




**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**  
**Policy**

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# SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

## Corporate Policy

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Cucumber Recruitment primarily provides support and services to adults; however, some services do support individuals aged 16–18 years who fall within child protection legislation, regulations and good practice.

Cucumber Recruitment also work with service users who have children or who are in contact with children either through family or friends.

We are all responsible for reporting concerns about a child's welfare and Cucumber Recruitment are committed to ensuring the protection, wellbeing and safeguarding of children at all times through adhering to statutory requirements.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To protect children and young people who receive or come in to contact with Cucumber Recruitment services.
- To provide Cucumber Recruitment staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.

### 2. SCOPE

2.1 This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and trustees, paid staff, volunteers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Cucumber Recruitment.

2.2 This policy aims to ensure employees of Cucumber Recruitment who come into contact with children are able to recognise instances of abuse or potential harm and are able to address them appropriately and quickly.

2.3 The policy responsibility extends to:

- Services where children are known to live
- Services where children may live
- Services where children visit
- Services where children neither live nor visit, but service users may have access to children

2.4 Cucumber Recruitment understands that some service users with a mental health need, at times experience deterioration in their mental health, this may consequently, for some people, require additional support to ensure their child(ren) and/or those who have contact with, are not exposed to any risk of a physical or psychological nature.

2.5 There is also a duty to ensure any children visiting supported accommodation are not unduly put at risk by individuals residing within our services. It is essential that Cucumber Recruitment's safeguarding children policy should be used in conjunction with the relevant Local Authority Safeguarding Children policy.

*Anna Lunt*

### 3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- *The Children Act (1989)* established the legislative framework for the current child protection system in England and Wales.
- *United Convention of the Rights of the Child (1991)*
- *Data Protection Act (2018)*
- *Sexual Offences Act (2003)*
- *Children Act (2004)*
- *Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)*
- *Protection of Freedoms Act (2012)*
- Relevant Government guidance on safeguarding children

The Department for Education is responsible for child protection in England. It sets out policy, legislation and statutory guidance on how the child protection system should work.

At the local level Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) co-ordinate, and ensure the effectiveness of, work to protect and promote the welfare of children. Each local board includes: local authorities, health bodies, the police and others, including the voluntary and independent sectors. The LSCBs are responsible for local child protection policy, procedure and guidance.

### 4. DEFINITIONS OF HARM AND ABUSE

Children may be abused by acts of commission or omission resulting in:

#### 4.1 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 care-givers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

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

Anna Lunt

### **4.3 Sexual abuse**

'Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.'

### **4.4 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 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, 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.'

### **4.5 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. Domestic abuse can seriously harm children and young people.

Working Together 2015 now includes additional notifiable incidents of child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and radicalisation and the definition of Significant Harm.

### **4.6 Child Sexual Exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. Children in exploitive situations and relationships receive something such as gifts, money or affection as a result of performing sexual activities or others performing sexual activities on them. Children may also be groomed and exploited online. Some children and young people are brought into the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation, this is called trafficking.

### **4.7 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Female genital mutilation is the partial or total removal of female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is also known as female circumcision or cutting. Religious, social or cultural reasons are sometimes given however FGM is child abuse and is a criminal offence.

### **4.8 Online Abuse**

Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the web whether through social networks, playing online games or using mobile phones. Children and young people may experience cyberbullying, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse. Children can be at risk of online abuse from people they know as well as from strangers.

*Anna Lunt*

## 5. WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT HARM AND HOW IS IT DETERMINED?

"Harm" is the "ill treatment or the impairment of the health or development of the child". It is determined "significant" by "comparing a child's health and development with what might be reasonably expected of a similar child". Although there is no absolute criteria for determining whether or not harm is "significant", local authorities such as social services, police, education and health agencies work with family members to assess the child, and a decision is made based on their professional judgment using the gathered evidence.

### 5.1 Serious Harm

Serious harm includes, but is not limited to, cases where the child has sustained, as a result of abuse or neglect, any or all of the following:

- a potentially life-threatening injury
- serious and/or likely long-term impairment of physical or mental health or physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

The guidance makes it clear that this definition is not exhaustive, and that serious harm can still have occurred if a child recovers from the incident. It states that Local Children Safeguarding Boards (LCSB's) should ensure their considerations on whether serious harm has occurred are informed by available research evidence.

