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# Safeguarding: Policy and Procedure 2017

A guide to safeguarding children at Elmbridge Borough Council

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## Document Control

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## Document Approvals

This document requires the following approvals:

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## Introduction to the safeguarding children policy

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Elmbridge Borough Council has a legal 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 – under 18 years of age.

The aims of safeguarding are to:

- Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect.
- Stop abuse or neglect wherever possible.
- Prevent impairment of development and enable individuals to have the best outcomes.
- Safeguard individuals in such a way that supports them in making choices and having control over how they want to live.
- Promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the individual.
- Raising public awareness so that communities alongside professionals, play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect.
- Provide accessible information and support to help people understand what constitutes abuse and neglect, and how to respond.
- Address what has caused the abuse or neglect.

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. The Surrey Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) is led by Surrey County Council and all Borough Councils are partner agencies of the board along with other statutory and voluntary agencies.

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## 1.1.1.Principles and values

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### 1.1.1.1 Safeguarding children: principles and values

The statutory guidance 'Working together to safeguard children 2015' suggests that the focus when safeguarding children should be to promote children's wellbeing and welfare through supporting families. It recommends that safeguarding must focus on the needs of a child as much as the risk to a child to give children and families positive outcomes. When safeguarding children, the response needs to be in line with the following key principles:

#### 1.1.1.2 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

'Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility' is the founding principle of safeguarding children. It asserts that everybody has role to play in protecting children from harm and keeping them safe. If a person encounters a child whom they consequently have concerns about, they must act to safeguard the child. It is unlikely that a single individual's insight into a child's situation will form a complete picture and by raising your concerns, however small, and sharing information, it will allow for more informed decision making and decisive action to be taken.

#### 1.1.1.3 A child centred approach

In all cases, safeguarding should be child-centred. This means prioritising the needs of the children, and their views. To do this, children's views must be sought, heard and respected, and they must have consistent support that meets their needs.

#### 1.1.1.4 Every child matters

The purpose of all safeguarding should be to achieve the best possible outcomes for each individual child. The government has set out five key outcomes for all children in the statutory guidance 'Every Child Matters'. Effective safeguarding of children will contribute to the attainment of these outcomes:

- Stay safe
- Be healthy
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic wellbeing

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## Legal framework

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This Safeguarding policy is underpinned by a range of legislation including but not limited to:

### 1.1.1.5

### 1.1.1.6 The Children Act (2004) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)

Section 11 of The Children Act 2004 places a statutory duty on local authorities, including districts and boroughs that provide children's and other types of services, to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are discharged bearing in mind the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This includes any function they contract out.

The statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 sets out how organisations and individuals should work together to achieve this using the key principles:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part.
- The approach must be child-centred: to be effective, there needs to be a clear understanding of the needs of the child.



### **1.1.1.7 Surrey Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB)**

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, 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

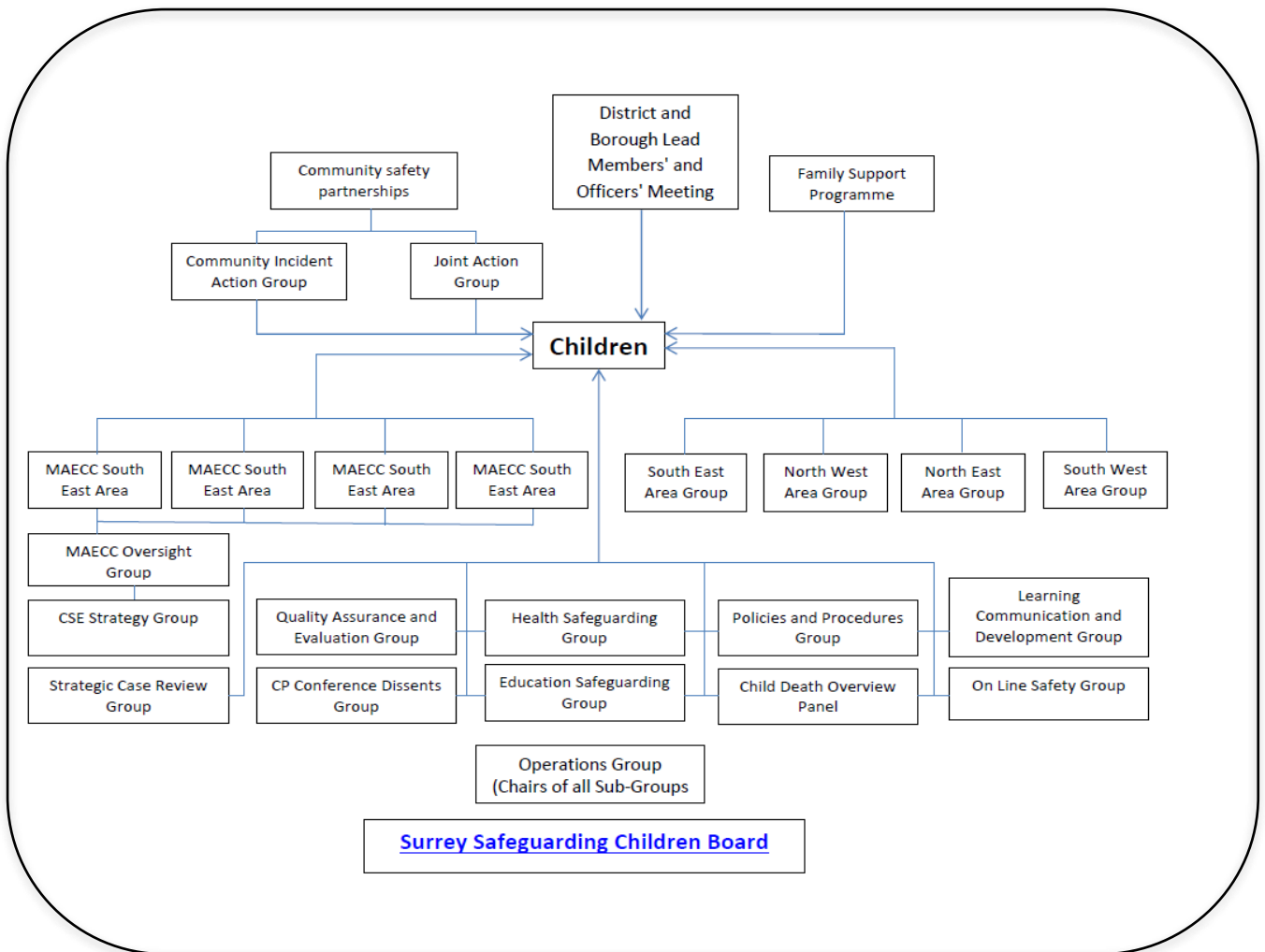
Borough and District Councils have a crucial role to play in the safeguarding of children in their areas. The Surrey Safeguarding Board Procedures Manual specifically refer to the duty of housing authorities to share information that is relevant to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and 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.

**1.1.1.7.1 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.

### **1.1.1.7.2 Surrey Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB)**

The structure of Surrey Safeguarding Children Board can be viewed in the figure is on the next page.



### 1.1.1.7.3 Surrey Safeguarding children priorities

#### The SSCB has 2 main objectives:

- To coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area
- To ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes

#### The functions that support these objectives are:

- Developing policies and procedures
- Communicating and raising awareness
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of partners individually and collectively
- Participating in the planning of services
- Undertaking reviews of all child deaths and serious case reviews and disseminating the learning
- Commissioning and delivery of multi-agency training
- Evaluation of single agency and multi agency training

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## Definitions

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### 1.1.2 Forms of abuse and indicators of abuse

#### 1.1.2.1 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.

#### Possible indicators

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury/unexplained 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
- Exhibiting untypical self-harm
- Sudden and unexplained urinary and/or faecal incontinence. Evidence of over/under-medication
- Flinches at physical contact
- Appears frightened or subdued in the presence of particular people
- Reluctance to undress or uncover parts of the body

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 must be reported using the procedures below.

#### 1.1.2.2 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.

### 1.1.2.3 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 way 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.

#### Possible indicators

- Urinary tract infections, vaginal infections or sexually transmitted diseases that are not otherwise explained;
- Appears unusually subdued, withdrawn, or has poor concentration;

- Exhibits significant changes in sexual behaviour or outlook;
- Experiences pain, itching or bleeding in the genital/anal area;
- Underclothing is torn, stained or bloody;
- A child or a woman who lacks the mental capacity to consent to sexual intercourse becomes pregnant.

#### **1.1.2.4 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.

#### **Possible indicators 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.

#### **1.1.2.5 Domestic abuse**

Staff must also be aware and report concerns relating to Domestic Abuse. The definition of Domestic Abuse, revised in 2013, is:

“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”

Domestic abuse includes so called 'honour' based violence, Female Genital Mutilation, forced marriage.

Many people think that domestic abuse is about intimate partners, but other family members are included and that much safeguarding work that occurs at home is, in fact is concerned with domestic abuse. This confirms that domestic abuse approaches and legislation can be considered safeguarding responses in appropriate cases.

Family members are defined as: mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, and grandparents, whether directly related, in-laws or step-family.

**Forced marriage** is a term used to describe a marriage in which one or both parties are married without their consent or against their will. A forced marriage differs from an arranged marriage, in which both parties consent to the assistance of their parents or a third party in identifying a spouse.

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 means it is now a criminal offence to force someone to marry. In addition, the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 may be used to obtain a Forced Marriage Protection Order as a civil remedy.

**Honour-based violence** is a crime, and referring to the police must always be considered. It has or may have been committed when families feel that dishonour has been brought to them. Women are predominantly (but not exclusively) the victims and the violence is often committed with a degree of collusion from family members and/or the community. Many of these victims will contact the police or other organisations. However, many others are so isolated and controlled that they are unable to seek help.

Safeguarding concerns that may indicate honour-based violence include domestic violence, concerns about forced marriage, enforced house arrest and missing person's reports. If a safeguarding concern is raised, and there is a suspicion that the child/adult is the victim of honour-based violence, referring to the police must always be considered as they have the necessary expertise to manage the risk.

**Female genital mutilation (FGM)** involves procedures that intentionally alter or injure female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The procedure has no health benefits for girls and women. The Female Genital Mutilation Act (FGMA) was introduced in 2003 and came into effect in March 2004. The Act makes it illegal to practise FGM in the UK or to take girls who are British nationals or permanent residents of the UK abroad for FGM whether or not it is lawful in another country. It also makes it illegal to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad.

#### **1.1.2.6 Discriminatory abuse**

Including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

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## Roles and responsibilities

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### 1.1.3 The Council as an organisation

The Council is committed at senior and committee level to safeguarding children at risk. The Council recognises its responsibilities under The Children Act 2004, and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015. Safeguarding is on the agenda ensuring:

- Representation at the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board and the completion of Section 11 returns for this board;
- Appointment of a Lead Member for Children's Safeguarding;
- Appointment of Safeguarding Officers across the Council;
- Sign up to protocols and policies;
- Regularly review and adopt safeguarding children's policy

### 1.1.4 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.

### **1.1.5 The Council as an employer**

In its role as an employer the Council incorporates safeguarding measures in its recruitment procedure and provides mandatory safeguarding training for all employees.

### **1.1.6 Recruitment of staff who will work with children**

It is important that recruitment procedures are thorough 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 an individual's 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.

### **1.1.7 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.

### **1.1.8 Training**

All staff working with children and families will receive training in child protection and information regarding procedures relating to safeguarding. All new employees are required to undertake safeguarding e-learning within 3 months of starting in their role. This will ensure that all staff are aware of the safeguarding policies and will know how to refer concerns via the appropriate routes. Organisational Development monitor this training.



Employees who cannot access the e-learning will have training provided by their managers (Centres for the Community). All staff are required to undertake safeguarding e-learning every three years.

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 noticeboards, included on Bridge-It, and discussed at staff forums.

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 able to identify concerns about maltreatment, should complete the safeguarding children course arranged by the Surrey Learn Partnership (SLP)). These groups will be identified on the establishment list by the Lead Safeguarding Officer 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 monitored by Organisational Development and is also the responsibility of Heads of Service. Casual staff (including Shout! Holiday Activities staff) and volunteers will receive training according to their duties led by their managers.

The Family Support Team training will be provided by Surrey County Council. However, they are all expected to understand their responsibilities in relation to Elmbridge Borough Council and will receive a copy of this strategy.

**1.1.8.1.1 The training requirements are as follows: -**

<b>Training and Awareness</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Participant</b>
Safeguarding E learning module.	e-learning provided through Learning Pool and designed through the SLP	All new employees
Cascade training for remote staff e.g. environmental services staff/day centre staff who are unable to do e learning 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 able 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.

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## Procedure

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### 1.1.9 A guide on how to respond if you have a concern

The safeguarding procedures outlined below form a framework for raising an alert and taking action, however, it must be remembered that safeguarding is a dynamic process that must be undertaken with people, and is not something that happens to people.

### 1.1.10 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.

### **1.1.10.1 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 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.

### **1.1.10.2 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.

### **1.1.10.3 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, speak to your manager and contact a nominated safeguarding officer (see below).

### **1.1.10.4 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.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Team</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>
Ray Lee	Strategic Director	Safeguarding Champion	01372 474700
Siân Kiely	Leisure Services	Designated Safeguarding Lead for Children	01372474544
Julie Cook	Head of Housing	Safeguarding Officer	01372 474640
Ian Burrows	Head of Leisure Services	Safeguarding Officer	01372 474572
Natalie Anderson	Head of Organisational Development	Safeguarding Officer	01372 474111
Annabel Crouch	Policy Manager	Safeguarding Officer	01372 474398

**Councillor, Lead Member for Safeguarding Janet Turner**

This is important as the safeguarding officer will be aware of any previous referrals. If a nominated safeguarding officer is not available, you will still need to make the referral following the referral process below.

# Raising a concern

## Safeguarding children/adult referral process

It is believed, suspected or alleged that a child/adult is suffering, or likely to suffer from significant harm, or a child's health or development may be impaired

Is the child/adult in immediate danger?

Yes



Contact 999 immediately

No

**Discuss the issue** with your manager and the nominated safeguarding officer. If a nominated safeguarding officer is unavailable, proceed to the next step but make sure a line manager is aware and let the lead safeguarding officer know as soon as possible.

Report concern to **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** on **0300 470 9100** within 48 hours.

Outside of office hours, contact the emergency duty team on: **01483 517898**.

Follow up with a **Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF)** available from [surreycc.gov.uk](http://surreycc.gov.uk) and send to the lead safeguarding officer.

Safeguarding officer will log the form and send to **MASH** via **Egress**.

The **MASH** will acknowledge receipt within 24 hours. All communication regarding the case should be passed to a safeguarding officer and logged in the secure area.

**It is not our responsibility to decide if the allegation is true. Enquiries must not be initiated without the authority of children's/adult's services or the police.** Make notes of all concerns or allegations, while things are fresh in your mind and keep a record of the time and date.



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

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

Staff working with children should also be aware of the specific SCCB guidance on [“bruising in children who are not independently mobile”](#).

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

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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 [earlyhelp@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelp@surreycc.gov.uk)

If you need to complete an EHA form it should be sent to the Early Help Partnership Service, 35 Guildford Road, Woking, Surrey GU23 6LH or by secure email to [earlyhelp@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelp@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 [“What is Early Help”](#).

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## 1.1.11 Allegations against staff, carers and volunteers

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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 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 0300 123 1650 option 3 or email [LADO@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@surreycc.gov.uk)

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## 1.1.12 Whistle Blowing

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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.