;
- Leaving home / care without explanation;
- Suspicion of physical assault / unexplained injuries;
- Parental concerns;
- Carrying weapons;
- Significant decline in school results / performance;
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks;
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being;
- Unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour;
- Being frightened of some people, places or situations;
- Being secretive;
- Sharp changes in mood or character;
- Physical signs of abuse, like bruises or bleeding in their genital or anal area.

Further information about Criminal Exploitation of Children can be found here: https://www.proceduresonline.com/kentandmedway/chapters/p_ch_criminal_exp.html

What to do if a child alleges that they have been abused

Children involved in any allegations made will be treated with sensitivity and be comforted and reassured. Be aware that any allegation may result in a criminal investigation; therefore, ensure that you don't affect the evidence. Let the child tell their story uninterrupted, with as little prompting as possible.

In circumstances where a child makes an allegation of abuse, the member of staff will:

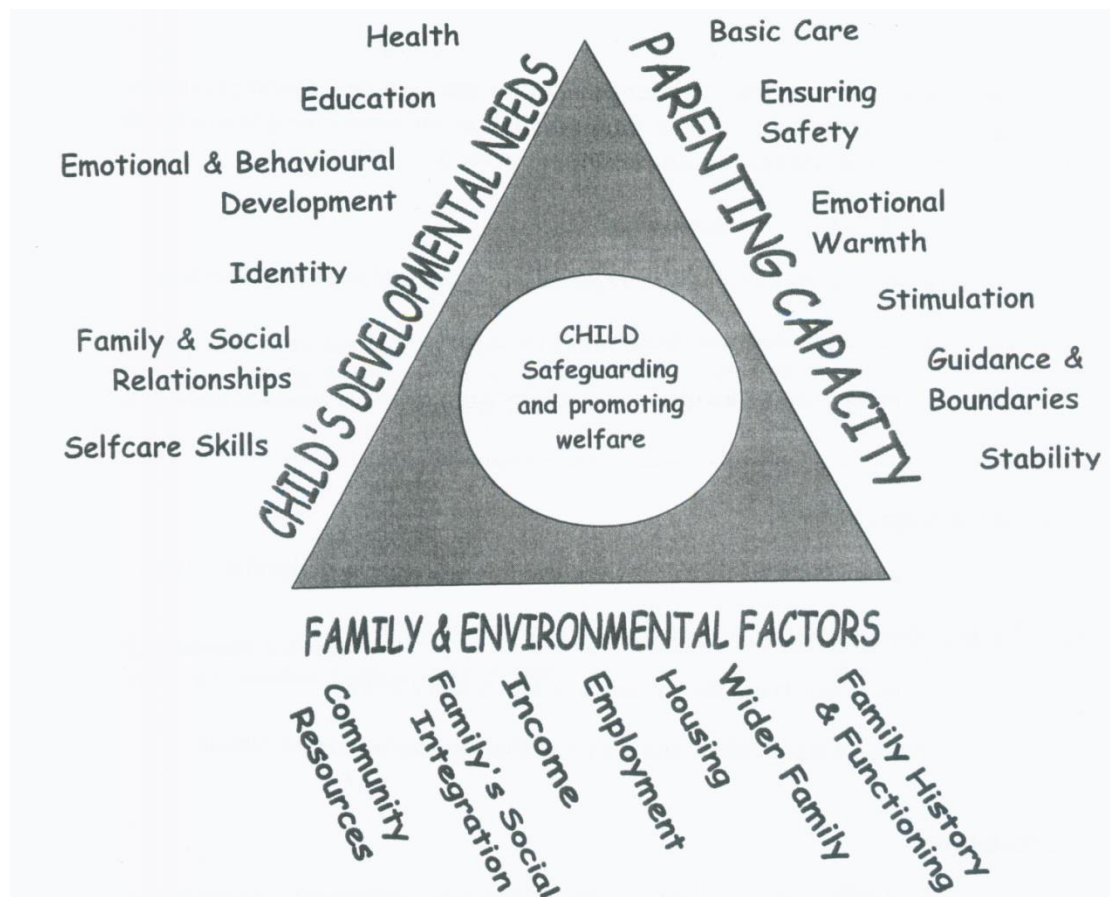
- Listen fully to what the child has to say
- Make no observable judgements
- Ask open ended questions that encourage the child to speak in their own words
- Ensure the child is safe and not left on their own
- Make no promises that cannot be kept, such as telling them no one will be told about what they are saying
- Ensure an appropriate written record is made and the Designated Safeguarding Practitioner and your line manager are fully informed.
- If a disclosure is made by a child or you have cause for concern when you are seeing them in their educational setting, then you need to inform the Designated Safeguarding Practitioner in that setting and follow the school's safeguarding policy as well as informing the Rising Sun Designated Safeguarding Practitioner.

