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Version: 7	Relevant to: All Onside Staff and Volunteers
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Related Policies: Safeguarding Adults Dignity at Work Safer Recruitment Whistle Blowing Health & Safety Harassment & Bullying Data Protection & Confidentiality Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Complaints Comments & Feedback Prevent policies (children and adults) Lone Working	
Resources:	
Policy Amendments/Updates: Addition of how policy is shared (page 5) Addition of Onside help keep children safe (page 8) Update on how children & young people should report their concerns (page 19) Update to flowchart for reporting a safeguarding concern (page 33)	

Onside Children's Safeguarding Policies & Procedures

2024/2025

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Onside Safeguarding Statement

Safeguarding protects people's health, well being and human rights and enables them to live free from harm and abuse. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
Onside is committed to ensuring that children, young people and adults at risk of harm or abuse who come into contact with Onside staff and volunteers are treated with respect and are free from all forms of abuse or mistreatment. We are committed to ensuring that all staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding, including their legal and statutory responsibilities, and have the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and maintain the welfare and safety of those with whom they come into contact. Our Trustees recognise their responsibility for ensuring that those benefiting from, or working with the organisation, are not harmed in any way through their contact with Onside.

Onside have comprehensive safeguarding policies which are reviewed annually.
The designated safeguarding lead responsible for safeguarding children and young people is Sarah Hudson, Safeguarding Manager.

Onside Safeguarding Contact Details

If you are worried about someone's immediate safety or health, please call the relevant emergency services on 999

During Office Hours

If your concern is urgent and you need to speak to a Designated Safeguarding Lead please contact the DSL by telephone in the first instance

You can do that by

1. Phoning the Safeguarding Manager Sarah Hudson direct on **07377 154686** ***OR***
2. Phoning the Access Hub on **01905 27525** and ask to speak to a DSL ***OR***
3. If urgent and no response to above call **07497 390459**

Out of office hours

Onside office hours are Monday to Thursday 9am – 5pm, Friday 9am to 4.30pm. If you have an urgent concern outside of these hours please contact the OUT OF HOURS NUMBER on

07497 390459. You will be connected to a member of the Senior Leadership Team who will support you with your concern.

Key Contacts

Local Authority Safeguarding Contact details

Worcestershire

To report a **Child Protection** concern

- If you have an immediate concern about the safety and welfare of a child, please phone the Family Front Door directly on **01905 822666**. You will be required to submit the information on a referral form as per the Worcestershire County Council procedure. Please see link below

  https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20641/are_you_a_professional_and_worried_about_child Scroll halfway down the page and click on "referral to social" care button. Please note you may need to create an account depending on the type of referral you need to submit

- Before making a referral please refer to the levels of need guidance by following the link below
  http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/7962/levels_of_need_guidance_formerly_threshold_guidance

- If you have a child protection concern outside of normal office hours please contact the out of hours emergency duty team (EDT) telephone **01905 768020**

Herefordshire

To report a **Child Protection** concern

- If you think that a child has been harmed or is being neglected, contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on **01432 260800.** Outside of normal office hours please contact **01905 768020** when MASH is unavailable

Birmingham

To report a **Child Protection** concern

Monday to Thursday: 8:45am to 5:15pm
Friday: 8:45am to 4:15pm
Telephone: **0121 303 1888**

- **Emergency out-of-hours** Telephone: 0121 675 4806
  https://www.birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/info/3/information_for_professionals/40/refer_a_child_who_you_re_concerned_about

Warwickshire

To report a **Child Protection** concern

- **Before making a referral** - please take a look at the Threshold Document to decide whether your concerns require a referral to Children's Social Care
- **For urgent concerns** - if you have an urgent child protection concern and need to get in touch with us, call the MASH on **01926 414144**
- Lines are open Monday to Thursday - 9.00am – 5:30pm & Friday - 9.00am – 5:00pmYou will then need to complete and return a Multi-Agency Contact Form (MAC) and send via email to the MASH team: Please email - mash@warwickshire.gov.uk
- **Out of hours** - if you need to get in touch out of usual office hours, please contact the Emergency Duty Team immediately on **01926 886922**

Gloucestershire

To report a **Child Protection** concern

- **Telephone 01452 42 6565 during office hours**
  or email
  childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk

- Out of hours contact the emergency duty team on **01452 61 4194**

Onside Organisational Safeguarding Policy

Date of Policy: 1 January 2022
Date of last review: 3rd March 2023
Date for next review: 6th March 2024

Related Policies: Dignity at Work, Safer Recruitment, Whistle Blowing, Health & Safety, Harassment & Bullying, Data Protection & Confidentiality, Privacy, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Complaints Comments & Feedback, IT Internet & social media, Prevent policies (children and adults) Lone Working, Anti Bullying Policy.

Onside is committed to the welfare and safety of all children, young people, and adults it comes into contact with. Onside will take all reasonable steps to ensure that all people it works with are kept safe from all forms of harm or abuse. Onside are committed to promoting good practice and managing services in a way which promotes safety and reduces the risk of harm or abuse occurring. Onside will ensure that any allegations, disclosures of abuse or suspicions are dealt with appropriately and the child or adult at risk is supported.

All Onside's policies are shared with new staff during induction. They are also available on Onside's intranet page, Oracle as well as on Onside website. When any amendments are made to polices, these are communicated via Onside intranet page and shared at management and team meetings. A record of this is kept on Onside's internal HR system

Policies and procedures are shared with service users at the beginning of support. This is done is various ways depending on age and mental capacity of the individual.

