



Elmbridge
Borough Council
... bridging the communities ...

Safeguarding Children Policy

June 2014

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Introduction to the Safeguarding Children Policy

Elmbridge Borough Council has legal a duty to work together with other statutory and voluntary agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. For the purposes of this document children should be taken as 0-18 years of age.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance 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.

To achieve this, children need to be loved and valued and be supported by a network of reliable and affectionate relationships. If children are denied this, they are at an increased risk of an impoverished childhood, but also at an increased risk of disadvantage and social exclusion in adulthood. Abuse and neglect pose particular problems.

Effective safeguarding of children can only be achieved by putting children at the centre of the system, and by every individual and agency playing their full part, working together to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children.

Effective safeguarding arrangements in every local area must be underpinned by two key principles:

- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation must play their full part
- a child-centred approach: for services to be effective they must be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

It is a statutory duty under the Children Act 2004 for each local authority to have a safeguarding board. Government guidance: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 added further duties. The Surrey Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) is led by Surrey County Council. All Borough Councils are partner agencies of the board along with other statutory and voluntary agencies.

The overall role of the SSCB is to coordinate local work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to ensure the effectiveness of what the member organisations do individually and together by developing interagency policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children including:-

- the action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare
- training of those working with children and/or families or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children
- investigation of allegations concerning persons working with children

It is very important that local safeguarding arrangements are strongly led and promoted at a local level, specifically by:

- a strong lead from local authority members, and the commitment of chief officers in all agencies, in particular the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children's Services in each local authority; and
- effective local coordination and challenge by the Local Safeguarding Children's Boards

Borough and District Councils have a crucial role to play in the safeguarding of children in their areas. The Surrey Safeguarding Board Procedures Manual specifically refer to the duty of housing authorities to share information that is relevant to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and the duties of Leisure Services departments and leisure contractors to ensure that their leisure facilities safeguard children and that all casual and temporary members of staff are aware of safeguarding children issues and know how to report concerns.

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Working Together to Safeguard Children March 2013 (Chapter 2) provides details of specific organisational responsibilities.

Information sharing between agencies

Information sharing is vital to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. A key factor in many serious case reviews regarding children who have been harmed has been the failure to record information, to share it, to understand the significance of the information shared and to take appropriate action in relation to known or suspected abuse or neglect. Often it is only when information from a number of sources has been shared that it becomes clear that a child is at risk of, or is suffering, harm.

Professionals who work with , or have contact with children, parents or adults in contact with children, should always share information with Children's Social Care where they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child may be suffering or may be at risk of suffering significant harm.

The Elmbridge Safeguarding Children Policy has been developed in accordance with Surrey guidance and outlines:-

- The safeguarding training programme.
- Recruitment procedures that will safeguard children and promote welfare. e.g., Disclosure and barring checks for specified employees and thorough selection procedures.
- Details of the designated safeguarding officers.
- The procedures that staff must follow if they believe a child or young person may be at risk.
- The use of the Early Help Assessment.

Recruitment of staff who will work with children

It is important that recruitment procedures are thorough in order to ensure that employees and volunteers who will be working with children are suitable and do not pose a risk to children.

Recruitment paperwork should refer to the need to be committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Application forms will specifically require an applicant to disclose any previous convictions made against them both in relation to their personal and professional life

A reference must be sought from a previous employer and we will request:

- The accurate dates of employment and any periods of sick leave
- An accurate assessment of individuals qualities such as any disciplinary action, known convictions and other grounds for disquiet and should focus on the key criteria for effective performance in the specified post
- Information regarding current investigations or disciplinary action in relation to allegations of a child protection nature.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

DBS checks are sought when employees will be working with children. Elmbridge Borough Council (EBC) can only request a DBS check if the position is designated as a regulated activity and meets the frequency criteria. Personnel, the Lead Safeguarding Officer and the relevant Service Heads have identified the positions on the Council establishment list that require a DBS check. DBS checks will indicate any spent and unspent convictions, cautions, formal reprimands and final warnings and will contain non-conviction information from local police records, which may be relevant to the position sought.

If a DBS check reveals that a person is prohibited from work with children, it is an offence to employ them and the independent safeguarding authority and the police must be informed of their attempt to seek employment.

Training

All staff working with children and families will receive training in child protection and information regarding procedures relating to safeguarding. All new employees should attend induction training which includes safeguarding information and good practice guidelines for working with children. They should also undertake the e learning safeguarding and equality and diversity modules on the intranet within three months of appointment. This will ensure that all staff are aware of the safeguarding policies and will know how to refer concerns via the appropriate routes. Personnel monitor this training. Employees at remote sites who cannot access the e training will have training provided by their managers.

All councillors will be invited to attend training that includes safeguarding and child protection information and good practice guidelines when working with children. A presentation on the updated safeguarding policy will take place via the staff and managers' meetings and at a members training session. Information will be also be posted on the staff notice boards and on Bridge-It.

Guidance regarding training is provided via the SSCB training strategy and programme. Those who have regular contact, or have a period of intense but irregular contact, with children and/or their parents/carers, who may be in a position to identify concerns about maltreatment, should complete the safeguarding children course arranged by the Surrey Training Officers Group (STOG). These groups will be identified on the establishment list by the Lead Safeguarding Officer and Personnel and include Housing, Leisure, Environmental Services and Benefits Officers. Those who may be required to attend child protection conferences such as housing or safeguarding officers will be required to undertake further training provided by the Surrey Safeguarding Board. The level of training required for each job position is outlined in a list held by Personnel. Casual staff and volunteers will receive training according to their duties led by their managers.

The Family Support Team training will be provided as a part of the team's workforce development plan. However all workers will be expected to understand their responsibilities in relation to Elmbridge Borough Council and will receive a copy of this strategy

The training requirements are as follows:-

Training and Awareness	Provider	Participant
Induction	Human Resources/Safeguarding Officer for staff at council offices.	All new employees
Child Protection/Safeguarding E learning module.	Marshall e learning package via Spelnet or provided by managers.	All new employees
Cascade training for remote staff e.g. environmental services staff/day centre staff who are unable to do e training or attend staff meetings.	Safeguarding officers/senior officers at remote sites.	Remote site staff
Main council staff and managers' meetings to provide an update regarding the new strategy	Lead Safeguarding Officer	All staff
½ day Safeguarding Children Training	Surrey Shared Training Schedule	Employees, including seasonal holiday (SHOUT) staff who come into contact on a regular basis with children and adults who are parents or carers, who may be in a position to identify concerns about maltreatment.
Module 1 and 2	Surrey Safeguarding Board	Housing officers, Play Development Officer, Leisure Development Officer and Safeguarding Children Officers.
Module 3	Surrey Safeguarding Board	Housing officers that attend child protection conferences and Safeguarding Children Officers.

Good Practice when working with children

It is important to follow the good practice outlined below, when working with children.

- Adults should not behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children, or act as a role model.
- Adults must not work on their own with children. If a situation occurs when this arises, due to sickness or an emergency, always inform colleagues or parents/carers to ensure that someone can be present or nearby.
- It is inappropriate to offer lifts to a child or young person. There may be occasions where the child or young person requires transport in an emergency situation or where not to do so may place a child at risk. If circumstances permit, the parent/carer or line manager should be informed before the lift is provided. The event must always be recorded and reported to a senior manager and parents/carers.
- Physical contact is discouraged and should only take place only when it is absolutely necessary and in a safe and open environment i.e. one easily observed by others.
- Always report any accidents/incidents or situations where a child becomes distressed or angry to a senior colleague.
- Do not take photographs of children without consent from the child and the parent. Photographs of children with their family, class or club, are generally a source of pleasure and pride, which can enhance the self-esteem of children. Photography should not cause a problem providing that reasonable steps are taken to follow safe practice guidelines. Staff should remain sensitive to any children who appear uncomfortable or feel threatened by photography and should recognise the potential for misinterpretation. Photographs should not be taken without permission of the children and their parent if they are under 18. (A photograph consent form can be found in Appendix 3). Parents retain the right to withdraw consent at any stage but they need to do so in writing.
- Staff must always be aware of E-safety and maintain professional boundaries when communicating with children and young people. Use of Social networking sites must be in line with individual organisational procedures.

Referrals to Children's Services (social services)

It is important that employees make a referral to children's services if it is believed or suspected that:

A Child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm (see examples of significant harm below); or

A child's health or development may be impaired without the provision of services; or

With the agreement of the person with parental responsibility, a child would be likely to benefit from family support services.

There are several categories of abuse that could be defined as significant harm as follows:-

Physical abuse

This is a form of significant harm which may include 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.

The following are often regarded as indications of concern;

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury
- Several different explanations provided for an injury
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment
- The parents/carers are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries.

If you notice that a child or young person has injuries such as bruising, bite marks, burns and scalds, or scars and are concerned about the cause, it should be reported using the procedures below.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is a form of significant harm which involves 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. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may also feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capabilities, 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, serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Staff must also be aware and report concerns relating to Domestic Abuse The definition of Domestic Abuse was changed by Government in September 2012 and is now defined as:-

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

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is a form of significant harm which 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 or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in a 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.

Staff must also be aware of Child Sexual Exploitation as an emerging, high priority concern. CSE is defined as:

“involving exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive ‘something’ (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of their performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. It can occur through the use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition; e.g. being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child’s limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.”

Sexual exploitation can have a serious long term impact upon every aspect of a child or young person’s life, health and education. It also damages the lives of families and carers and can lead to families breaking up.

It is a multi-agency responsibility of partner agencies to identify those children and young people at risk of exploitation, to protect them and safeguard them from further risk of harm and to prevent children from becoming victims of this form of abuse.

Neglect

Neglect is a form of significant harm which involves 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 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.

If physical, emotional, sexual or neglect significant harm is suspected, or you have any other concerns regarding significant harm, it is important to report them immediately using the referral method outlined below. A piece of information, no matter how small, could mean that a child at risk is identified. Several small pieces of information from different agencies have in the past identified horrific cases of abuse that would not have been identified by one single agency.

What to do if a child makes an allegation

If a child makes an allegation or discloses information which raises concern about significant harm, the initial response should be to listen carefully to what the child says so as to:

- Clarify the concerns
- Offer reassurance about how s/he will be kept safe and
- Explain that the information will be passed to Children's Services and/or the police

The child must not be pressed for information, led or cross examined or given false assurances of absolute confidentiality. Such well-intentioned actions could prejudice Police investigations, especially in cases of sexual abuse. An interpreter should be used if necessary.

A record of all conversations and actions must be kept.

If the child can understand the significance and consequences of making a referral to Children's Services, s/he should be asked her/his view by the referring professional. Whilst the child's view should be considered, it remains the responsibility of the professional to take whatever action is required to ensure the safety of that child and any other children.

Professionals should generally seek to discuss any concerns with the family and where possible, seek their agreement to making referrals to Children's Social Care, but there will be some circumstances where professionals should not seek consent if it could:-

- Place a child at increased risk of significant harm
- Place an adult at risk of serious harm
- Prejudice the prevention or detection of a serious crime
- Lead to unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of Significant Harm

Professionals should record in writing, on the referral form, whether they have discussed the referral with the family. They should also record the reasons if they decide not to inform the family of these matters.

The procedure in Appendix 2 is designed to help professionals to understand what to do if they have concerns about a child who has additional needs and what to do if a child has been or is likely to be significantly harmed.

How to make referrals relating to children at risk of significant harm

If you have concerns about a child being at risk of significant harm please speak to one of the nominated safeguarding officers (see appendix 1) and they will support you to make a referral if necessary. It is important that you do this, as the safeguarding officer will be aware of any previous referrals. If possible please let your manager or team leader know that you are doing this. They will also be able to help you to contact a safeguarding officer. In the unlikely event that a nominated safeguarding officer is not available and you need to make a referral, you should make the referral (please see the referral process in appendix 2), but please ensure that a safeguarding officer is informed on the same day or next working day after the referral so that the details can be logged in the secure area. **It is not the responsibility of EBC to decide if the allegation is true or not. Enquiries should not be initiated without the authority of children's services or the police.** It is important to make sure that you keep notes of any concerns or allegations, whilst things are fresh in your mind and to also keep a record of the time and date.

Referrals regarding significant harm should be made in one of the following ways:-

- By telephone by calling 0300 200 1006 and followed up in writing/email as appropriate within 48 hours, using the Multi Agency Referral Form. This is also available on the Surrey County Council website at [Procedures for professionals if they have concerns about a child](#).
- In an emergency outside office hours, by contacting the Emergency Duty Team on 01483 517898 or the police.

For all emails including personal details, it is crucial that the information is sent via secure email e.g. from one "Egress" account to another. The Chair of the Information Governance Group will be able to help with any enquiries regarding Egress

Receipt of a referral to the contact centre will be acknowledged within 24 hours.

Staff working with children should also be aware of the specific SCCB guidance on "bruising in children who are not independently mobile".

Concerns about a child who is not at risk of significant harm – Early Help Assessment (EHA)

If there is a concern about children, but the child is not at risk of significant harm, this needs to be dealt with via the Early Help Assessment (EHA) process. Most enquiries about children's welfare are to do with concerns regarding children with additional needs. These needs may require a multi-agency response. The Early Help Assessment (EHA) will help to clarify the child's specific needs and in collaboration with parents, ensure appropriate actions including the identification of a lead professional to continue to assist the family if necessary. The EHA form is available via this link [Early Help Assessment Referral Form](#).

It is possible that an EHA form may have already been completed for the same child, so please call the EHA team on 020 8541 9282 to find out if this is the case. If a form has been completed they will put you in touch with the person who initiated the EHA. The team can also be contacted on caf@surreycc.gov.uk

If you need to complete an EHA form it should be sent to the EHA Team, Runnymede Centre, Chertsey Road, Addlestone, Surrey, KT15 2EP. Or by secure email to caf@surreycc.gov.uk. You will receive an email, please ensure the assessors email is on the EHA Form. The appointment of a Lead Professional would usually be decided jointly between the agencies involved and the parent, carer or young person. The Lead Professional is likely to be the person who knows the child or young person best and already has a relationship with the family. The procedure can be found at [Guidance for professionals with concerns about a child](#) will help to clarify if an EHA is required.

Allegations against staff, carers and volunteers

An investigation is required, if there is an allegation or concern that any person who works with children, in connection with his/her employment or voluntary activity, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

Whilst some behaviours may not constitute a criminal offence, consideration will need to be given as to whether they may indicate unsuitability to work with children. These include concerns relating to inappropriate relationships between members of staff and children such as;

- Having a sexual relationship with a child under 18 in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if consensual;
- 'Grooming' i.e. meeting a child under 16 with intent to commit a relevant offence;
- Other 'grooming' behaviour giving rise to concerns of a broader child protection nature e.g. inappropriate text/email messages or images, gifts, socialising etc.
- Possession of indecent photographs/pseudo-photographs of children

Any allegations or concerns about a member of staff, councillor or volunteer should be immediately referred to the Head of Personnel who should act in accordance with the Surrey Safeguarding policy. If the alleged behavior harmed a child, is a possible criminal offence or the behavior indicates that they are unsuitable to work with children, the local authority designated officer (LADO) at Surrey County Council) must also be informed within one working day of the allegation that come to their attention or allegations that are made directly to the police and if an organisation removes an individual (paid worker or unpaid volunteer) from work such as looking after children (or would have, had the person not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to children, the organisation must make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service. It is an offence to fail to make a referral without good reason.

The LADO is responsible for advising and monitoring such allegations and can be contacted on 01372 833321.

Whistle Blowing

The Council has in place a Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy to ensure serious concerns are reported, investigated and dealt with. The Code forms part of the Council constitution and sets out how to raise serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work. It also clarifies the legal protection under the Public Interest Disclosure Act against reprisals. The Code is available on the Intranet.

If a member of staff believes that a reported allegation or safeguarding concern is not being dealt with appropriately by their organisation, there are clear communication channels within the Council to raise concerns (see named senior officers as set out in the Confidential Reporting Code). If you are not satisfied with any action taken internally and you would prefer to take the matter outside the Council, there are a number of possible contact points as set out in the policy.

Appendix 1 - Safeguarding Officers

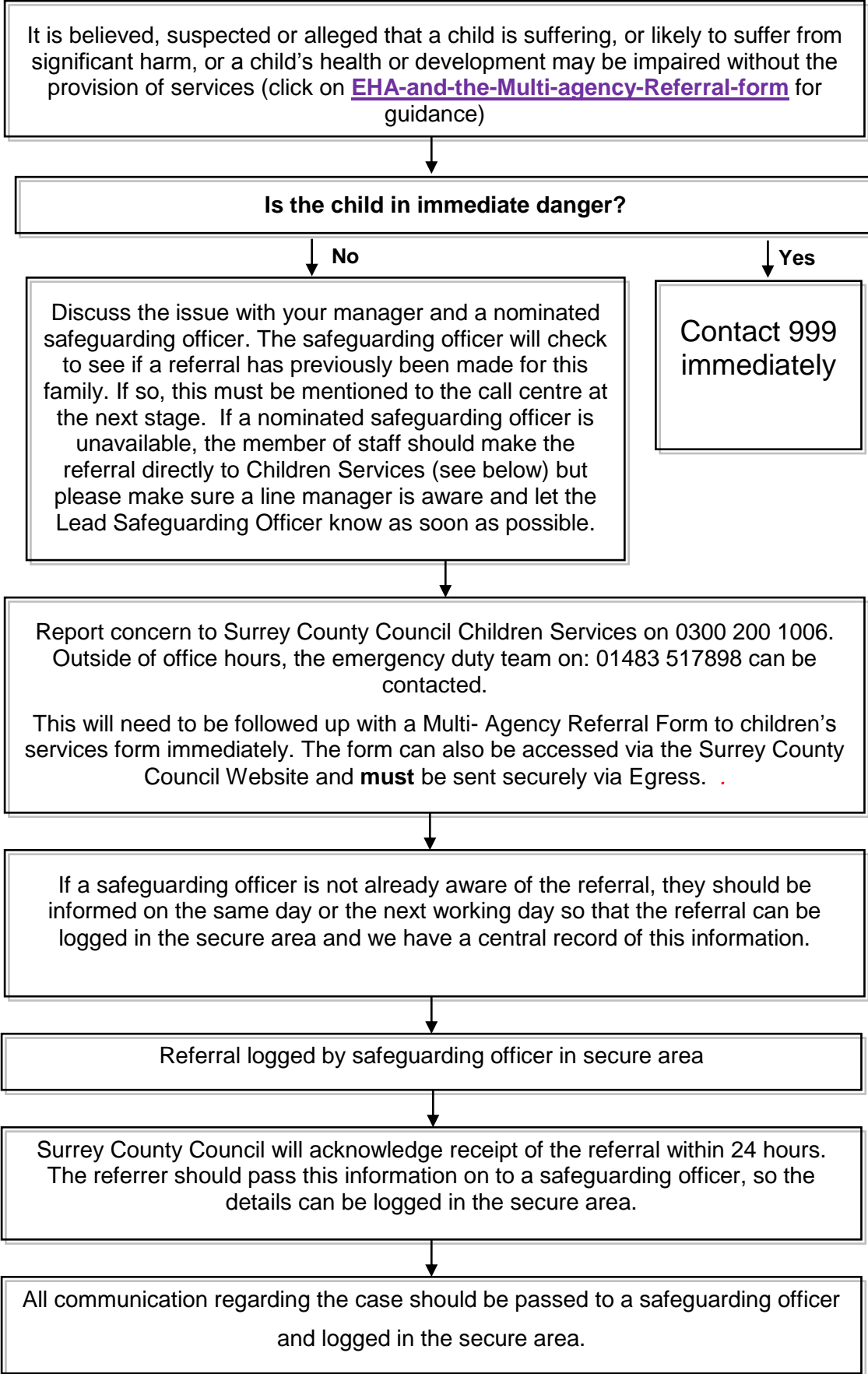
The safeguarding officers will be willing to discuss any concerns with officers or members and will support them to make referrals to children's services.

If employees or members make referrals, please inform a safeguarding officer, as a log of referrals needs to be made. All information will be stored in a secure area.

Strategic Director (Safeguarding Champion)	01372 474700
Centre Services Manager (Lead safeguarding officer)	01372 474558
Head of Housing	01372 474640
Head of Leisure Services	01372 474572
Head of Corporate Policy and Partnerships	01372 474111
Training and Development Officer	01372 474213
Centre Manager - Long Ditton Children's Centre	020 8398 0438

The Lead Member for Safeguarding is Councillor Janet Turner

Appendix 2 - Elmbridge Safeguarding Children Referral Process





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Photo Consent Form at Public Events

Consent for use of photographs taken at

[EVENT, LOCATION] on [DATE]

Name of child/young person 1:

Name of child/young person 2:

Name of child/young person 3:

Name of child/young person 4:

I am the legal parent/guardian/carer of the child/children/young person above and I give permission for those named above/ and myself to be photographed for the following uses:

Elmbridge Borough Council and their partners' publications,
Website, other social media and for general publicity purposes YES/ NO

Local newspapers and other news media
(on the basis that their full names may be published along with their picture) YES/ NO

Optional use e.g. "Future Playday publicity including posters, flyers, adverts, magazine,
Playday and Play England websites YES/NO

Name of parent/guardian/carer:

Relationship to child/ren:.....

Title of photograph (description of what is being taken)

.....

I confirm that I have read the terms and conditions of use attached to this consent form and understand the proposed uses for the photographs. I understand that I can withdraw the photo from the photo library at any time by contacting the event organiser(s).

Signature of parent/guardian/carer:

Address:.....

Date

Elmbridge Borough Council Officer(s) in charge of photographs (event organiser):

.....

(Please see Terms and Conditions overleaf)

Terms and Conditions

Dear Parent, Guardian or Carer

The photographs may be used in any media used by **Elmbridge Borough Council** in various promotional material including website, newsletters, leaflets and posters. Photographs may also be circulated to the media. Photographs taken at this event might be kept on file for future use.

Optional paragraph to include use by other partners/associations e.g. *“The photographs may also be used to promote the Playday campaign nationally, and used on the Playday website. Elmbridge Borough Council will only use the photographs to promote future Playday events and champion children’s right to play.”*

Optional paragraph if media invited: *“Elmbridge Borough Council has invited the media to take photographs and/or film footage for publicity purposes. Images taken of any people may appear in local or national newspapers, on televised news programmes or on a newspaper’s website.”*

Conditions of use by Elmbridge Borough Council

1. This form is valid for 3 years from the date of signing. The consent will automatically expire after this time. We will not re-use any images after this time.
2. Images taken will be securely stored and used by Elmbridge Borough Council to promote activities of the same subject. This includes media releases, brochures, leaflets, websites, social media, displays and exhibitions.
3. We will not include details or full names (which means first name **and** surname) of any child or adult in an image on video, on our website, or in printed publications, without good reason.
4. We will not include personal e-mail or postal addresses, or telephone or fax numbers on video or on our website or in printed publications
5. If we use images of individual children, we will not use the name of that child in the accompanying text or photo caption without good reason.
6. We may use group images with very general labels, such as “making decorations”.
7. We will only use images of children who are suitably dressed, to reduce the risk of such images being used inappropriately.