Understanding the child's world

As a Rising Sun member of staff, it is important we are familiar with the many factors which can affect how children learn, how they react, and how they develop. It is necessary to be familiar with government guidance to help agencies to work together in taking a common approach to assessment and service planning: the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families 1999. A child's developmental needs are affected in different ways by the parenting capacity of carers, and by the family and the environmental situation of the child.

The Assessment Triangle (below) helps us to use a holistic approach when considering the needs of children.

Assessment Framework Triangle



Available at:

http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/chapters/chapter_one.html#assess

How to share your concerns

Discuss your concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Practitioner immediately or as soon as possible, always within 24 hours.

If agreed with the DSP that it is safe and appropriate, share any initial concerns with the child's parents, in order that a meaningful discussion can take place to identify the support that can be offered; unless you feel that discussing the issue with the parent/s may put the child at further risk of significant harm or you think a criminal offence has been committed and discussion would interfere with a potential criminal investigation.

Keep a factual note of any concerns, i.e. what you have observed, heard and said with clear actions and expected outcomes, on the Rising Sun Cause for Concern Form. Ensure you complete the form and send it to the DSP within 24 hours. If there are serious concerns and the Designated Person or deputy is not available but immediate advice is needed, contact:

Central Duty Team on 03000 41 11 11 (03000 41 91 91 Out of Hours) for a consultation.
<https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/report-abuse>

Sign and date your records for future reference. (Cause for concern report form)

The consultation process will provide an opportunity to identify if the threshold for a referral to social services has been met. If not, a discussion should follow to identify an appropriate way forward.

If you are aware that the child has an allocated social worker, then your concerns should be shared with them directly and a referral to/consultation with the Central Duty Team is not necessary.

If a worker believes that another member of staff has not responded appropriately to a concern then they should report this to a DSP or utilise the Whistleblowing Policy. In line with our Whistleblowing Policy, any individual raising legitimate concerns will not be subject to any detriment, either during or after employment. Rising Sun will also endeavour to ensure that the individual is protected from any intimidation or harassment by any other parties.

The referral process

This section should be read in conjunction with the KSCB Eligibility and Threshold criteria:
<https://www.kscmp.org.uk/guidance/kent-support-levels-guidance>

When making a referral,
https://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/86464/Support-Levels-Guidance-Sheet.pdf