- Physical copy of policy handed to service user
- Completion of Onside & You – document outlining support Onside will offer and cover complaints process

Links to online versions of policy

Onside will ensure that

- All trustees, staff, volunteers, and people using our services are familiar with this policy
- We will work with other agencies within the Safeguarding Framework for both children and adults
- We will work within our confidentiality policy and will gain permission from people using our services before sharing information about them with another agency (unless it is the referring agency), unless we are required by law to share it, or, unless the person using our service will come to harm if we do not share it
- All staff and volunteers are suitable to undertake work with children, young people, and adults, and that all reasonable steps are taken not to appoint someone who is

disqualified from working with one of the above groups. This will be done by the securing of two references and enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service checks which will be renewed every three years as a minimum. Onside staff are required to join the DBS Update Service and undertake an annual check

- All staff and volunteers are aware of the relevant policies relating to all aspects of safeguarding, through initial induction and on-going relevant training
- All staff and volunteers will have appropriate training in relation to safeguarding both children and adults
- All staff and volunteers are aware of their obligations and legal responsibility to report safeguarding concerns or inappropriate behaviour and the process they should follow in the event of a concern
- All staff and volunteers are aware that they are expected to demonstrate understanding and respect, and always adhere to the Onside Dignity at Work policy
- All staff and volunteers will have the appropriate levels of support and supervision
- Trustees and the Senior Leadership Team will receive regular safeguarding reports to ensure effective management of services.
- The organisation responds appropriately to any changes of legislation

Onside Child Protection Policy and Procedures

These procedures are designed to provide a support framework for all staff and volunteers to ensure they recognise and respond to the safeguarding needs of children. These procedures are based on the West Midlands regional safeguarding procedures.

Working Together 2018 introduced a new requirement for Multi-Agency Safeguarding arrangements to replace local Safeguarding boards with a Safeguarding Children's Partnership Board. Responsibility for children's strategic safeguarding arrangements now lies jointly and equally with the Clinical Commissioning Group, Police, and the Local Authority. Although there have been changes to the governance for Safeguarding children, the procedures for reporting significant harm to children and young people remain the same.

This procedure applies to any paid member of staff, volunteer, or Trustee, who may be concerned about the safety and protection of a child. This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation is made that a child has been abused or when there is a suspicion that a child has been abused. Promises of confidentiality should not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the child. If the complainant is the child, questions should be kept to the minimum necessary to understand what is being alleged and leading questions should be avoided. The use of leading questions can cause problems for any subsequent investigation and or court proceedings.

A full record should be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information

Remember that you are not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred**. Onside staff and volunteers are not responsible for investigating an allegation,** that is the responsibility of the local authority child protection team following on from a referral.

Purpose and aim of this procedure

We aim to ensure those children who come into contact with Onside and any other children who may come to our attention, receive the protection and support they need if they are at risk of abuse.
This procedure provides clear direction to Onside staff and volunteers who may have concerns that a child is in need of protection.

A child-centred approach to safeguarding

A child centred approach is fundamental to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child. A child centred approach means keeping the child in focus when making decisions about their lives and working in partnership with them and their families.

All Onside staff and volunteers should follow the principles of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 which state that the welfare of children is paramount and that they are best looked after within their families, with their parents playing a full part in their lives, unless compulsory intervention in family life is necessary.

Children may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their day-to-day lives. These threats can take a variety of different forms, including sexual, physical and emotional abuse; neglect; exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Whatever the form of abuse or neglect, staff and volunteers should always put the needs of children first when determining what action to take. (Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018)

Onside recognise that they have a responsibility to the children and young people they support to help improve their personal safety and this is done in a variety of ways through our different service but can include:

- Increase children's awareness of personal safety risk
- Teach children how to identify and avoid risky or dangerous situation
- Empower and encourage children to speak up about any worries they have
- Build children's confidence and resilience using safety strategies that are age and stage appropriate
- Work in partnership with agencies and families to provide a holistic response to children's personal safety
- Develop and provide age and stage appropriate resources which currently include access to face to face individual and group support, online chat and group support and access to helpline via whats app

Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse

Deliberately physically hurting a child. This might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, or suffocating a child.
Physical abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol, or their mental health or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Babies and disabled children also have a higher risk of suffering physical abuse.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Physical abuse can also occur outside of the family environment.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of physical abuse

- Children with frequent injuries
- Children with unexplained or unusual fractures or broken bones
- Children with unexplained: bruises or cuts; burns or scalds; or bite marks

Emotional Abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. Although the effects of emotional abuse might take a long time to be recognisable, staff will be in a position to observe it, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve serious bullying, this could include online bullying through social networks, online games, or mobile phones by a child's peers.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of emotional abuse

- Children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong
- Parents or carers who withdraw their attention from their child, giving the child the 'cold shoulder'
- Parents or carers blaming their problems on their child
- Parents or carers who humiliate their child, for example, by name-calling or making negative comparisons

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child. You should be aware that many children and young people who are victims of sexual abuse do not recognise themselves as such. A child may not understand what is happening and may not even understand that it is wrong. Sexual abuse can have a long-term impact on mental health.

Sexual abuse 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 clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual abuse

- Children who display knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age
- Children who use sexual language or have sexual knowledge that you wouldn't expect them to have
- Children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games
- Children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections, or underage pregnancy

Neglect

Defined as a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be providing adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision, or shelter. It is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development.
Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse. It is important that staff remain alert and do not miss opportunities to take timely action. However, while you may be concerned about a child, neglect is not always straightforward to identify.
Neglect may occur if a parent becomes physically or mentally unable to care for a child. A parent may also have an addiction to alcohol or drugs, which could impair their ability to keep a child safe or result in them prioritising buying drugs, or alcohol, over food, clothing or warmth for the child. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal drug or alcohol abuse.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of neglect

- Children who are living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe
- Children who are left hungry or dirty
- Children who are left without adequate clothing, e.g., not having a winter coat
- Children who are living in dangerous conditions, i.e., around drugs, alcohol, or violence
- Children who are often angry, aggressive, or self-harm
- Children who fail to receive basic health care
- Parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse can be defined as an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behavior, including sexual violence, in the majority of cases by a partner or ex-partner, but also by a family member or carer as well as peer to peer. It is very

common and in the vast majority of cases it is experienced by women and is perpetrated by men.

Domestic abuse can include, but is not limited to, the following

- Coercive control (a pattern of intimidation, degradation, isolation and control with the use or threat of physical or sexual violence)
- Psychological and/or emotional abuse
- Physical or sexual abuse
- Financial or economic abuse
- Harassment and stalking
- Online or digital abuse

Key Changes to the new Domestic Abuse Act include

- A legal definition of domestic abuse which recognizes children as victims in their own right
- A legal duty on councils to fund support for survivors in safe accommodation (removing the word / term refuge)
- A ban on abusers using a defense of rough sex
- New protections in the family and civil courts for survivors (including ban on cross examination by alleged abusers, separate waiting rooms, exits etc.)
- A ban on GP's charging for medical evidence of domestic abuse
- A guarantee that all survivors will be in priority need category for housing and will be able to keep a secure tenancy in social housing if they need to escape an abuser
- Introduction of new criminal offences including post separation coercive control, non-fatal strangulation, threats to disclose private sexual messages

The full statutory guidance can be access here Statutory definition of domestic abuse factsheet - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Contextual Safeguarding

In 2018, the Department for Education updated the *Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance* which says 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. Extremist groups make use of the internet to radicalise and recruit and to promote extremist

materials. The risks arising from situations outside the family interact with a wide range of needs such as social exclusion, poor physical and emotional health, barriers to learning, and SEND.

The growing sense that the current system of protection is not effective in meeting diverse needs and reducing risks is accompanied by an increase in understanding about adolescent development.

We should understand that risk can exist within peer groups and social networks as well as within families; We should avoid harmful assumptions about adolescent choices e.g. don't minimise the significance of adolescent choices, nor perceive them as adult 'lifestyle' choices; We should recognise and address the challenges involved in reducing adolescent risk and breaking cycles e.g. the challenge to engage adolescents in interventions and to support the full range of adolescent needs.

You can read more about Contextual Safeguarding here
https://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/

It is also important to understand the definitions of:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Child Criminal Exploitation
- Modern Day Slavery
- Gangs
- Organised Crime Groups (OCGs)
- County Lines
- Cuckooing
- Trafficked Children
- Children and Young People Missing from Care
- Forced Marriage
- Honour Based Violence
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Radicalisation

This will enable you to be aware of the safeguarding complexities surrounding criminal exploitation, gang affiliation and organised criminality affecting children (0- to 18-year-olds), young people (18- to 25-year-olds) and vulnerable adults (over 25-year-olds).

Child Sexual Exploitation

A form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power, or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status.

Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care, and education at some point.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual exploitation

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- Children who regularly miss school or education or don't take part in education

Child Criminal Exploitation

Child Criminal Exploitation has been defined within the Home Office Serious Violence Crime Strategy (2018) 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 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. 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.

Staff need to be mindful that children who are criminally exploited should be seen as victims and not treated as criminals. They should also be treated through the lens of modern slavery and child safeguarding legislation and practice. It is important to remember that children, young people or adults being criminally exploited may be trafficked, especially if they are having their travel arranged or facilitated for the purpose of them being exploited.

In cases of criminal exploitation and gang affiliation we know that powerful, adult gang members recruit and arrange or facilitate the travel of children, young people (and vulnerable adults) for the purpose of them selling drugs, firearms or sex on their behalf. This is exploitation and is defined as such under the Modern-Day Slavery Act 2015 which includes**:**

- Sexual exploitation
- Securing services etc. by force, threats or deception
- Securing services etc. from children and vulnerable persons

- It is important to note that perpetrators of criminal exploitation may themselves be children
- Young people or vulnerable adults who are criminally exploited and the victims of criminal exploitation may also be at risk of becoming perpetrators.

Modern day Slavery

The Modern-Day Slavery Act 2015 places a duty on local authorities, including services that are commissioned to give due regard to support people who are drawn into modern day slavery in which people are exploited for criminal gain.

Gangs

It is common for groups of children and young people to gather in public places to socialise. Crime and violence are not intrinsic to the identity or practice of peer groups. Although some peer group gatherings can lead to increased anti-social behaviour and youth offending, these activities should not be confused with the serious violence or criminal activity (such as drug dealing) of a street gang, or criminal activities or an organised crime group.

Street Gangs

A street gang can be described as a relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of children who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity. A street gang will engage in criminal activity and violence and may lay claim over territory (not necessarily geographical but it can include an illegal economy territory), where they are in conflict with other similar gangs. These gangs have some form of identifying structure featuring a hierarchy usually based on age, physical strength, and propensity to violence or older sibling rank. Street gangs are loosely organised and may be affiliated to older criminals who are members of organised crime groups. Criminal exploitation and gang affiliation is likely to occur in street gangs. To become a gang member there may be certain rites a person will have to complete in order to become accepted as part of the gang. This may involve anti-social or criminal behaviour, substance misuse, sexual abuse/exploitation and/or violence.

Organised Crime Group (OCG)

An OCG is a group of individuals normally led by adults. Many of these groups are often loose networks of criminals that come together for a specific criminal activity, acting in different roles depending on their skills and expertise. This involves serious and organised criminality, where organised crime can be defined as serious crime planned, coordinated, and conducted by people working together on a continuing basis.

Their motivation is often, but not always, financial gain. OCG structures vary. Successful OCGs often consist of a durable core of key individuals. Around them is a cluster of subordinates, specialists, and other more transient members, plus an extended network of associates. Many groups are often loose networks of criminals. Collaboration is often reinforced by shared experiences (such as prison), or recommendation from trusted individuals. Others are bonded by family or cultural ties – some 'crime families' are precisely that.

Street gangs and OCGs are a socially and intentionally constructed group of individuals with attitudes, thinking and behaviours geared towards criminality. They will use violence and intimidation, social media, and weapons as 'tools of power' to violate, challenge and disrespect other gangs. They will also use this level of violence and intimidation against a child that refuses to do particular criminal activities. This may result in threats being made against a child's family, including threats towards siblings and wider family members, to coerce someone into criminal activity.

County Lines

County Lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". They 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.

Both street gangs and OCGs criminally exploit children, young people and vulnerable adults to carry out illegal activity on their behalf. Gangs dealing drugs is not a new issue but the extent to which criminal exploitation (often organised) of children and vulnerable adults, as well as the increasing use of violence, has become an inherent part of 'County Lines'.

Children, young people, and vulnerable adults can be exploited to be both consumer and runner. They may begin to consume the drugs they are asked to run or begin running in order to maintain their drug usage or those of their peers. This places them 'in debt' to the gang and so they are expected to either pay back by 'working' or else accumulate debt. The more debt the more control the gang has. Threats can vary from being beaten, or in more extreme cases stabbed and may involve indirect threats to harm family members.

Cuckooing

Cuckooing is likely to occur when gangs establish a base within a targeted location. They will typically take over the homes of local vulnerable adults by force or coercion in a practice referred to as "cuckooing". Some of the cuckooing signs to look out for include but are not limited to the following:

- People living in multi-occupancy or social housing properties
- Vulnerable people disengaging with support services
- Drug users
- Individuals who are unwilling or scared to discuss what is happening at their property when the subject is raised with them
- Individuals who are isolated and lack family or other support networks

There is also the risk that babies and very young children may be living in properties that are being used by gangs which presents significant safeguarding risks.

Trafficked Children

Children may be trafficked into the UK from a number of different countries for a variety of different reasons. They can be trafficked a number of times and be subject to multiple forms of exploitation during their journey and once in the UK. Factors which can make children vulnerable to trafficking are varied and include such things as poverty, lack of education, discrimination and disadvantage, political conflict and economic transition and inadequate local laws and regulations.

Children of both UK and other citizenships are being trafficked internally within the UK for similar reasons to those outlined above, such as sexual and criminal exploitation. This can include unaccompanied asylum-seeking (UASC) children, who may appear to have entered the UK through legal channels but for whom this may have been part of their trafficking journey and will be exploited once within the UK.

Children & Young People Missing from Home or Care

A missing person is defined as: "Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character, or the context suggests the person may be at risk of criminal activity or harm. When someone is categorised as missing, the police will investigate their disappearance and try to find and safeguard them. Under the Children Act 1989, the Police, working with Local Authority Children's Social Care services and other agencies, are responsible for making enquiries to safeguard and secure the welfare of any child within their area who is suffering (or is likely to suffer) significant harm.

Children Missing Education (CME)

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have.

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children

missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation, or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. (Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities September 2016)
Children missing education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Forced Marriage

The Forced Marriage Unit defines forced marriage as:
"A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. It is an appalling and indefensible practice and is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse, and a serious abuse of human rights.

The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence, and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). Financial gain can also be a factor. E.g., withholding of wages.

So Called Honour Based Violence

This is a crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community. It is a term used to describe violence committed within the context of the extended family which is motivated by a perceived need to restore standing within the community, which is presumed to have been lost through the behaviour of the victim. This domestic violence could include physical, sexual, emotional, or financial abuse or all of these.
The triggers around this may include:

- Having a relationship outside of an approved group
- Refusing an arranged marriage
- Loss of Virginity
- Pregnancy
- Spending time without supervision of a family member
- Attempting divorce
- Refusing to divorce when ordered to by family members
- Custody of children after divorce
- Reporting domestic violence

This form of abuse requires an immediate response from both the police and children's/ adults social care as urgent action will need to take place to safeguard and protect the victims.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

This is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured, or changed, but there's no medical reason for this to be done. It's also known as female circumcision or cutting, and by other terms, such as Sunna, Gudniin, Halalays, Tahur, Megrez and Khitan, among others. The age at which FGM is carried out varies. It may take place when a female baby is born /during childhood or adolescence or just before marriage /during pregnancy.

Sometimes religious, social, and cultural reasons are given to justify FGM, however it is a dangerous practice and is a form of child abuse and illegal in the UK, child protection procedures need to be initiated and a referral to the police is required.

Radicalisation

Radicalisation is the process through which a person comes to support or be involved in extremist ideologies. It can result in a person becoming drawn into terrorism and is a form of harm.

