



## Unfold Safeguarding Policies and Procedures for Children

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<b>Revised by</b>	Grace Xia, Safeguarding Trustee Champion		
<b>Approved by</b>	Catherine Mahony, CEO	<b>Date</b>	August 2023
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<b>Revised by</b>			
<b>Approved by</b>		<b>Date</b>	

# **Unfold Safeguarding Policies and Procedures for Children**

## **1.1. Definition of Safeguarding Children and Young People**

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to protect all children and young people from harm, and actively taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes (NSPCC 2020)

Unfold adopts the definition of safeguarding used in Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018 HM Government.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Further details of what constitutes child abuse is documented in Appendix 1 (pg 13).

## **1.2 Safeguarding at Unfold**

Unfold works with children and young people, parents and the community to ensure we support children's rights and create and maintain the safest possible environment for children. Keeping children safe is everyone's business, including everyone who comes into contact with us, including trustees, staff, befrienders, mentors and volunteers in Unfold.

We do this by:

- Recognising that all children have the right to freedom from abuse and harm.
- Promoting joint working with parents and carers in the interest of children's welfare.
- Following safe recruitment procedures which ensure that staff are carefully selected, vetted and have the relevant qualifications and experience.
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are aware of and accept responsibility for helping to protect children and young people and prevent abuse.
- Designating a Safeguarding Lead and a deputy Safeguarding Lead who take specific responsibility for children's protection, safety and well-being for the organisation.
- Supporting all staff and volunteers in bringing concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Responding quickly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse.
- Providing parents, carers, and children with the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the organisation's Child Protection Policy and Procedures, including this policy on an annual basis.
- Working in partnership with external organisations and professionals to ensure that children are protected.

## **1.3 Board / Senior Organisational Lead**

The Chief Executive leads on safeguarding in our organisation as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and takes responsibility for Unfold's safeguarding arrangements and is the accountable person that will ensure that children's welfare is promoted in the provision of all services to children. The Chief Executive works in partnership with the staff and volunteer team to ensure that policy and practice is implemented and reports any

safeguarding issues or concerns to the Board. A Trustee has responsibility for oversight of appropriate safeguarding practice and supports the Chief Executive (DSL) and Deputy DSL.

#### **1.4 Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy DSL role and responsibilities**

It is the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to act as a source of support and guidance on all matters of child protection and safeguarding within the setting. In the absence of the DSL, staff should report any concerns to the Deputy Safeguarding Lead who will act in accordance with this policy, Working Together to Protect Children 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-protect-children--2>), and the London Child Protection Procedures (<https://www.londoncp.co.uk/index.html>), and will report back to the DSL. Everyone in the organisation should know who the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is and how to contact them.

It is not the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to decide whether a child has been abused or not. This is the task of Westminster Children's Services who have the legal responsibility. But it is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that concerns are shared and appropriate action taken.

The designated member of staff is responsible for:

- Liaising with the Children's Social Care
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers receive appropriate child protection training so that they are up to-date with current legislation, policy and practice and are able to respond sensitively and appropriately to any child protection concerns. A log of safeguarding training will be kept for staff.
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers receive induction training to enable them to understand and adhere to our policies, including reporting and whistle-blowing procedures.
- Ensuring that child protection referrals are made using the format agreed by Westminster Children's Services.
- Ensuring the setting's child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures are maintained, up-to-date and are disseminated and adhered to by all staff.
- Agree a mechanism with the Trustees to ensure the procedures are followed.

Please see end of document for contact details of DSL, Deputy SL and Trustee for Safeguarding.

#### **Procedures to follow if you suspect that a child is at risk of harm**

We have a statutory duty to notify agencies if we have a concern about children's safety and welfare (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018):

- Where there is a concern about a child's welfare or wellbeing or a concern that a child is in need of protection, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Deputy DSL should be informed immediately, and the concerns should be recorded on an incident form within 24 hours.
- The relevant statutory agency will be informed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their Deputy.
- All records of concerns, emails, notes of phone conversations and actions are filed confidentially and securely in the mentee or family's file.
- Concerns will be discussed with parents unless this would put the child at further risk of serious harm.

- Staff and volunteers should know that when they have concerns about a child's welfare they need to:
  - Focus on the needs of the child – their physical and emotional welfare
  - Be sensitive
  - Talk it over with one of the Designated Members of staff as soon as possible.
- If the matter is an emergency, then emergency services should be called on 999.