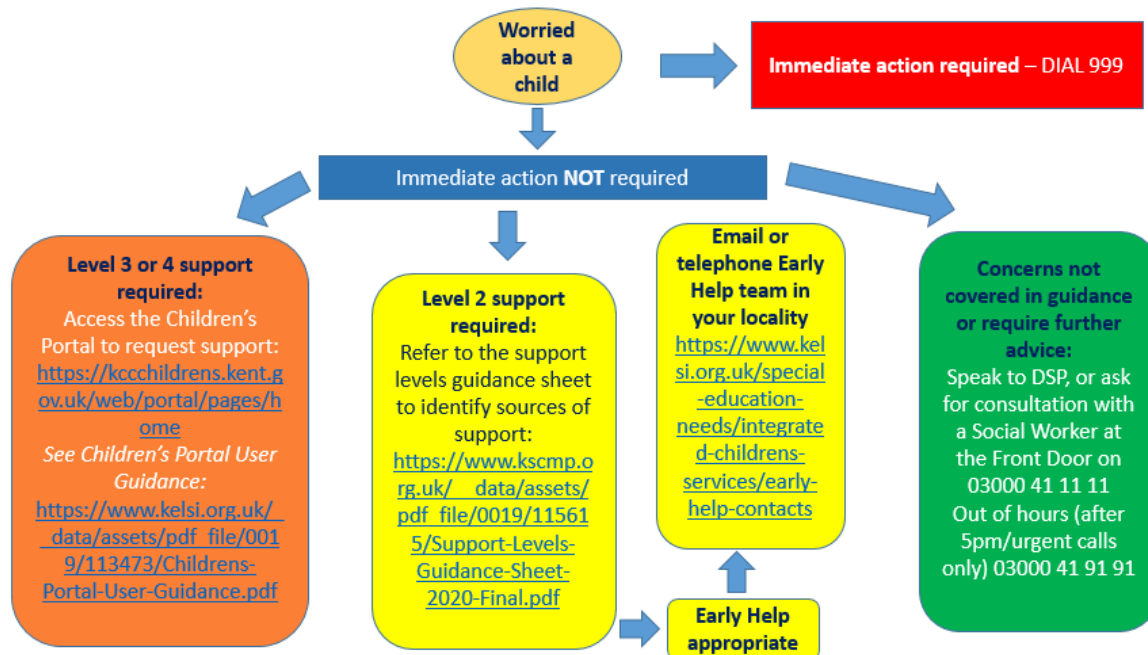
Where there are concerns of a child protection nature under section 47(9) all staff have a duty to co-operate with enquires, this may mean providing information whether or not parental consent has been given.

In some cases, you may need to take immediate action and refer to the Integrated Front Door Team via a telephone call, e.g. a child discloses abuse, or you witness a child being

abused. In these circumstances, a written referral must be completed and sent as soon as possible (at least within 24 hours).

Full guidance is available at:

<https://www.kscmp.org.uk/guidance/kent-support-levels-guidance>



Support levels guidance sheet:

https://www.kscmp.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/115615/SLG-Sheet-July-2021.pdf

Children's Portal (for referrals into the Front Door service) guidance:

https://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/113473/Childrens-Portal-User-Guidance.pdf

Access to Kent Integrated Children's Services Portal:

<https://kccchildrens.kent.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/home>

Directory of Early Help contacts:

<https://www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/integrated-childrens-services/early-help-contacts>

Professionals who have made a referral and who are not in agreement with the decision that has been made should refer to the Kent Resolution of Professional Disagreement Policy relating to the Safeguarding of Children and the escalation of professional concerns at:

https://www.proceduresonline.com/kentandmedway/pdfs/res_prof_disagree.pdf

All dissatisfaction with decisions taken should in the first instance go through line management channels and key safeguarding professionals within the agency accountable for the decision being made. If a resolution is not achieved, contact the Customer Care Team on 01233 652165 or by e-mail at cscomplaints@kent.gov.uk (Kent County Council).

Record Keeping

Staff can play a vital role in helping children in need or at risk by effective monitoring and record keeping. Any incident or behavioural change in a child or young person that gives cause for concern should be recorded. It is important that records are kept factual and reflect the words used by the child or young person. Records must be signed and dated with timings if appropriate. (Cause for concern report forms)

Information to be recorded:

- Child's name and date of birth
- The incident with dates and times
- A verbatim record of what the child or young person and staff member has said, observed and actions agreed
- If recording bruising/injuries indicate position, colour, size, shape and time on body map
- Action taken.