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

It happens gradually so children and young people who are affected may not realise what it is that they are being drawn into.

If a child or young person is being radicalised their day-to-day behaviour may become increasingly centred around an extremist ideology, group or cause. For example, they may:

- Spend increasing amounts of time talking to people with extreme views (this includes online and offline communication)
- Change their style of dress or personal appearance
- Lose interest in friends and activities that are not associated with the extremist ideology, group or cause
- Have material or symbols associated with an extreme cause
- Try to recruit others to join the cause

If you think a child or the people around them are involved in radicalisation and there is an immediate risk of harm, call the police straight away. Refer to the PREVENT policy on 26.

Recognising and Responding to Abuse

Ways that abuse might be brought to your attention

- A child might make a direct disclosure about him/herself/their self
- A child might make a direct disclosure about another child
- A child might offer information that is worrying but not a direct disclosure
- A member of staff might be concerned about a child's appearance or behaviour or about the behaviour of a parent or carer towards a child
- A parent or carer might make a disclosure about abuse that a child is suffering or at risk of suffering
- A parent might offer information about a child that is worrying but not a direct disclosure.
- Child missing education

Responding to a child who has told you that he/she or another child is being abused

- Stay calm
- Listen carefully to what is said
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets
- Tell the child that the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it
- Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer (leading questions)
- Reassure the child that telling someone about it was the right thing to do
- Tell the child that you now have to do what you can to keep him/her (or the child who is the subject of the allegation) safe
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and who else needs to know about it.
- Let the child tell his or her whole story. Don't try to investigate or quiz the child, but make sure that you are clear as to what he/she is saying
- Ask the child what they would like to happen as a result of what they have said, but don't make or infer promises you can't keep
- Record in writing as soon as possible what was said, using the child's own words. Include the date, time, any names mentioned and to whom the information was given

All concerns raised directly by children will be dealt with using the same safeguarding reporting process for all concerns whereby a DSL is informed immediately. A discussion will be held to agree any actions and if information needs to be shared with the child's family, school or other external agencies. The DSL will create a record of the concerns on Onside case record management system and staff will update case notes as and when appropriate.

Helping a child in immediate danger or in need of emergency medical attention

- If the child is in immediate danger and is with you, remain with him/her and call the police
- If the child is elsewhere, contact the police and explain the situation to them
- If the child needs emergency medical attention, call an ambulance and, while you are waiting for it to arrive, seek help from a first aider within the setting where you are working
- If the first aider is not available, use any first aid knowledge that you may have yourself to help the child
- You also need to contact the designated safeguarding lead to let them know what is happening

A decision will need to be made about who should inform the child's family and the local authority children's social care department, and when they should be informed. If you have involved the police and/or the health services, they should be part of this decision. Consider the welfare of the child in your decision making as the highest priority.

Issues that will need to be considered are

- The child's wishes and feelings
- The parent's right to know (unless this would place the child or someone else in danger, or would interfere with a criminal investigation)
- The impact of telling or not telling the parent
- The current assessment of the risk to the child and the source of that risk
- Any risk management plans that currently exist

Reporting child protection concerns

If a child is in need of emergency medical attention or in immediate danger, follow the procedure outlined above re helping a child in immediate danger or in need of emergency medical attention.
You should then take the steps set out below (keeping a record of your concerns) to ensure the concern is dealt with.

Once any immediate danger or emergency medical need has been dealt with, follow the steps set out at the end of this document. Local contact details for Child Protection teams are included within these policy and procedures on page 4.

All staff should discuss any concerns with the Onside Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL) and if the DSL or no DDSL`s are available please contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). All contact details are available within these policies and procedures on page 4.

Keeping a record of your concerns

Make some brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation

- Do not destroy the original notes in case they are needed by a court of law
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words
- Indicate the position of any bruising or other injury on the body map diagram that can be found within the safeguarding concern form
- Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions
- Record if carer/others have been informed of the concerns, their responses and or if they have not been informed, why you felt this was an appropriate course of action
- All the information outlined above should be recorded on a safeguarding concern form

Role of the line manager

The role of the line manager is to support the member of staff, trustee or volunteer involved with the incident and to ensure the correct procedures are followed.

It is the responsibility of the line manager to ensure that their member of staff reports any concerns to either the Designated Safeguarding Lead, a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead or a member of SLT.

The line manager should ensure that all staff within their team are familiar with these procedures and ensure that all staff/volunteers undertake appropriate child protection training.

What to do if a member of staff has concerns about a child's safety or welfare

A member of staff/volunteer will seek advice and guidance as appropriate from a DSL or DDSL at this stage.

If the child's family does not already know about the concern, the member of staff/volunteer or manager discusses it with them **unless**:

- A family member might be responsible for abusing the child
- Someone may be put in danger by the family being informed
- Informing the family might interfere with a criminal investigation
- If any of these circumstances apply, discussions with the family should only take place after this has been agreed with the local authority children's social care department

- If there is still uncertainty about the concerns, then the staff member/volunteer/line manager can discuss with children's social care department without disclosing the identity of the child/family

If you remain concerned

A referral to the local authority children's social care department should be made immediately using the relevant Online form, please see p2 – 3 for links. This form should only be completed after you have spoken to a DSL, unless there are exceptional circumstances and / or the individual is at immediate risk of significant harm. A copy of the local authority safeguarding referral form should be emailed to the DSL via safeguarding@onside-advocacy.org.uk. Once a referral has been made a social worker should respond within agreed timescales informing you of any further action that will be taken. If you have not had a response within 48 hours the referral should be followed up and any further action confirmed.

If no further local authority child protection action is identified

The staff member/volunteer and DSL should decide whether to discuss the initial concern with other services (e.g., school) to ensure that the child's needs are being met elsewhere e.g., through Early Help or other interventions or agencies.

Consent and mental capacity:

Any young person aged 16 years or over is presumed by law to be competent and to have capacity (as defined in the Mental Capacity Act 2005) and therefore has the right to give or withhold consent to treatment or sharing of information independent of their parents' views. However, 16-18-year-olds are still deemed to be children for the purposes of safeguarding and these procedures should be followed and advice taken from line manager and/or DSL. For those under 16, the Mental Capacity Act is relevant when there are doubts about their ability to make decisions.

The Care Act 2014 emphasises the need to empower people to balance choice and control for individuals against preventing harm and reducing risk, and to respond proportionately to safeguarding concerns. Whilst the Care Act primarily focuses on adults with care and support needs, it's not entirely limited to them either as young carers and young people transitioning to adult services sit within this legislation, so Onside apply these principles of empowerment and risk management with children and young people when required.

If there are concerns around the capacity of the person you are supporting, these should be raised with the person who made the initial referral as well as informing an Onside DSL

Staff and Volunteer Training

Child protection training will be included in all Staff and Volunteer induction. This includes:

- E-learning package of child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, PREVENT and Zero Suicide
- Mandatory induction day for all staff and volunteers with an introduction to safeguarding delivered by safeguarding manager
- Mandatory safeguarding training with safeguarding manager which covers internal reporting processes, how to record concerns and how to write appropriate case notes

Staff and volunteers will be made aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, how they should respond to child protection concerns and how to make a referral to local authority children's social care or the police if necessary. All staff will be required to read and confirm that they agree to work in line with this policy, this will be recorded on Onside's internal HR system. All Staff and volunteers will have updated safeguarding training appropriate to their role. For staff this is an annual refresher safeguarding training session with the safeguarding manager, for volunteers this is required bi-annually

The DSL will ensure that all DDSL`s will receive regular updates recognising that policies and best practice change and develop regularly.

Responding appropriately to an allegation of abuse

In the event of an incident or disclosure:

DO

- Make sure the individual is safe
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- Listen and offer support and reassurance
- Ascertain and establish the basic facts
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them
- Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Follow correct procedure
- Explain areas of confidentiality; immediately speak to your manager for support and guidance
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation
- Remember the need for ongoing support

DON'T

- Panic
- Confront the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion
- Be dismissive of the concern

- Investigate or interview beyond which is necessary to establish basic facts
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation
- Ask leading questions
- Assume information
- Make promises
- Ignore the allegation

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. This is a task for the professional safeguarding agencies, following a referral.

The role of the DSL is to: -

- Ensure all staff are aware of these procedures, ensure that appropriate training and support is provided to all staff
- Ensure that the Chief Executive is kept fully informed of any concerns
- Ensure the maintenance of effective working relationships with other agencies and services
- Decide whether to take further action about specific concerns e.g. refer to Children's Services or the Police
- Ensure that accurate records relating to individual children are stored in line with the Onside Data Protection Policy
- DSL to agree with line manager any required monitoring of children who have been identified as 'at risk'

Support for staff

Dealing with a disclosure from an adult or child at risk is likely to be a stressful experience. The member of staff/volunteer concerned, should consider seeking support for her/himself and discuss this with their line manager, designated safeguarding lead or contact the Employee Assistance service HR - Documents

Allegations involving Onside volunteers or staff

Onside has a whistle blowing policy which includes the procedure outlined below that enabling staff and volunteers to share, in confidence with a designated person, concerns that they may have about a colleague's behaviour. This is sometimes referred to as **whistle blowing.** Also see Procedure for dealing with allegations made against an employee/volunteer.
This behaviour may not be linked to adult abuse, but it is beyond acceptable limits. Staff and volunteers are reminded that:

- You can't tell by looking at a person whether they are an abuser. They don't appear different from the rest of society
- Abusers come from all classes in society, all professions, and all races
- Abuse of adults may sometimes be carried out by strangers, but it is much more common that the abuser is known to the adult and is in a position of trust and/or authority

There may be staff or volunteers who:

- Are unable to provide consistent care
- Cause adults to suffer physical or emotional harm consistently behaving inappropriately towards them
- Manipulate themselves into positions of trust where they can exploit adults at risk, physically, emotionally, financially, or sexually.

Onside will provide support for whistle blowers. If you become aware of anything that makes you feel uncomfortable then we actively encourage you to discuss your concerns in confidence with any of the following: Chief Executive, Director of Services and Business Development, Director of Resources, Onside Trustee Lead for Safeguarding, Onside Safeguarding Manager or any Onside designated Safeguarding Leads (all contact details can be found on the "Safeguarding Contact Details" pages contained within this document). Please refer to Whistle Blowing policy for further information.

The Organisation supports and will provide protection for whistle blowers. If you become aware of anything that makes you feel uncomfortable then discuss the incident with the designated person. Training and supervision will be provided for staff and volunteers to recognise suitable and inappropriate behaviour.

The Safeguarding Manager/Chief Executive will not investigate the allegation itself, or take written or detailed statements, but he/she will assess whether it is necessary to refer the case to the local Social Services Department/Police in accordance with the local adult protection procedures.

Confidentiality

Onside is committed to maintaining confidentiality wherever possible and information around child protection issues should be shared only with those who need to know. For further information, please see Onside confidentiality policy.

All allegations/disclosures/concerns should be recorded on the safeguarding concern form. The information should be accurate, factual and not based on opinions. The information that is recorded will be kept secure and will comply with GDPR and data protection.

Appendix i

Prevent Policy Children and Young People

Date of Policy: 3 July 2025
Date of last policy review: 6 June 2025
Date of next policy review: 6th June 2026

Related Policies: Safeguarding Policy and related documents, Confidentiality Statement, Code of Conduct

Safeguarding Children and Young people against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism

Onside recognises its responsibilities under the Prevent duty to safeguard Children and Young People against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 specifies that Local Safeguarding Children Boards, local authorities and their partners should be commissioning and providing services for children who are likely to suffer, or may have suffered significant harm, due to radicalisation and extremism. (Chapter 1, Section 17).

From 1 July 2015 all schools and childcare providers must have regard to the statutory guidance issued under section 29 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". An updated Prevent Toolkit was published in September 2018 toolkit.

This duty is known as the Prevent duty. The specified authorities are those judged to have a role in protecting vulnerable children, young people, and adults and/or the national security.
The Prevent strategy, published by the Government in 2011, is part of an overall counter-terrorism strategy called CONTEST. The aim of the Prevent strategy is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.
In addition, the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CT and S Act) set out the duty on local authorities and partners to establish and cooperate with a local Channel programme of

'Channel panels' to provide support for people, children, and adults, vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It is essential that Channel panel members, partners to local panels and other professionals ensure that children, young people, and adults are protected from harm.

Channel is about ensuring that vulnerable children and adults of any faith, ethnicity or background receive support before their vulnerabilities are exploited by those that would want them to embrace terrorism, and before they become involved in criminal terrorist related activity.

Definition

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.

"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. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas" (HM Government Prevent Strategy 2011).

Since the publication of the Prevent Strategy, there has been an awareness of the specific need to safeguard children, young people, and families from violent extremism. There have been attempts to radicalise vulnerable children and young people to develop extreme views including views justifying political, religious, sexist, or racist violence, or to steer them into a rigid and narrow ideology that is intolerant of diversity and leaves them vulnerable to future radicalisation.

Keeping children safe from these risks is a safeguarding matter and should be approached in the same way as safeguarding children from other risks. Children should be protected from messages of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to, those linked to Islamist ideology, or to Far Right / Neo Nazi / White Supremacist ideology, Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups, and extremist Animal Rights movements.

Risks

Children and young people can be drawn into violence, or they can be exposed to the messages of extremist groups by many means. These can include through the influence of family members or friends and/or direct contact with extremist groups and organisations or, increasingly, through the internet via social media or other websites. This can put a young

person at risk of being drawn into criminal activity and has the potential to lead to the child or young person suffering significant harm.

This may take the form of a "grooming" process where the vulnerabilities of a young person are exploited to form an exclusive friendship which draws the young person away from other influences that might challenge the radical ideology. The risk of radicalisation can develop over time and may relate to a number of factors in the child's life. Identifying the risks require practitioners to exercise their professional judgement and to seek further advice as necessary. The risk may be combined with other vulnerabilities or may be the only risk identified.

On-line content, in particular social media, may pose a specific risk in normalising radical views and promoting content that is shocking and extreme; children can be trusting and may not necessarily appreciate bias, which can lead to being drawn into such groups and to adopt their extremist views.

Recent case evidence indicates that specific groups such as young Muslim women have been targeted for radicalisation and grooming, which has led to attempts to travel to the Middle East placing them at risk. Any information about a young person or child that raises concerns should be discussed with their parents, schools, Children's Services, and the police as part of the risk assessment.

Indicators

Regarding issues that may make an individual vulnerable to radicalisation, these can include:

- Identity Crisis - Distance from cultural / religious heritage and uncomfortable with their place in the society around them
- Personal Crisis - Family tensions; sense of isolation; adolescence; low self-esteem; disassociating from existing friendship group and becoming involved with a new and different group of friends; searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging
- Personal Circumstances - Migration; local community tensions; events affecting country or region of origin; alienation from UK values; having a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy
- Unmet aspirations - Perceptions of injustice; feeling of failure; rejection of community values
- Criminality - Experiences of imprisonment; previous involvement with criminal groups

However, those closest to the individual may first notice the following changes of behaviour:

- General changes of mood, patterns of behaviour, secrecy

- Changes of friends and mode of dress
- Use of inappropriate language
- Possession of violent extremist literature
- The expression of extremist views
- Advocating violent actions and means
- Association with known extremists.
- Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology.

There is an obvious difference between espousing radical and extreme views and acting on them and staff and volunteers should ensure that assessments place behaviour in the family and social context of the young person and include information about the young person's peer group and conduct and behaviour at school. Holding radical or extreme views is not illegal but inciting a person to commit an act in the name of any belief is in itself an offence**. Some of the above indicators may be usual/normal teen behaviours, or indicators of other forms of abuse, which is why it is important to have a holistic assessment**

Protection and Action to be Taken

Any member of staff or volunteer identifying concerns about the child or young person should discuss them with their line manager and report them to the Onside Safeguarding Manager, who will discuss these concerns with the police and follow the safeguarding referrals procedure. A multi-agency assessment meeting will determine the appropriate response and level of support to the family.
Consideration of referrals to the Channel programme may be appropriate in some cases. Response should be proportionate, with the emphasis on supporting vulnerable children and young people, unless there is evidence of more active involvement in extremist activities.

Consideration should be given to the possibility that sharing information with parents may increase the risk to the child and therefore may not be appropriate. However, experience has shown that parents are key in challenging radical views and extremist behaviour and should be included in interventions unless there are clear reasons why not.

Wherever possible the response should be appropriately and proportionately provided from within the normal range of universal provision of the organisation working with other local agencies and partners. Responses could include curriculum provision, additional tutoring or mentoring, additional activities within and out of school and family support.

Where a higher level of targeted and multi-agency response is indicated a formal multi-agency assessment will be conducted. The assessment process may lead to a Strategy discussion, Section 47 Enquiry, and an Initial Child Protection Conference, if there are concerns about the child or young person suffering significant harm.

Where there is an identified risk/potential risk that a child young person may be involved/ potentially involved in supporting or following extremism, further investigation by the police will be required, prior to other assessments and interventions.

Issues

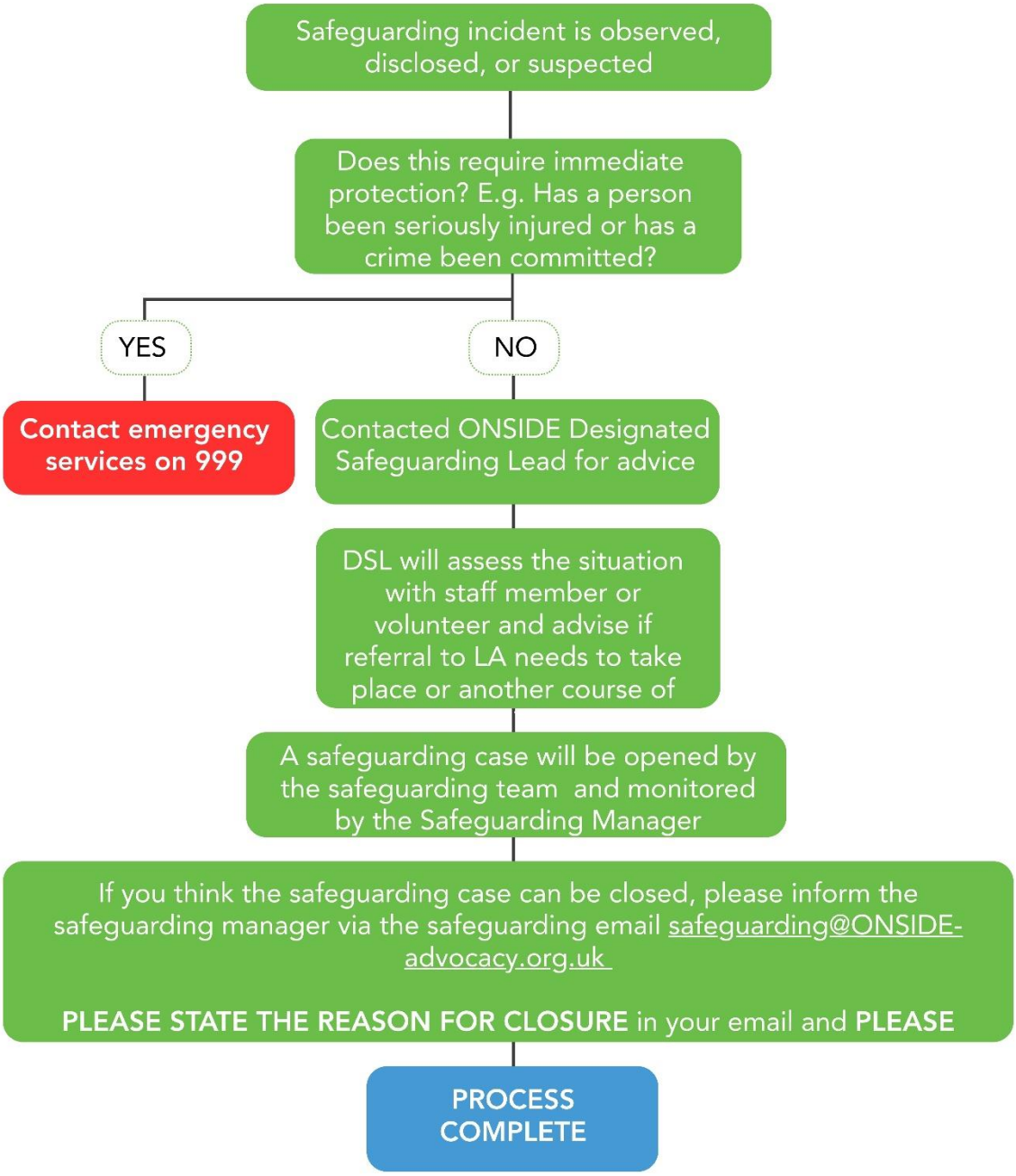
Protecting children and young people from radicalisation and extremism requires careful assessment and working collaboratively across agencies as initially concerns may be inconclusive and protecting child or young person against a potential risk can be dependent on a wider range of factors. Sharing information effectively and keeping the child and young person in focus should be the main aim of any interventions and services.
Any concerns about a child or young person should be discussed with the Onside Safeguarding Manager

Useful Contacts check our info as this is different

The Police Prevent Team 01386 591835/591825/591917 or prevent@warwickshireandwestmercia.pnn.police.uk

Online training modules on Prevent and Channel are available at https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/preventreferrals

https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/channelawareness

Appendix ii

Reporting a Safeguarding concern for all services (Staff & Volunteers)