### 5.2 A Notifiable Incident

Is one involving the care of a child in which either:

- A child has died (including cases of suspected suicide), and abuse or neglect is known or suspected.
- A child has been seriously harmed and abuse or neglect is known or suspected.
- A looked after child has died (including cases where abuse or neglect is not known or suspected); or: -
- A child in a regulated setting or service has died (including cases where abuse or neglect is not known or suspected).

## 6. PREVENTION

Cucumber Recruitment will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing them, listening and respecting them.
- Adopting Child Protection practices through procedures, code of conduct for staff and volunteers, and through safer recruitment.
- Developing related policies for whistleblowing, data protection, freedom of information, Safeguarding Adults at Risk and related procedures.
- Provide effective management of staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring necessary checks are made.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with staff, volunteers, parents and children and young people.
- Sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, including concerns about suspected child abuse, non-attendance at school or children acting as the main carer.
- Involving parents and children appropriately.

*Anna Lunt*

## 7. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 7.1 Children or adults cannot be given an absolute guarantee of confidentiality in matters concerning the protection of a child. Where appropriate, it should be explained to the child that certain other people might need to be told in order to protect him/her and the circumstances under which this may need to happen.
- 7.2 Sharing of information is vital to effective child protection work. This is in line with Cucumber Recruitment's confidentiality policy that states that information of a "need to know" nature must be passed on. (See Cucumber Recruitment's *Data Protection and Information Governance* policy)
- 7.3 Concerns about service user confidentiality should never delay acting as soon as a problem, suspicion or concern about a child becomes apparent.

## 8. PROCEDURES

Cucumber Recruitment services should request a copy of their local Safeguarding Children procedures and ensure that all staff are aware of these procedures:

- a. The Department for Education is responsible for child protection in England. It sets out policy, legislation and statutory guidance on how the child protection system should work.
- b. At the local level Local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs) co-ordinate, and ensure the effectiveness of, work to protect and promote the welfare of children and are responsible for local policy, procedure and guidance.
- c. In most local authority procedures, referrals will need to be made by completing a Multi-Agency Referral and Assessment Form. If you do not have access to the required form, you should telephone referrals to Social Services/Social Care.
- d. This must be followed up with a written referral within 24 hours, either using the appropriate Multi-Agency Referral and Assessment Form or using Cucumber Recruitment's Notification of Professional Concerns Form (Appendix 1) and following the local authority safeguarding children procedures.
- e. In all instances where abuse is suspected or an allegation has been made, staff must contact the relevant Service Manager, Service Director, Chief Executive or other member of the Executive Team. If your concern arises out of hours contact the Duty Manager or On Call Manager within Cucumber Recruitment. If you have any reason to believe that a colleague or manager is the perpetrator of abuse or has failed to act in accordance with this policy, it is imperative you do not discuss the matter directly with them and that the incident is always reported in the first instance to a member of the Executive Team or the Senior On-Call.
- f. All allegations of abuse against staff, even where there is evidence that they are false, vexatious or malicious, will be recorded. All other allegations that a member of staff has caused or been complicit in abuse or neglect (ie where there is no immediate evidence that it is false) must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and managed according to local multi-agency safeguarding children procedures. The senior member of staff must also consider the need for temporary exclusion or redeployment under the disciplinary policy based on potential risk to the alleged victim or others.

*Anna Lunt*

- g. The senior member of staff to whom you have reported your concern will advise you as to what action you should take and/or who you should contact or will themselves liaise with the relevant children's social care team or police (dependent upon the nature of the concern) who will be responsible for further investigation and follow-up.
- h. The person reporting the concern must take the full details of the referral in relation to whom they spoke to, what time, what advice was provided and how this will be dealt with, including any action to be taken on our part. All details and full referral documents should be submitted to Cucumber Recruitment's Safeguarding Coordinator. This information will be shared on a need to know basis with relevant individuals.
- i. If it is determined that there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm a local authority Strategy Meeting will take place. The senior manager for the relevant service may be asked to attend this meeting and if asked, must represent Cucumber Recruitment, with a typed report which should contain relevant factual information pertaining to the concerns/allegations, including the original Safeguarding Referral Form/Professional Concerns Form.
- j. The purpose of the Strategy Meeting is to share available information, agree the conduct and timing of any investigation (criminal or otherwise), agree what immediate action is needed to safeguard the welfare of the child, determine if legal action is required, and ensure that all relevant agencies involved with the child are informed of any significant outcomes to prevent the child from being placed further at risk. In addition to the Strategy Meeting, there may be a need to share information through a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) as per the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

## **8. DESIGNATED CHILD PROTECTION PERSON**

The designated Child Protection Person is the Cucumber Recruitment Safeguarding Lead who has overall responsibility for the co-ordination of child protection procedures within Cucumber Recruitment, liaison with Social Services and other agencies and for collating relevant data and records.

All staff must be made aware of who the Safeguarding Lead is as all cases of suspected abuse should be reported to him or her.

The Safeguarding Lead will have the appropriate training and should know:

- When to make a referral based on the information received
- The local Safeguarding Children Board's Safeguarding Children procedures
- The role and responsibilities of the investigating agencies and how to liaise with them
- The requirements of record keeping with regards to child protection procedures. The Safeguarding Coordinator will also keep an up-to-date log of any referrals made to him or her under these procedures.

*Anna Lunt*

## 9. TRAINING

All staff, regardless of where they work in the organisation, complete mandatory induction training. Day 2 of the training focuses on Safeguarding Adults and Children/Young People at risk. The content and learning outcomes of the module are as follows:

- Know how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse
- Know how to respond to suspected or alleged abuse
- Understand the national and local context of safeguarding and protection from abuse
- Understand ways to reduce the likelihood of abuse
- Know how to recognise and report unsafe practices
- Explain what you must do if you suspect a child, young person (met in any circumstances) is being abused or neglected

As part of the Care Certificate, which all new support staff have to complete within the first 3 months of working for the organisation, there is a module on safeguarding children and young people. Developed by Skills for Care the module includes:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Radicalisation
- Child Trafficking
- Female Genital Mutilation

With regards to service delivery all staff working in services are required to undertake a local induction to familiarise themselves with the local authority's safeguarding procedures for both adults and children, including key contact details for the local Safeguarding Boards. In addition all staff undertake mandatory stand-alone safeguarding training (which includes agency protocols/procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns) and this must be refreshed annually. On an on-going basis staff receive regular supervisions, with safeguarding as a dedicated agenda item.

## 10. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF STAFF

The *Protection of Freedoms Act* (2012) established the DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) which processes criminal records checks and manages the Barred Children's and Barred Adults' Lists of unsuitable people who should not work in regulated activities with these groups. The DBS decides who is unsuitable to work or volunteer with vulnerable groups and it is illegal for a barred person to apply for such work (paid or voluntary), or for a charity to employ a barred person in such work. It is also a legal requirement for employers to refer someone to the DBS if they:

- dismissed them because they harmed a child or adult
- dismissed them because they might have harmed a child or adult otherwise
- we're planning to dismiss them for either of these reasons, but the person resigned first

10.1 Cucumber Recruitment ensures that all individuals who are employed to work with vulnerable adults and children are subject to criminal record checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service the functions of the DBS are those contained within the *Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act* (2006).

*Anna Lunt*



- 10.2 Checks are carried out on all positions. Any potential employees whose duties and responsibilities will fall under the regulated activities (providing advice, guidance or assistance to vulnerable adults or children, including teaching, care or supervision) who appear on the DBS registration list as 'Barred', will not be employed.
- 10.3 Where potential employees who have convictions and/or cautions (having fully disclosed them) a decision regarding their suitability to work with vulnerable adults and/or children will be made by the director responsible for Human Resources, as per our Recruitment and Retention Policy.
- 10.4 As a registered body working on behalf of the Disclosure and Barring Service, we fully comply with the standards of the *Data Protection Act* (2018).
- 10.5 Dealing with issues concerning the protection and safeguarding of children can be difficult and distressing. All Cucumber Recruitment staff and volunteers have access to a free confidential Personal Counselling Helpline, provided by the Health Assured, which is available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, online or on the telephone. If you need to contact the helpline the details are:
- Website: <https://healthassuredeap.co.uk/>  
Telephone: 0800 030 5182 (simply state that you work for Cucumber Recruitment).
- 10.6 Individual staff members who are subject to allegations of abuse are also able to contact the Health Assured (number above) and if suspended (suspension is a neutral act allowing an investigation to take place), they will receive notification of their suspension and details pertaining to their suspension, including a contact person for support.

## REFERENCES

- Working Together to Safeguard Children\_ [www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2)
- Children and Families Act (2014)\_ [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted)
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- Data Protection Act (2018)\_ [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents)
- NSPCC

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