Record the information as accurately as you can, including the timing, setting and those present, as well as what was said verbatim. Do not exaggerate or embellish what you have heard in any way. Records of concern should be regularly reviewed by the DSP who should record action taken.

What to do if you need to take emergency action to protect a child

On very rare occasions, it may be necessary to act quickly, for example, to protect a child from a parent under the influence of drugs and alcohol or behaving abusively.

In these circumstances the staff member should immediately telephone the Police (999).

In an unlikely event that a child is brought to the service with serious injuries, **it would be appropriate to telephone 999 for an ambulance/Police.**

Update your DSP as soon as possible.

Remote Working

The following list is to highlight procedures for staff while working with children remotely via phone, video, text (for example during the covid-19 pandemic).

- All concerns must still be recorded on a Rising Sun cause for concern form and discussed with the Rising Sun DSP.
- You have sole responsibility while children are not in a school setting and there is no Child Protection officer on site. Therefore, remember you may need to contact social services directly.
- If contacting a child or young person directly on their phone, make sure you check who has access to their call log and messages.

- Remember to only contact children and young people from your work phone and email address.
- Make sure you are in a private and confidential space before contacting a child and/or young people.
- Explicit consent to deliver sessions virtually needs to be obtained from parents/carers alongside the standard service consent.
- Staff should consider whether virtual sessions are appropriate in line with a child's age and ability and if a safe and private space is available in the child/young person's environment where they can talk freely and without compromising confidentiality.
- A responsible adult either teacher/parent or carer should be available following the session to take responsibility /supervision of the device and internet use in line with the child's environment (ie school or at home) their age and ability. Staff should make contact with the responsible adult and let them know once the session has ended.
- Let the child and parent or carer know what they can do if they have any concerns about the sessions. Talk about any support the child or young person may need from their parent or carer.
- It is important that you have the contact details for children and young people's parents or carers and that they have yours in case of emergency.
- All sessions must be undertaken at an agreed time (not ad hoc). Staff should also inform another appropriate adult (their team lead or colleague) that they are undertaking a virtual session where they will be alone with a child or young person.
- Staff need to ensure that a suitable device is available to the child/ young person. Only school or parent/carers emails should be used, staff must not send links to a child's personal email.
- If you are using a platform where you can blur or digitally change your background, this is recommended to try to maintain boundaries where possible.
- If not, try to present in a neutral space if possible. Always remove any identifying background features ahead of time. No other staff member should be present unless there is a reason and this has been agreed prior.
- If delivering sessions from home no other family members should be present and confidentiality should be maintained at all times.
- Staff must keep up to date with the risks associated with video calling software, and social media in general. Always use password protection facilities to ensure no one else can enter the virtual meeting.
- Staff must maintain professional boundaries at all times as they would if conducting a session in person.

Working in supported accommodation

Rising Sun supported accommodation provides practical care and support to homeless, pregnant (or with a young baby) women with varying degrees of vulnerability. Rising Sun believes that people who use our service have an unconditional and on-going right to be free from any form of abuse, harassment or fear, and will take immediate action if it is believed that abuse in any form is occurring or has taken place.

Everyone who is involved in the care of young children has a duty of care and to take action on the child's behalf.

We operate with the following values and principles when working with children within the Rising Sun supported accommodation:

- The safety and wellbeing of children and young people is paramount.
- Children and young people should be listened to.

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- Children and young people and their cultures should be respected.
 - Children and young people should be encouraged to participate in decisions which affect them.
 - The Rising Sun supported accommodation to use learning to provide opportunities for raising self-esteem, and increasing self-awareness.
 - The Rising Sun supported accommodation to work with mothers to build an understanding of setting responsibilities, to ensure the child's welfare.
 - All staff to be aware/trained of Rising Sun safeguarding policies and procedures, to have a current valid DBS, to be fully inducted to the organisation, and to be able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse.
 - To monitor children who are identified as being 'in need'.
 - To keep confidential records which are stored securely and appropriately shared with other professionals.
 - To ensure supportive and effective liaison with other agencies.

Approach to minimizing risk in the supported accommodation:

Rising Sun recognises its residents may bring their babies up differently. Rising Sun will be sensitive and tolerant of customs and views which may be held by residents, while at the same time making it clear what is acceptable behaviour and what is not.

Rising Sun acknowledges that it can be difficult living in supported housing, coupled with the effects of domestic abuse and other issues. Staff members will work closely with the mother through their Individual Support Plan to assist them in developing the appropriate parenting skills and responses.

If there are concerns about parenting, the supported accommodation House Manager will support staff to resolve the situation.

Staff will work with the mother to ensure that the child's needs are met. Every effort will be made to work with the mother on identified issues, this will include practical and therapeutic help and support to her and her child. It may include referral to other agencies.

Residents/mothers are responsible for the safety of their babies in the building at all times. This is clearly stated in the House Rules and Licence Agreement.

Rising Sun supported accommodation will:

- Inform all Staff and Residents of the Safeguarding Policy and associated procedure.
- Provide each resident with a Policy Booklet which will include the policy headlines, and would direct the residents to the reading of the full policies kept on file in the office. The booklet will include mini policies of Safeguarding, Domestic Violence, Anti-bullying, Equality and Diversity, GDPR, Whistle Blowing, as well as House Rules, and Complaints.
- Residents are regularly reminded through House Meetings of what to do should they have any concerns regarding Safeguarding
- Staff will deliver sessions on Healthy Relationships and Recognizing Abuse as well as sessions looking at Positive Parenting including alternative ways to manage behaviour in a non-threatening way, as part of the on-going support.

- Assure Staff, Residents and other individuals who have genuine concerns regarding abuse, that they can report the concerns to the House Manager without recrimination or punishment. Confidentiality will be respected and information not divulged unless justified in accordance with the Confidentiality Policy. However, concerns about the safety of a child will not be ignored. In practical terms this means that when a child protection is an issue, the need for appropriate action will override the usual guarantee of confidentiality.
- Act on all cases of abuse or suspected abuse to support and protect the victim, prevent a recurrence and take fair and proportionate action in respect of the alleged perpetrator.
- Endeavour to support victims of abuse by adopting a victim-centred, multi-agency approach, and always collaborate and co-operate with other agencies such as Social Services, GP's and the Police in respect of individual cases, and in the development of policies and strategies, ensuring that victims of criminal offences are afforded the protection of the law.
- Social Services have the lead responsibility in Child Protection, and Rising Sun recognises the importance of maintaining a good relationship with Social Services to ensure that Child Protection issues are dealt with sensitively and effectively. In order to encourage good working practice, Social Services staff can visit the supported accommodation and meet the Staff in order to keep up to date with the services to the homeless which the supported accommodation provides. Rising Sun ensures that Social Services clients who have experienced Domestic Abuse, are aware of support services available to them.
- Rising Sun staff will write reports and attend case conferences of children with whom they are working, as and when necessary. Core group meetings relating to women and children resident at the supported accommodation can take place at Little Hands Children's Centre or the Family Centre at Cow Lane.
- Residents complete a risk assessment on arrival at the accommodation; this will be reviewed and updated if there are any changes of circumstances.

What you should do if you suspect a child is being abused in supported accommodation?

It is not always easy to recognise adult or child abuse, there are many forms of abuse and some are less clear than others, although this does not mean they are less harmful. It is not the responsibility of staff to decide whether or not abuse has taken place or if an adult or child is at significant risk. It is the responsibility of all Rising Sun staff to report concerns, **NOT** to decide whether or not something is child abuse.

Everyone working for Rising Sun at the Rising Sun supported accommodation has a responsibility to report their concerns to ensure all children and young people are safe. If you are concerned that a baby/child is suffering harm from another person you have a responsibility to protect the child by reporting your concern to the Rising Sun DSP and House Manager immediately. The concern or alleged / actual abuse may need to be reported to

Social Services and if necessary the police. The DSP and House Manager will retain records of all disclosures and concerns raised.

It would be appropriate to inform/discuss the concerns with the resident/mother before a referral is made, except in cases where the need for a referral is considered urgent, such as immediate physical harm or abandonment.

If it is not possible to contact a DSP or House Manager, the staff member should call Children's Social Services out of hour's duty team and report/discuss their concerns.

Rising Sun supported accommodation recognises that one of the best ways to support a baby/ child is to provide support for the resident/mother, and this we will strive to do. However, we also recognise that sometimes there may be a conflict between the interests of the resident/mother and those of the baby/child. This can raise difficulties, but as professionals we have a duty to ensure that **the welfare of the child is paramount**.

Reports into child deaths show there is a need for agencies to share information where there is a suspicion of abuse or neglect. A referral should not be seen as a betrayal of trust but as a necessary and responsible way of protecting children.

Concerns about the safety or well- being of a Baby/child will not be ignored. In practical terms this means that when child protection is an issue, the need for appropriate action will override the usual guarantee of confidentiality. If another resident has reported the abuse, staff must maintain confidentiality by not discussing the case further with the resident. If another resident reports concerns/abuse, the Rising Sun supported accommodation will:

- Reassure her that her concerns will be taken seriously
- Reassure that her identity as the one making the allegation will not be disclosed to the mother but that it will be discussed with members of staff.
- Offer support, and encourage her not to discuss this with other residents.
- Monitor the situation
- Discuss the issue with the mother.
- Make a referral to Social Services if necessary.
- Record and keep the information on file.

If it is suspected that a child has been abused away from the Rising Sun supported accommodation and it is known that the resident/mother takes the child back into an unsafe situation where there is risk of further harm, Rising Sun would have no alternative but to inform Children's social Services of its concerns and give the any relevant information they may require.

If the alleged abuser is a resident, that family would need to be placed into temporary accommodation where possible, pending investigation.

If the alleged abuser is a worker, volunteer, or student at the supported accommodation they will be suspended immediately for their own and the child's protection pending investigation.

If the alleged abuser is a visitor, they will be excluded from the supported accommodation pending investigation.

If the resident/mother leaves the supported accommodation or completely disengages to avoid a CP referral, and Rising Sun still has concerns for the child or young person, Rising Sun will have no alternative but to inform Children's Social Services.

Safe Service, Safe Staff

General principles

The abuse of children can arouse many difficult feelings for staff and it should be recognised that staff can be at different stages in their understanding and awareness. The management team of Rising Sun should ensure that members of staff are supported through any difficulties they may have, by providing both regular and formal supervision and informal support if required, and training and development opportunities.

The staff team is aware that children will need physical comfort at times. It would be inappropriate to deny young children this if they require it. However, any physical contact should be “child led” and appropriate to the child’s needs e.g.: a child seeking comfort after a fall, distressed on separation from a parent etc. No member of staff should ever seek comfort from a child to meet their own needs. Comfort should be in the form of hugs or holding hands. For a variety of reasons, some children may find being touched uncomfortable or distressing. It is important for staff to be sensitive to a child’s physical reaction and to act appropriately.

What support is available to you?

Any member of the team affected by issues arising from concerns for children’s welfare or safety can seek support from their DSP and through their supervision process. The DSP can put staff and parents in touch with outside agencies for professional support if they wish so

Training and Support

All staff will be trained in basic child protection every year as recommended by KSCB. Training courses will be available to all staff through KSCB, in-house and external training plans. The Designated Person and Deputy must complete Designated Person training every two years.

We can currently access free multi agency training from the Kent Safeguarding Children’s Board. Please make sure you are registered for Multi Agency training events and have created an e-learning account – both are accessed via the Kent Safeguarding Children’s Board website.

Monitoring and Review

All Rising Sun personnel and visiting staff will have access to a copy of this policy and will have the opportunity to consider and discuss the contents with the Service Director. The policy will also be available to parents. All staff should have access to this policy and sign to confirm that they have read and understood its contents. The policy should be covered as part of any new staff members’ induction. The policy will be reviewed formally annually, but will be affirmed and altered if necessary (reflecting and policy or legislative changes) as necessary.



Cause for concern report form

This form will be used by members of staff or volunteers to record concerns, disclosures or suspicions of abuse. The completed form should be sent to the Designated Safeguarding Practitioner dealing with the allegations.

The Cause for Concern Report Form can be found on the Rising Sun server here:

G:\Safeguarding

Please ensure you use the latest version of the form which will be the version saved on the server.

If for some reason you cannot access the server, please ask a DSP or another team member to email you a copy of the form to complete.

What happens if an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff or volunteer?

This separate policy is to remind staff of the measures that can be taken to reduce the risk of any allegations being made against them or another member of staff or volunteer. It also contains the procedure which will be undertaken if an allegation is made against a member of staff. This complies with Children's Social Services requirements.

How we can protect ourselves?

- If a child sustains an injury whilst in our care, we will record it on an accident form as soon as possible. When the child is collected, we will inform whoever picks up the child about the injury and ensure that they also sign the record to confirm they have been informed of the event
- If a child arrives with an injury sustained elsewhere we will ask for an explanation and again record this and ask whoever has brought in the child to sign the record
- We will ensure that all staff undertake regular child protection training
- We will ensure that all parents understand our role and responsibility in child protection
- Our behavioural management procedure is that no physical sanctions will be used, and we will ensure that everyone at Rising Sun complies with the policy
- We will not engage in rough physical play with children, as this may be misconstrued and could cause accidental injury to a child
- We will avoid doing things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves
- We will take up references of employees, including one from the candidate's last employer, and will always question any gaps in employment history
- We will encourage an open door ethos, to enable staff to talk to senior managers if they have concerns about the conduct of any of their colleagues.

What happens if an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff/volunteer?

- If anyone makes an allegation of abuse against a member of our staff (whether it be in or out of working hours), the Rising Sun's CEO should be informed immediately and will immediately contact the Trustee Board responsible for Human Resources.
- The Rising Sun's Trustee Board and Service Director will assess whether the allegation reaches the threshold for referral to Police/Social Services and advise accordingly regarding further action to be taken in respect of the child and the member of staff. The Local Authority Designated Officer (**LADO**) on **03000 410888**.
- The Service Director will complete the attached form for recording allegations or complaints made against staff
- The Rising Sun's Service Director will not discuss the allegation with the member of staff concerned, unless advised to do so by Children's Social Services
If the allegation is made against the Service Director or Designated Person, this should be made to/or reported to the Chair of the Trustee board.
- All staff need to be aware that it is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk. When in doubt – consult the CEO or a Trustee.
- If Children's Social Services and/or the police decide to carry out an investigation, advice and consultation will be offered with regard to managing the potential risk and whether the member of staff can continue to work at Rising Sun. The Rising Sun could also invoke their disciplinary procedure
- We will not carry out an investigation ourselves unless Children's Social Services and the Police decide it is not appropriate for them to do so.

Always remember;

The welfare of the child is paramount.

Guidance for completing checklist for handling and recording allegations or complaints of abuse made against a member of staff/volunteer

1. Record the name and position of member of staff/volunteer against whom the allegation or complaint has been made.
2. Verbal complaints should be backed up in writing by the complainant if appropriate; some may require immediate action that does not allow time for this to happen.
3. It is important to identify who made the complaint and whether it was received first hand or is a concern that is passed on from somebody else. If this is the case it is better that you receive the information first hand. If a parent, carer or a member of staff at the Rising Sun makes a complaint against you it must be passed immediately to your line manager.
4. Record the full name, age and date of birth of the child. The address recorded should be the address at which the child lives with the main carer.
5. If there are one or more alleged incidents, be as specific as possible about dates that they are alleged to have happened.
6. Check the attendance register/ diary of work to see if the child was present/seen on that day and the shift patterns of the staff member/volunteer involved to see if they

were working at that time. This could impact on the judgment about whether the incident had taken place.

7. If you have received the complaint in writing attach it to the checklist. You can then summarise it on the form.
8. Any other information should be factual. It will be helpful if you can confirm things such as the level of contact that the staff member has with the child and any other minor concerns that may have been raised previously. **Do not attempt to investigate the complaint yourself.**

Checklist for handling and recording allegations or complaints of abuse made against a member of staff/volunteer regarding a child/children in their care

1. Name and position of staff who is the subject of allegations/complaint:	
Is the complaint: Written or verbal? (Delete as necessary)	
Complaint made by:	Relationship to child:
Name of child:	Age and date of birth of child:
Parent's/carer's name(s) and address:	
Date of alleged incident/s:	
Did the child attend/seen on this/these date/s:	
Nature of complaint (if received in writing see guidance):	
Other relevant information (continue on a separate sheet if needed):	
Social Services (LADO) contacted at (date and time):	
Further actions advised by Specialist Children's Services:	
Your name:	Your position:

Signature:	Date & time of completing:

Local Authority Designated Officer Contacts

The LADO Team deal with allegations against staff who work with children either in education or the wider workforce

If you need to speak to the LADO Team regarding an **allegation** against a member of staff, **please call any member of the LADO Team number**. Your details will be taken and passed to the intake officer. The same intake officer will support you through the process until the matter has been resolved. Please note that the team no longer works on an area basis.

LADO Team contact number: 03000 410 888
Now it's just one number for the whole LADO Team covering Kent Local Authority
Email: kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk

If a call is urgent i.e. **a child is in immediate danger**, and the call **cannot** go through to the officer on **Duty**, the call should go through to the **Central Referral Unit on: 03000 41 11 11**

Urgent child protection issue outside of office hours, Call the **Central Duty** Out of Hours Number: 03000 41 91 91

There may be times when complaints are made about members of staff that relate to conduct, performance and behaviour. Rising Sun recognises the shared responsibility between managers and staff for maintaining acceptable standards of behaviour, conduct and performance at work. Whilst most day-to-day issues will be picked up through regular communication and supervision between managers and their staff, there are occasions when an individual's conduct may need more serious attention.

Useful contacts, websites and links:

Designated Safeguarding Practitioners

Elaine Coia elaine@risingsunkent.com Mobile: 07975964463

Fran Ellis fran@risingsunkent.com Mobile: 07512324947

Ingrid Sanfey Ingrid@risingsunkent.com 01227452852

Anne Lyttle anne@risingsunkent.com Mobile: 07706357522

Trustee Lead

Donna Convery (email via one of the DSPs above, or call the office on 01227 452 852 for contact details)

DfE Working Together to Safeguard Children:

<http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/>

Gov.uk – safeguarding and child protection:

<https://www.gov.uk/childcare-parenting/safeguarding-child-protection>

KCC Report Abuse:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/report-abuse>

KELSI (KCC) – child protection and safeguarding:

<https://www.kelsi.org.uk/child-protection-and-safeguarding>

Kent and Medway Safeguarding procedures:

<https://www.proceduresonline.com/kentandmedway/>

Kent and Medway safeguarding e-learning and online training:

https://kscb.melearning.university/course_centre

Kent Safeguarding Multi-Agency Partnership – support levels guidance:

<https://www.kscmp.org.uk/guidance/kent-support-levels-guidance>

https://www.kscmp.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/115615/Support-Levels-Guidance-Sheet-2020-Final.pdf



NSPCC – what is child abuse and types of abuse:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse>