Last updated: December 2025

Next review date: December 2026

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy – Wales

This policy applies to all paid staff and volunteers, including the Joint Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, associates, students, or anyone else working on behalf of Contact.

The primary responsibility for safeguarding children and young people rests with their parents and carers. Contact services can assist and support parent carers to promote the wellbeing and welfare of their children and young people and keep them safe.

Purpose of the policy

- To protect children and young people who receive, or whose families receive support, advice or services from Contact.
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guides our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

Contact believes that all children and young people deserve to live happy, safe and secure lives, and should be protected from abuse, harm or neglect. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects and safeguards children and young people.

You can find our external safeguarding statement on the Contact website Safeguarding | Contact

Legislation and guidance underpinning this policy

For a full list of relevant legislation and guidance, see the NSPCC website:

https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/wales

This policy should be read alongside Contact's policies, procedures and guidance on:

- Role of the Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO) and safeguarding review group guidance.
- IT security and acceptable use policies.
- GDPR policy.

- Recruitment Policy and Procedure.
- Safer Recruitment Policy.
- Equality and Diversity Policy.
- Compliments and Complaints Policy.
- Whistleblowing Policy.
- Health and Safety Policy.
- Lone Working Policy and Procedure.
- Confidentiality Policy and Procedure.

Contact's responsibilities

Contact must ensure all staff, volunteers and anyone else working on behalf of Contact are aware of the relevant safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures for raising safeguarding concerns. All Contact staff and volunteers are required to follow Contacts internal referral safeguarding procedures.

Contact will ensure that all staff and volunteers have had adequate training. This training is provided via e-learning. Additional revision e-learning should take place at least after every two years. This will be organised by HR. Freelance workers will be expected to provide updated proof of refresher training.

Additional process training may be provided by the Contact Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO) for operational teams where appropriate. In addition, operational staff may access training through the local authority where they are based or through other appropriate national or local providers.

Contacts Board of Trustees review this policy annually. The Board has appointed a designated safeguarding lead who periodically meets with the safeguarding review team lead executive director.

Responsibilities of Contact employees, volunteers and other representatives:

- To be familiar with the safeguarding children policy and procedures.
- To take appropriate action in line with the safeguarding children policy.
- To declare any existing or subsequent convictions. Failure to do so will be regarded as gross misconduct, possibly resulting in dismissal.

Support for those who report abuse

All those making a complaint or allegation or expressing concern, whether they be staff, volunteers, service users, carers or members of the general public, should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously.
- Their comments will usually be treated confidentially, but their concerns may be shared if they or others are at significant risk.
- Both staff and service users reporting abuse will be given support as needed.

Contact operates to the principles that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.
- Early help can be a key factor in preventing safeguarding concerns.
- Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility.

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

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Appointing Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO), ELT member and board member with responsibility for safeguarding.
- Implementing an effective IT security and effective use policy.
- Adopting safeguarding and child protection practices through procedures for staff and volunteers.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely ensuring all necessary checks are made, including through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or nations equivalent.
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely.
- Sharing information about safeguarding and 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.
- Creating and ensuring that we maintain an anti-bullying environment and ensuring we have a dignity at work policy and procedure to deal with bullying that does arise
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing policies and procedures in place.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for staff, volunteers, children and families by applying health and safety measure in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.

Definitions of child abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms 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 a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Even for those experienced in working with child protection, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Whilst it is accepted that staff are not experts at such recognition, they do have a responsibility to act if they have any concerns about the behaviour of someone (an adult or a child) towards a child. All staff have a duty to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child or young person immediately with their line manager and the Safeguarding Officer.

It is important that all staff and volunteers know what they are and how to recognise them. The following definitions are based on those from the updated *Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance 2023.*

Types of abuse

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to, a child whom they are looking after.

A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention, they get through having a sick child. Physical abuse, as well as being a result of an act of commission can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

Children and young women affected by FGM may also fall under this category of abuse. Those affected may also be defined as experiencing both emotional and sexual abuse.

Emotional abuse

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 children 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. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed 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. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of 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. 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). 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. The sexual exploitation of children is child sexual abuse. The sexual exploitation of children defines a broader context of abuse than formal 'prostitution'; the full spectrum of sexually exploitative situations includes children and young people exchanging sex for accommodation, food, gifts, drugs and/or safety.

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 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 caregivers).
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Bullying

It is important to recognise that abuse is not always carried out by an adult on a child; the abuser may be a young person, for example, in the case of bullying. Bullying may be seen to be deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over time a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves.

Although anyone can be a target for bullying, victims are typically shy, sensitive and perhaps anxious and insecure. Bullying can and does occur anywhere where there is inadequate supervision – on the way to and from school for example.

Bullies come from all walks of life; they bully for a variety of reasons and may have been bullied or abused themselves. Typically, bullies have low self-esteem; can be excitable, aggressive and jealous. Crucially, they have learned how to gain power over others.

Bullying may be:

- Physical, e.g. hitting, kicking, theft.
- Verbal, e.g. name-calling, constant teasing, sarcasm, racist or homophobic taunts, threats, graffiti, gestures.
- Emotional, e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring.

- Sexual, e.g. unwanted physical contact, abusive comments.
- Perpetuated via persistent use of the internet e.g. Facebook.
- The damage inflicted by bullying is often underestimated.

It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm).

Research demonstrates that disabled children and young people are significantly more likely to be bullied than non-disabled children, and therefore it is particularly important to ensure that when working with groups of children this is considered and addressed.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It's also known as female circumcision or cutting.

Religious, social or cultural reasons are sometimes given for FGM. However, FGM is child abuse. It's dangerous and a criminal offence.

There are no medical reasons to carry out FGM. It doesn't enhance fertility, and it doesn't make childbirth safer. It is used to control female sexuality and can cause severe and long-lasting damage to physical and emotional health

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. When a child or young person is exploited, they're given things, like gifts, drugs, money, status and affection, in exchange for performing sexual activities. Children and young people are often tricked into believing they're in a loving and consensual relationship. This is called grooming. They may trust their abuser and not understand that they're being abused.

Children and young people can be trafficked into or within the UK to be sexually exploited. They're moved around the country and abused by being forced to take part in sexual activities, often with more than one person. Young people in gangs can also be sexually exploited.

Sometimes abusers use violence and intimidation to frighten or force a child or young person, making them feel as if they've no choice. They may lend them large sums of money they know can't be repaid or use financial abuse to control them.

Anybody can be a perpetrator of CSE, no matter their age, gender or race. The relationship could be framed as friendship, someone to look up to or romantic. Children and young people who are exploited may also be used to 'find' or coerce others to join groups.

Child trafficking

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. Children are trafficked for:

- Sexual exploitation.
- Benefit fraud.
- Forced marriage.

- Domestic slavery like cleaning, cooking and childcare.
- Forced labour in factories or agriculture.
- Committing crimes, like begging, theft, working on cannabis farms or moving drugs.

Trafficked children experience many types of abuse and neglect. Traffickers use physical, sexual and emotional abuse as a form of control and children and young people are also likely to be physically and emotionally neglected within this experience. Traffickers often groom children, families and communities to gain their trust. They may also threaten families with violence or threats and will often promise children and families that they'll have a better future elsewhere.

Trafficking is also an economic crime. Traffickers may ask families for money for providing documents or transport and they'll make a profit from money a child "earns" through exploitation, forced labour or crime. They'll often be told this money is to pay off a debt they or their family "owe" to the traffickers.

Radicalisation

Radicalisation is a process by which an individual or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideals and aspirations that reject or undermine the status quo or reject and/or undermine contemporary ideas and expressions of freedom of choice.

Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. It includes calls for the death of members of the British armed forces (HM Government, 2011).

The process of radicalisation may involve:

- Being groomed online or in person.
- Exploitation, including sexual exploitation.
- Psychological manipulation.
- Exposure to violent material and other inappropriate information.
- The risk of physical harm or death through extremist acts.

Vulnerability factors:

Anyone can be radicalised but there are some factors which may make a young person more vulnerable. These factors will not always lead to radicalisation but include:

- Being easily influenced or impressionable.
- Having low self-esteem or being isolated.
- Feeling that rejection, discrimination or injustice is taking place in society.
- Experiencing community tension amongst different groups.
- Being disrespectful or angry towards family and peers.
- Having a strong need for acceptance or belonging.
- Experiencing grief such as loss of a loved one.

Grooming

Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know - for example a family member, friend or professional.

Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking.

Children and young people can be groomed online or face-to-face, by a stranger or by someone they know - for example a family member, friend or professional. Groomers may be male or female. They could be any age.

Many children and young people don't understand that they have been groomed or that what has happened is abuse.

Domestic Abuse

Witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse, and teenagers can suffer domestic abuse in their relationships.

- Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. But it isn't just physical violence – domestic abuse includes emotional, physical, sexual, financial or psychological abuse.
- Abusive behaviour can occur in any relationship. It can continue even after the relationship has ended. Both men and women can be abused or abusers.

Domestic abuse can seriously harm children and young people. Witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse, and teenagers can suffer domestic abuse in their relationships.

Online abuse

Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen across any device that's connected to the web, like computers, tablets and mobile phones. And it can happen anywhere online, including:

- Social media.
- Text messages and messaging apps.
- Emails.
- Online chats.
- Online gaming.
- Live-streaming sites.

Children can be at risk of online abuse from people they know or from strangers. It might be part of other abuse which is taking place offline, like bullying or grooming. Or the abuse might only happen online.

Children can feel like there is no escape from online abuse – abusers can contact them at any time of the day or night, the abuse can come into safe places like their bedrooms, and images and videos can be stored and shared with other people.

Signs and symptoms of abuse

It is important to remember that a child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and that abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur

repeatedly over time. There is no absolute criterion on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm.

For detailed information on the signs and symptoms of abuse see the NSPCC website: https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/signs-symptoms-effects/

Contact's internal safeguarding referral process

Guidance and documentation around Contact's incident reporting process, including process flowcharts, the safeguarding incident form and descriptions of the role of the designated safeguarding officers (DSO), are located on the intranet.

Designated Safeguarding Team

Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs)

- Angie Fenn
- Tom Bobbin
- Harriet Squirrell
- Catherine McGee

Trustee lead

- Jamileh Tufail

Please email the safeguarding team on:

safeguarding@contact.org.uk

Out of office hours:

- Harriet Squirrell 02076088773

Further reading

- https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/
- https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/signs-symptoms-effects/