## **Managing a Disclosure**

Staff and volunteers should:

- Stay calm and listen to the child.
- Ask questions for clarification only. Avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Consider how to explain to the child about our policies and procedures so that they know what is going to happen.
- Tell them who you are going to tell so that they can be made safe – children may fear that what they have said will be passed on to everyone and they need to know that this will not be the case.
- Control expressions of panic or shock.
- Use the child's language or vocabulary.
- Offer comfort, bearing in mind the age and needs of the child.
- If the child has disclosed sexual abuse, ask them when it happened but nothing more. Whether a child is asked this question will depend upon the child's age and understanding.
- Tell them that they were right to tell you and it was not their fault and they are not bad.
- Do not be tempted to give false reassurances to the child but tell them that you will do your best to protect or help them.
- As soon as possible take care to record in writing what was said using the child's own words. Record the date, time, setting, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given, and other people present. Sign and date the record, using the incident form (Appendix 1).
- Record any subsequent events and actions.
- It is not your responsibility to decide if a child has been abused. Any disclosure must be raised with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Children can only be interviewed once, and this interview must be conducted by a trained police officer and social worker under Home Office 'Achieving Best Evidence' guidance. If a child has already been interviewed, it means that the police may not be able to pursue the matter.

A child may recall former abuse once in a safe situation. Although they may be under no current threat to their safety, any disclosure must be raised with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and followed through appropriately.

The DSL or Deputy SL in her absence should:

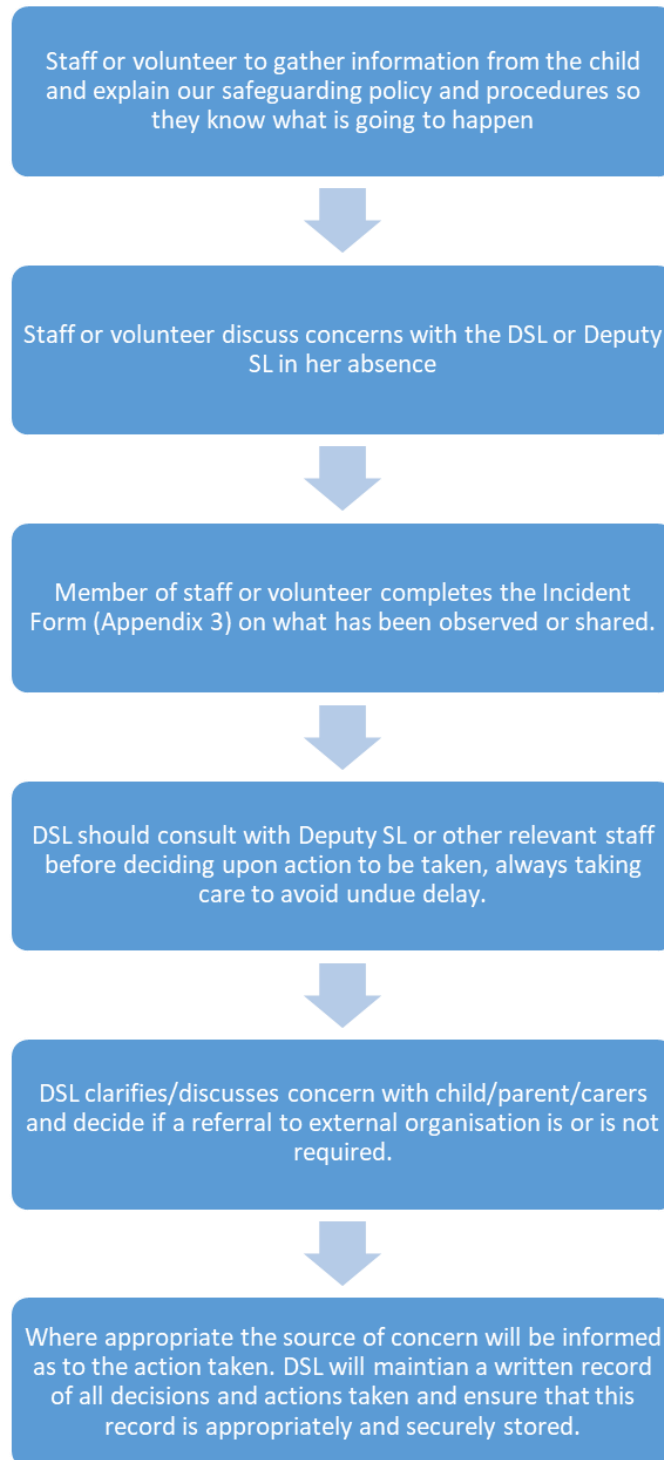
- Refer cases of suspected abuse to Children's Social Care, and support staff and volunteers who have raised concerns about a child or have made a referral to Children's Social Care

- Where there are concerns about radicalisation, to make referrals to the PREVENT programme and offer support to other staff who have concerns about radicalisation
- Refer cases to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) when a member of staff has been dismissed following concerns, they posed a risk to a child.
- Refer cases to the police where a crime has been or may have been committed.

If a child at risk, is at risk of immediate harm or needs emergency medical attention, the emergency services must be contacted, and the parents/carers informed that immediate steps are being taken to get help. If there is no immediate harm, all actions taken should follow the "Processes for Referral" flowchart.

**Processes for Referral are set out in the flowchart below:**

Procedure where the organisation has concerns, or has been given information, about possible safeguarding concern.



### **Raising a Concern without a Disclosure**

You may also have concerns about a child's welfare where there has not been any disclosure or allegation. In the best interests of the child / young person, these concerns should be raised with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and followed through appropriately.

### **Recording and reporting**

Recording is a tool of professional accountability and is central to safeguarding and protecting children. It is not always possible to know whether a small or vague concern held today may increase as the days or weeks pass and later form the substance of a child protection referral. For this reason, it is vital that concerns are recorded accurately so that they can be monitored, and emerging patterns noticed. Safeguarding reports should be recorded on our Safeguarding Incident Register within 24 hours, and this is the responsibility of the DSL.

### **Safer recruitment**

Safe recruitment and selection practice is vital to safeguarding and protecting both children and adults.

- All staff and volunteers are carefully selected. Two references are required on recruitment, including one from the staff or volunteer's most recent line manager. Unfold's recruitment procedures are in line with Westminster's safer recruiting guidelines:  
<https://committees.westminster.gov.uk/documents/s14891/DRAFT%20Safer%20Recruitment%20Principles.pdf>
- Ensuring Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) checks are carried out in accordance with national and statutory guidelines for all staff, student on placements and volunteers before they are allowed to work with us. This aims to ensure that unsuitable people do not work with children on a paid or voluntary basis.
- All staff working with children will undergo DBS check on a regular basis, renewing their DBS certificate upon expiry (every three years). A document control sheet is available via BreatheHR to identify regular reviews and updates
- DBS disclosures are recorded in staff files.
- All volunteers should have an enhanced DBS certificate, undertaken in the last three months, or we will undertake the enhanced DBS. All volunteers should have DBS refreshed every 12 months.
- Volunteer DBS records are kept in Beacon with due dates for renewal
- All new members of staff, volunteers, and students on placement complete the induction process and sign to agree they have understood our policies, procedures and basic safeguarding practices.
- Ensuring Job Descriptions include a statement regarding safeguarding children

### **Training**

All members of staff will regularly access appropriate safeguarding training and ensure their knowledge is up to date on safeguarding issues. All staff are required to complete Level 2 Safeguarding Awareness training on recruitment, and this should be repeated every three years. A record of all training, including safeguarding training dates and repeat requirements, is kept in BreatheHR, which provides a refresher notification.

All Trustees are required to complete Unfold's online training (Ascend) within three months of taking up the position, which covers basic safeguarding requirements. This should be refreshed at live training after three years.

All volunteers complete Unfold's online and live training sessions which cover safeguarding extensively. Live training, including safeguarding, should be repeated after two years. Unfold will ensure that the training made available will enable volunteers to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity, and to respond in a timely and appropriate way. A log of all training related to safeguarding is kept in Beacon for volunteers (dates of initial and refresher training are recorded in Beacon)

## **Unfold Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure**

This document does not form part of a contract of employment and may be changed from time to time in line with current best practice and statutory requirements, and to ensure that business needs are met. Staff will be consulted and advised of any changes as far in advance as possible of the change being made, unless the change is required by statute.

### **Introduction**

We are committed to having a workplace which is free from harassment and bullying, and to ensuring that all employees, contractors and others who come into contact with us in the course of our work are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, transgender status, marital or family status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, creed, culture, religion or belief, age or disability. Striving to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is central to ensuring equal opportunities in employment.

This policy and procedure is intended to support this commitment in practice and to provide guidance to staff on how to deal with concerns of bullying or harassment.

### **Policy**

Unfold will not tolerate bullying or harassment in our workplace or at work-related events outside of the workplace, whether the conduct is a one-off act or repeated course of conduct, and whether done purposefully or not. Neither will we tolerate retaliation against, or victimisation of, any person involved in bringing a complaint of harassment or bullying. Retaliation or victimisation will also constitute a disciplinary offence, which may in appropriate circumstances lead to dismissal. You should also be aware that if a court or tribunal finds that you have bullied or harassed someone, in some circumstances the treatment may amount to a crime punishable by a fine or imprisonment.

Unfold will take appropriate action if any of our employees or contractors are bullied or harassed by our stakeholders or suppliers.

Allegations of bullying and harassment will be treated seriously. Investigations will be carried out promptly, sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially. If, after an investigation, we decide that an employee has harassed or bullied another employee or contractor, then the employee may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Employees and others who make allegations of bullying or harassment in good faith will not be treated less favorably as a result. False accusations of harassment or bullying can have a serious effect on innocent individuals. Staff and others have a responsibility not to make false allegations. False allegations made in bad faith will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.

### **What Type of Treatment Amounts to Bullying or Harassment?**

Harassment as defined in the Equality Act 2010 is

*Unwanted conduct that intentionally or unintentionally violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment for them.*

People can be subjected to harassment on a wide variety of grounds. These include the following, known as 'protected characteristics':

- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment



- Marriage and civil partnership
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Disability
- Age
- Harassment through association with an individual who has a protected characteristic.

Other grounds for harassment include:

- Nationality, ethnic origin, national origin or skin colour
- Employment status, e.g. part-time, fixed-term, permanent, self-employed, agency worker, etc.
- Membership or non-membership of a trade union
- The carrying out of health and safety duties
- Criminal record
- Health, e.g. AIDS/HIV sufferers, etc.
- Physical characteristics
- Willingness to challenge harassment - being ridiculed or victimised for raising a complaint

Harassment is normally characterised by more than one incident of unacceptable behaviour, particularly if it recurs once it has been made clear that it is regarded by the victim as offensive. However, just one incident may constitute harassment if it is sufficiently serious. Harassment on any grounds, including the above, will not be tolerated. Harassment at work is not only despicable and demeaning, but it is also unlawful under discrimination legislation.

Bullying or harassment is something that has happened that is unwelcome, unwarranted and causes a detrimental effect. If employees complain they are being bullied or harassed, then they have a grievance which must be dealt with regardless of whether or not their complaint accords with a standard definition. For further information, please refer to [ACAS guidance](#).

It is important to recognise that conduct which one person may find acceptable, another may find totally unacceptable. All employees must therefore treat their colleagues with respect and appropriate sensitivity.

Bullying does not include appropriate criticism of an employee's behavior or proper performance management.

### **Examples of Harassment**

Harassment takes many forms: verbal and non-verbal, from relatively mild banter to actual physical violence. Employees may not always realise that their behavior constitutes harassment, but they must recognise that what is acceptable to one employee may not be acceptable to another - determining what is acceptable is an individual right that we must all respect.

Examples of harassment include (but are not restricted to):

- Crude language, open hostility, offensive jokes, suggestive remarks, innuendoes, rude or vulgar comments
- Spreading malicious rumors, or insulting someone by word or behavior (particularly on the grounds of race, sex, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief)
- Copying memos that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know
- Ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them or setting them up to fail
- Exclusion or victimisation

- Unfair treatment
- Overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position
- Unwelcome sexual advances – touching, standing too close, display of offensive materials, asking for sexual favours, making decisions on the basis of sexual advances being accepted or rejected
- Preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities
- Making threats or comments about job security without foundation
- Deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading and constant criticism
- Preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities.

### **Examples of Bullying**

Workplace bullying can range from extreme forms such as violence and intimidation to less obvious actions like deliberately ignoring someone at work.

Obvious bullying includes actions such as:

- Shouting or swearing at people in public and private
- Persistent unfounded criticism
- Ignoring or deliberately excluding people
- Persecution through threats and instilling fear
- Spreading malicious rumours
- Constantly undervaluing effort
- Dispensing disciplinary action which is totally unjustified
- Spontaneous rages, often over trivial matters

Less obvious bullying can include actions such as:

- Unreasonably withholding information or supplying incorrect information
- Deliberately sabotaging or impeding work performance
- Constantly changing targets
- Setting individuals up to fail by imposing impossible deadlines
- Unreasonably removing areas of responsibility and imposing menial tasks
- Unreasonably blocking applications for holiday, promotion or training

These examples listed are not exhaustive. The actions listed must be viewed in terms of the distress they cause the individual. As with harassment, it is the perceptions of the recipient that determine whether any action or statement can be viewed as bullying.

### **Reporting Concerns**

*What should you do if you witness an incident you believe to be harassment or bullying?*

If you witness such behaviour, you should report the incident in confidence to your manager or, if the incident concerns your manager, to the Chair of the Board or another Board member you feel comfortable speaking to. Such reports will be taken seriously and will be treated in strict confidence as far as it is possible to do so.

*What should you do if you feel you are being bullied or harassed by a stakeholder or supplier (as opposed to a colleague)?*

If you are being bullied or harassed by someone with whom you come into contact at work, please raise this with your manager in the first instance or with the chief executive. If the incident concerns your manager/the Chief Executive, raise this with the Chair of the Board or another Board member you feel comfortable speaking to. We will then decide how best to deal with the situation, in consultation with you.

*What should you do if you are being bullied or harassed by a colleague?*

If you are being bullied or harassed by another employee, there are two possible avenues for you, informal or formal.

### **Informal Resolution**

If you are being bullied or harassed by another employee or contractor, you may be able to resolve the situation yourself by explaining clearly to the perpetrator(s) that their behaviour is unacceptable, contrary to our policy and must stop. Alternatively, you may wish to ask your manager or a colleague to put this on your behalf or to be with you when confronting the perpetrator(s).

If the above approach does not work or, if you do not want to try to resolve the situation in this way, or if you are being bullied /harassed by your own manager, you should raise the issue with the chief executive/ Chair of Trustees, as appropriate. The Chief Executive /Chair will discuss with you the option of trying to resolve the situation informally by:

- telling the alleged perpetrator(s), without prejudging the matter, that there has been a complaint that their behaviour is having an adverse effect on a fellow employee
- that such behaviour is contrary to our policy
- that the continuation of such behaviour could amount to a serious disciplinary offence.

It may be possible for the Chief Executive /Chair to have this conversation with the alleged perpetrator without revealing your name, if this is what you want. They will also stress that the conversation is confidential.

In certain circumstances we may be able to involve a neutral third party (a mediator) to facilitate a resolution of the problem. The chief executive will discuss this with you if it is appropriate.

If your complaint is resolved informally, the alleged perpetrator(s) will not usually be subject to disciplinary sanctions. However, in exceptional circumstances (such as a serious allegation of sexual or racial harassment or in cases where a problem has happened before) we may decide to investigate further and take more formal action notwithstanding that you raised the matter informally. We will consult with you before taking this step.

### **Raising a formal complaint**

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, you can make a formal complaint about the harassment or bullying to your manager or the chief executive. A formal complaint may ultimately lead to disciplinary action against the perpetrator(s).

We will first investigate the complaint. You will need to co-operate with the investigation and provide the following details (if not already provided).

- The name of the alleged perpetrator(s)
- The nature of the harassment or bullying
- The dates and times the harassment or bullying occurred
- The names of any witnesses
- Any action taken by you to resolve the matter informally

The alleged perpetrator(s) would need to be told your name and the details of your complaint in order for the issue to be investigated properly. However, we will carry out the investigation as confidentially and sensitively as possible. Where you and the alleged perpetrator(s) work in proximity to each other, we will consider whether it is appropriate to separate you while the matter is being investigated.

After the investigation, we will meet with you to consider the complaint and the findings of the investigation. At the meeting, you may be accompanied by a fellow worker or a trade union official.

After the meeting (and normally within five working days) we will write to you to inform you of our decision and to notify you of your right to appeal to the Chair of Trustees if you are dissatisfied with the outcome. You should put your appeal in writing explaining the reasons why you are dissatisfied with our decision. You should submit your appeal within five working days of receiving written confirmation of our decision. If you submit an appeal, you will be invited to attend a meeting with a panel made up from Trustees of the Board to consider it. Once again you may be accompanied by a fellow worker or a trade union official. The Chair of the Panel will write to you afterwards to confirm their decision, which will be final.

### **Use of the Disciplinary Procedure**

Harassment and bullying constitute serious misconduct. If, at any stage from the point at which a complaint is raised, we believe there is a case to answer and a disciplinary offence might have been committed, we will instigate our disciplinary procedure. Any employee found to have harassed or bullied a colleague will be liable to disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal.

We will review the plan we have developed to address any incidents of bullying at regular intervals, in order to ensure that the problem has been resolved in the long term.

#### Contact Details

Nominated anti-bullying lead

Name: Maria Makri, Programme Manager, Parents Programme

Email/Phone: [parents@unfold.org.uk](mailto:parents@unfold.org.uk) 07311612004

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Name: Catherine Mahony, CEO

Email/Phone: [ceo@unfold.org.uk](mailto:ceo@unfold.org.uk) 07459548172

### **Responding to allegations made against a member of staff/volunteer**

Despite all efforts to recruit safely there will be occasions when allegations are made of abuse by staff or volunteers against children. All staff must be vigilant in relation to inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, or any other person working with the children. Examples include inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual roles and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images. If an allegation is made that a member of staff has harmed a child; is alleged to have behaved in a way in their private life that may suggest they are unsuitable to work with children and young people; the DSL must be informed immediately. Please see the "Volunteers Complaints Procedure" for details. If the allegation concerns the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Chair of the Board of Trustees must be informed.

All concerns about staff should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the whistle-blowing policy should be followed (please see Whistle Blowing Policy for Staff and Volunteers - [?hyperlink](#)). It is the responsibility of the DSL to report allegations to, and otherwise liaise with, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who has the responsibility to manage and have oversight of allegations against people who work with

children. The DSL will liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who will manage any allegation.

### **Board of Trustees**

Trustees have overall control of a charity and are responsible for making sure it's doing what it was set up to do. The board will ensure that this organisation is compliant with its safeguarding policy and that it is reviewed regularly at board meetings. It also needs to make sure that proper and formal arrangements are followed for the appointment, supervision, support, appraisal and remuneration of the chief executive. We have a designated Trustee for Safeguarding, for whom the contact details can be found below.

### **Lines of Accountability**

The Director is the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the organisation, alongside the Deputy DSL. If any incident takes place or any volunteer or staff member has any concerns, they should contact the DSL immediately on 07459548172. They should then fill in an incident form and the Senior staff member will take action.

The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that this policy is fully implemented and that the necessary training and support is made available. She has the duty to monitor and review the policy to take account of changes in the legislation and practice guidelines, and to ensure it remains an effective tool to safeguard children.

### **Contact Details**

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Name: Catherine Mahony

Email: [ceo@unfold.org.uk](mailto:ceo@unfold.org.uk)

Telephone: 07459548172

Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Name: Adasu Celebi

Email: [mentoring@unford.org.uk](mailto:mentoring@unford.org.uk)

Trustee for Safeguarding

Name: Grace Xia

Email: [safeguarding@unfold.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@unfold.org.uk)

To report a concern about a child or young person in Westminster please contact:

Westminster Access Team – Tel: 020 7641 4000

(Out of hours – 020 7641 6000)

Email: [AccesstoChildrensServices@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:AccesstoChildrensServices@westminster.gov.uk)

### **LADO**

For Lado consultations and referrals contact:

Telephone: 020 7641 7668

Email: [LADO@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@westminster.gov.uk)

### **FGM**

Tri-borough Senior Practitioner

Telephone: 020 7641 1610

Email: [rnaidoo@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:rnaidoo@westminster.gov.uk)

## **PREVENT**

Prevent Programme Manager, Westminster enquiries only  
Telephone: 020 7641 5071

To report a concern about a young person in Borough of Kensington and Chelsea:  
Kensington and Chelsea Duty Line  
Tel: 020 7361 3013 (9am-5pm)  
Out of hours: 020 7361 3013

To report a concern about a young person in Borough of Westminster:  
Westminster Duty Line  
Tel: 020 761 4000 (9am-5pm)  
Out of hours: 020 7641 2388

**In an emergency call the police on 999.**

## **Appendix 1 Understanding and identifying abuse and neglect.**

The four main categories of abuse are **physical, sexual, emotional abuse** and **neglect**.

### **Physical Abuse**

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

#### **Some possible signs of physical abuse:**

- Unexplained injuries, for example, bruising, bite marks, burns and fractures, particular if recurrent.
- Improbable explanations given for injuries.
- Several explanations provided for an injury.
- Refusal to discuss injuries.
- Untreated injuries.
- Withdrawal from physical contact.
- Admission of punishment which seems excessive or inappropriate
- Shrinking from physical contact or flinching
- Fear of going home or of a parent/carer being contacted
- Fear of undressing or changing or being changed
- Fear of medical help
- Aggression/bullying
- Over-compliant behaviour or a 'watchful attitude'
- Running away
- Significant changes in behaviour with no explanation
- Unexplained patterns of attendance
- Covering up i.e. wearing seasonally inappropriate clothing
- Signs of physical discomfort without explanation
- Female genital mutilation- partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or injury to the female genital organs

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development, and may involve: Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person; Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction; Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another e.g. where there is domestic abuse; serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger; exploiting and corrupting children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

#### **Some possible signs of emotional abuse:**

- Continual self-deprecation, low self esteem
- Fear of new situations, beyond what would be appropriate
- Inappropriate emotional responses to new, difficult or painful situations
- Self-harm (this can present in young children as well as older ones)
- Compulsive stealing, scrounging
- Obsessive behaviours such as rocking or thumb-sucking

- Detachment – ‘Don’t care’ attitude
- Social isolation – does not join in and does not have friends
- Attention-seeking behaviour beyond what would be age appropriate
- Eating problems including lack of appetite or over-eating
- Depression, withdrawal
- Inability to concentrate
- Obsessive masturbation in public
- Acting out aggression between parents or talking about domestic violence at home
- Attaching inappropriately to strangers or people that they do not know well

## **Sexual Abuse and Exploitation**

### **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 (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

Sexual abuse includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, including online and with mobile phones, or in the production of pornographic materials, watching sexual activities or 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 also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Sexual abuse includes abuse of children through sexual exploitation. Penetrative sex where one of the partners is under the age of 16 is illegal, although prosecution of similar age, consenting partners is not usual. However, where a child is under the age of 13 it is classified as rape under s5 Sexual Offences Act 2003

### **Some possible signs of sexual abuse:**

- Continual or excessive masturbation.
- Asking if you will keep a secret if they tell you.
- Unexplained sources of money, sweets or presents.
- Reluctance to get changed for an activity.
- Chronic ailments such as stomach ache or headaches.
- Involving other children in sexual activity.
- Self-harm.
- Bruises, bites or marks on the body
- Scratches, abrasions or persistent infections in anal or genital regions
- Age-inappropriate sexual awareness, may be evident in play, drawings, vocabulary, writing or behaviour towards children or adults
- Attempts to teach other children about sexual activity
- Attempting to coerce other children into sexualised games or behaviours
- Refusal to stay with certain people or to go to certain places
- Aggression, anger, anxiety, tearfulness

**Child sexual exploitation** is 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 possible signs 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

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and / or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse, maternal mental ill health or learning difficulties or a cluster of such issues. Where there is domestic abuse and violence towards a carer, the needs of the child may be neglected. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent 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, social and educational needs

### **Some possible signs of neglect:**

- Constant or frequent hunger
- Small stature or growth or, in babies or young children, not meeting milestones with no medical explanation
- Poor personal hygiene – in babies or young children this might present as always having nappy rash or regularly being left in dirty, soiled clothes/underwear
- Frequently being sent to school or nursery when ill
- Inappropriate clothing (too large, too small, clothes for the opposite gender)
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school.
- Medical needs not met or treatment not sought
- Low self-esteem, sense of unworthiness
- Poor social and peer relationships
- Constant tiredness or hunger
- Compulsive stealing or scrounging
- Constant lack of response or interest from parent/carer
- Under-achieving at school or nursery
- High and unusual levels of anxiety or being preoccupied

### **Bullying**

Bullying can also be a type of abuse. Bullying is the abuse and/or intimidation by a person, people or an organisation against another or others. It may be a specific act or it may be institutional. It is an abuse of a perceived power relationship. Children can also bully other

children. Bullying may include verbal abuse and intimidation, acts of physical or sexual abuse and coercion, e-bullying, through texting, filming on mobiles and posting on social networks. Whatever its form it is unacceptable. It must be challenged and appropriately addressed.

### **Some possible signs of bullying:**

- Reluctance to attend activities previously enjoyed.
- Tearfulness, depression, erratic emotions, loss of concentration.
- Stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed-wetting, bruising, cuts scratches, damaged clothing, bingeing on food, alcohol or cigarettes.
- Shortage of money, frequent loss of possessions.
- Asks for money or starts stealing (to pay bully/ies)
- Drop in performance.

### **Domestic Violence**

The Home Office definition of Domestic violence and abuse was updated in May 2018 as: Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological;
- Physical;
- Sexual;
- Financial;
- Emotional."

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

**Coercive behaviour** is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim." This definition includes so called *honour* based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group. All agencies need to work together to identify and protect these children/young people. The main characteristic of domestic violence is that the behaviour is intentional and is calculated to exercise power and control within a relationship. Seeing or overhearing violence to another person in the home has adverse effects on a child's development and welfare. Unborn children are also at increased risk; domestic violence is a prime cause of miscarriage, still birth, premature birth, foetal psychological damage, foetal physical injury and foetal death. Staff should be aware of the possibility that adolescents could also be experiencing violence within intimate partner relationship.

***Children of all ages living with a parent, most often the mother, who is experiencing domestic violence, are vulnerable to significant harm through physical, sexual, emotional abuse and / or neglect.***

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

The World Health Organisation defines FGM as: "all procedures (not operations) which involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons."

FGM is a criminal offence in the UK. It is also illegal to take a child abroad to undergo FGM. A child for whom FGM is planned is at risk of significant harm through physical and emotional abuse.

Where a child is thought to be at risk of FGM, practitioners need to act quickly before the child is abused through the FGM procedure in the UK or taken abroad to undergo the procedure.

### **Spirit Possession or Witchcraft**

Spirit possession is when parents, families and the child believe that an evil force has entered a child and is controlling them; the belief includes the child being able to use the evil force to harm others.

A child may suffer emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect if they are labelled and treated as being possessed with an evil spirit. Significant harm may occur when an attempt is made to 'exorcise' or 'deliver' the evil spirit from the child. Dismissing the belief may be harmful to the child involved.

### **Forced Marriage**

Forced marriage, as distinct from a consensual arranged one, is a marriage conducted without the full consent of both parties and where duress is a factor. Duress cannot be justified on religious or cultural grounds. A child who is being forced into marriage is at risk of significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Suspicious that a child may be forced into marriage include: A family history of older siblings leaving education early and marrying early; depressive behaviour including self-harming and attempted suicide; being kept at home by their parents; being unable to complete their education; a child always being accompanied including to school and doctors' appointments; a child talking about an upcoming family holiday that they are worried about; a child directly disclosing that they are worried they will be forced to marry.

Where a suspicion or allegation of forced marriage or intended forced marriage is raised, there may be only one opportunity to speak to a potential victim, so an appropriate initial response is vital. Professionals should not minimize the potential risk of harm or attempt to be a mediator. Professionals should see the child immediately, on their own, in a secure and private place and contact UNFOLD Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### **Honour Based Violence**

The Metropolitan Police definition of so-called honour-based violence is: 'a crime or incident, which has or may been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community'. Honour based violence cuts across all cultures and communities.

The perceived immoral behaviour which could precipitate a murder include: Inappropriate make-up or dress; the existence of a boyfriend; kissing or intimacy in a public place; rejecting a forced marriage; pregnancy outside of marriage; being a victim of rape; interfaith relationships; leaving a spouse or seeking divorce.

A child who is at risk of honour-based violence is at significant risk of physical harm and/or neglect, and may also suffer significant emotional harm through the threat of violence or witnessing violence directed towards a sibling or other family member.

Murders in the name of 'so-called honour' are often the culmination of a series of events over a period of time and are planned. These include: House arrest and excessive restrictions; denial of access to the telephone, internet, passport and friends; threats to kill; pressure to go abroad. There tends to be a degree of premeditation, family conspiracy and a belief that the victim deserved to die.

When receiving a disclosure from a child, professionals should recognise the seriousness and immediacy of the risk of harm. Professionals should not minimize the potential risk of harm or attempt to be a mediator. Professionals should see the child immediately, on their own, in a secure and private place and contact the agency's named child protection person.

### **Contextual Safeguarding**

Sometimes young people experience significant harm beyond their families. Different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Types of contextual abuse include:

- Online Abuse; which can include bullying, emotional or sexual abuse
- Bullying; which can include physical or emotional
- Grooming; which can include sexual exploitation; criminal exploitation (e.g. County Lines) or radicalisation

Staff and volunteers should be aware that the child or young person they are working with may be abused by other young people as well as by adults in this way, and that these types of abuse need reporting since the child may be at risk of significant harm.

### **Vulnerability of Disabled Children**

Research indicates that children with special educational needs or disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse. This may be for the following reasons:

- Attitudes and assumptions can lead to the denial or failure to report abuse.
- Reluctance to challenge carers – misplaced empathy.
- Seeing abuse as attributable to the stress and difficulties of caring for a disabled child
- Beliefs that abuse does not impact on disabled children in the same way.
- Double standards – unsatisfactory situations accepted for disabled children.
- Dependency – exposure to a wide range of carers for personal and intimate care.
- Isolation – easier for abuse and neglect to remain hidden.
- Lack of participation and choice in decision making – disempowered and less likely to complain.
- Especially vulnerable to bullying and intimidation.
- Behaviours misconstrued as part of child's disability.
- Communication barriers – may make it difficult to tell others what is happening.
- Judgements made about a child's ability to communicate not based on accurate information and specialist advice.
- Child's preferred method of communication not recognised / equipment and / or facilitation not available.
- Communication aids don't contain the necessary words to help a child describe an experience of abuse.

### **In addition to the above some possible signs of abuse for disabled children are:**

- Bruising on sites that may not be concerning on a non-disabled child.
- Not getting enough help with feeding.
- Over or under medicating.
- Poor hygiene and personal care arrangements.
- Rough handling / excessive restraint.
- Lack of stimulation.
- Unwillingness to learn a child's means of communication.

- Ill-fitting equipment / invasive procedures which are unnecessary or carried out against the child's will.

## **Asylum Seeking or Refugee Children**

Definitions:

**Asylum seeker** - adult, child, or young person whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed by the Government.

**Refugee** - adult, child, or young person whose application for asylum has been accepted by the UK government as meeting the definition of refugee in the Refugee Convention, resulting in refugee status documentation. In the UK, refugees are usually granted five years leave to remain as a refugee, after which they need to apply for further leave.

We are currently working with an increasing number of asylum seeking and refugee children. They are at a high risk of the following safeguarding issues:

- Unaccompanied child, having not previously been known to social services, an immediate referral needs to be made to the local authority children's social care. The primary concern is to ensure that they are taken into the care of the local authority, who then have a duty to care for them
- Vulnerabilities to sexual exploitation and risk of trafficking and modern slavery
- Exposure to violence, rape and/or trauma
- Females subjected to FGM
- Bullying or racism
- Unsafe living environment due to temporary accommodation or due to neglect or physical abuse

## Appendix 2

### Safeguarding Incident Report Form

Name of Child (Complete one form for each child)	
Date of Birth	
Address	
Name of Person Reporting Incident	
Position	Date/Time of Incident
Details of Incident (Be brief and factual)	
Record below the actual words the child or adult said when telling you about the incident.	
Action Taken: Who did you report this to?	
UNFOLD - Name ..... Date..... Time.....	
Social Services Name ..... Date.....	
Time.....	

Other	
What action was taken- Please list	
Action	Outcome
Has all the information given to 3rd party been confirmed in writing? Yes..... No.....  Date..... Time..... When this was done	
Has the Referral form been sent?  Yes..... No ..... Date..... .Time.....	
Has this incident been discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead?  Yes..... No ..... Date.....Time..... Has an incident sheet been set up Yes.....No <u>////////////////</u>	
Signed  Date.....Time.....	

## Appendix 3

### Declaration Form

#### Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedure

I confirm that I have read the policy and procedures on Safeguarding Children and Young people. I understand the contents and I agree to follow these procedures when I am working or volunteering for Unfold.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_



**Appendix 4**

**COMPLAINT: INITIAL REPORT FORM**

Name of Complainant: _____ Location: _____
Address _____
Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____
Date of Occurrence: ___/___/___ Date of Complaint: ___/___/___

Programme: Broadening Horizons      Mentoring for Mums      Women’s Support Groups

Details of Complaint (include dates/times):

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Name/Title of Parties Involved:

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**Persons who can provide additional Information:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Specific acts, regulations or other agreements believed to be violated:

Action Taken:

Who did you report this to?

UNFOLD - Name ..... Date..... Time.....

Other

What action was taken- Please list	
Action	Outcome

Signed  
Name  
Date and Time

This policy was last reviewed on: 07/09/2023 (date). Next Review Date:  
Name and Role:  
Signed:  
Date: