

Safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk of abuse

Policy & Procedure

Contents



1	What is this document for?	4
2	Scope and Definitions	4
3	Policy	6
3.1	The Children's Society's commitment to safeguarding	6
3.2	Key safeguarding principles of this document	7
3.3	Safeguarding corporate governance accountability	8
4	Procedures	11
4.1	Safeguarding procedures for all employees	11
4.2	Responding to a safeguarding concern	13
4.3	Recording safeguarding concerns	16
4.4	Making a referral	17
4.5	Working with local authority children's social care	21
4.6	Contributing to a Section 47 (s.47) enquiry	22
4.7	Attending a child protection conference	24
4.8	Contributing to a child protection plan	26
4.9	Working with adult services	29
4.10	Escalating a concern	31
4.11	Consulting The Children's Society Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team	35
4.12	Contributing to a learning review	36
4.13	Safeguarding in complex circumstances	37
4.14	Age assessment and age disputes	39
4.15	Contextual safeguarding	40
4.16	Intelligence sharing	41
4.17	Complex, organised or multiple abuse	42
4.18	Court proceedings	43
4.19	Organised Crime Groups and Networks	44
4.20	Digital safeguarding	45
4.21	Domestic abuse	46
4.22	Non-Recent (Historical) abuse	47

4.23	Managing safeguarding allegations/concerns regarding employees or volunteers ...	48
4.24	Missing children, young people and adults at risk	48
4.25	Prevent (preventing radicalisation)	51
4.26	Safeguarding children and adults who may have been trafficked	53
4.27	Transitional safeguarding planning	53
4.28	Children as perpetrators of abuse	54
5.	Appendices	57
6.	Glossary of Terms	58

This document contains:	
Policy Broad statements that MUST be followed	Yes
Procedure Step by step instructions that MUST be followed	Yes
Guidance Recommended practice that SHOULD be followed	No

1 What is this document for?

- 1.1 This document sets out The Children's Society's approach to safeguarding, including:
- The Children's Society's commitment to safeguarding
 - key safeguarding principles
 - safeguarding governance and accountabilities
 - safeguarding procedures for all employees and volunteers to follow
 - working with a local authority on safeguarding
 - specific safeguarding circumstances.
- 1.2 A glossary of terms to aid employees is included at the end of this document. Further safeguarding guidance to support the actions outlined in this policy and procedure is available on The Children's Society's intranet.
- 1.3 Volunteer managers in all domains must follow additional specific requirements and guidance available in the [Volunteer Managers Hub](#).
- 1.4 This document is reviewed by the Executive Director of Youth Impact, with input from the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Practice, and Youth Impact Directors annually (and presented to ELT for approval). It is raised to the Board of Trustees for approval where significant changes are noted, or three-yearly whichever is sooner. Date of last Board sign off (July 2022).

2 Scope and Definitions

- 2.1 **Child or young person:** Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.
- 2.2 **Adult at risk:** Anyone aged 18 or over with care and support needs who is experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing, abuse or neglect (either from another person's behaviour or their own behaviour).
- 2.3 **Employees:** Anyone employed by The Children's Society, including agency employees and those on secondment or placement (including internships both paid and voluntary, and students).
- 2.4 **Volunteers:** Anyone volunteering for The Children's Society, regardless of their role, including Trustees.
- 2.5 **Child and adult abuse:** Children and adults may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their daily lives. Abuse can take a variety of different forms, including:
- sexual, physical, emotional abuse, and neglect
 - fabricated or induced illness (FII)

- exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups
- trafficking and modern slavery
- online abuse
- sexual exploitation
- influences of extremism leading to radicalisation
- domestic abuse
- financial abuse
- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- discriminatory abuse
- organisational abuse.

2.6 **Safeguarding children** is defined in Working together to safeguard children 2018 as:

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

2.7 **Child Protection** is defined in Working together to safeguard children 2018 as: Part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

2.8 **Safeguarding adults at risk** is defined in the Care and support statutory guidance issued under the Care Act 2014 as:

- protecting the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect
- people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect
- people and organisations making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, taking their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs fully into account when deciding any action
- recognising that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear, or unrealistic about their personal circumstances and therefore potential risks to their safety or wellbeing.

3 Policy

3.1 The Children's Society's commitment to safeguarding

3.1.1 The Children's Society is committed to, and has a duty to, safeguard and promote the welfare of the children, young people, and adults at risk who use its services or with whom it comes into contact.

3.1.2 The Children's Society aims to ensure that employees and volunteers comply with all legal, contractual, and professional standards and responsibilities in their work with children and adults – whether in a group work setting or on an individual basis.

High-quality recording, record keeping, and records management are essential in this context, and procedures for these are contained within this policy.

3.1.3 The Children's Society is committed to building and embedding a culture that places transparency and sound safeguarding practice at the centre of all its activities – from the services delivered, to retail shops, to partnership work with supporters and stakeholders.

The Children's Society continually strives to strengthen its ways of working to ensure all employees and volunteers feel safe to raise any safeguarding concerns and are fully supported if this occurs.

3.1.4 Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that, 'every child should be protected from abuse'. Everyone at The Children's Society has a responsibility to make sure that children are safeguarded and protected from abuse and neglect.

3.1.5 The Care Act 2014 sets out a clear legal framework for how local authorities and other stakeholders should protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect. These safeguarding duties include the requirement for a multi-agency, local adult safeguarding system that seeks to prevent abuse and neglect, and stop it quickly when it happens.

3.1.6 Some of the people The Children's Society works with are adults with care and support needs who become at risk due to the actions or omissions of themselves or others. All employees and volunteers have a duty to safeguard these individuals – including The Children's Society volunteers and employees, who may have care and support needs, and become adults at risk as circumstances for them change.

- 3.1.7 The Children's Society's vision is a society built for all children. Acting on any safeguarding concern is an important aspect of achieving this vision.

Our organisational goal is to overturn the damaging decline in children's wellbeing, setting a path for long lasting growth by 2030. Young people are at the heart of The Children's Society's work – employees and volunteers must aim to speak up for them and protect them from harm.

A commitment to embedding equity, diversity and inclusion into all that we do is a key priority for The Children's Society. Employees and volunteers must uphold the principles of our Dignity at Work Policy and ensure that the promotion of equality, anti-discriminatory practice and tackling racism shines through in our work to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk.

3.2 **Key safeguarding principles of this document**

- 3.2.1 The wellbeing of children, young people, and adults at risk is paramount to the work of The Children's Society.
- 3.2.2 All employees and volunteers have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children, young people, and adults at risk. They must read and understand this policy and procedure, be aware of their responsibilities, and undertake their duties with care for quality, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 3.2.3 The Children's Society works in partnership on safeguarding matters. While everyone who works with children and adults at risk has a responsibility for keeping them safe, no one person or organisation alone can have a full picture of an individual's needs and circumstances. Therefore, all partners have a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action.
- 3.2.4 The Children's Society makes sure that employees, volunteers including Trustees are provided with training and support to equip them to safeguard children and adults at risk within their day to day professional practice.
- 3.2.5 This document reflects the legal framework set out in The Children Act 1989 and the Care Act 2014 (employees should note that child and adult safeguarding have the same statutory footing).

These laws set out the statutory safeguarding duties of local authorities. More information about safeguarding law and connected guidance can be found on the [intranet](#).

3.2.6 The Children's Society safeguarding policy must always take precedence over all internal organisational policies or frameworks for all employees and volunteers.

This remains the case when employees/volunteers are placed within other organisations (such as a local authority) or have current professional registration attached to a regulatory framework.

3.2.7 The care and support of children, young people, and adults at risk is The Children's Society's responsibility as an organisation, rather than that of the individual or service.

3.3 **Safeguarding corporate governance accountability**

3.3.1 The protection and safeguarding of children and adults at risk is paramount in all the work The Children's Society undertakes. The corporate governance accountability for safeguarding set out below shows lines of accountability for safeguarding throughout The Children's Society.

3.3.2 **Board of Trustees:** The Children's Society Board of Trustees is accountable for ensuring that the organisation has appropriate structure, processes, and resources in place to ensure safeguarding is central to all the organisation does, and for monitoring compliance. The Charity Commission for England and Wales¹ holds Trustees to account if things go wrong, and will check that Trustees followed the guidance and the law. As part of fulfilling their duties, Trustees must take reasonable steps to protect from harm, people who come into contact with The Children's Society. This includes:

- People who benefit from The Children's Society work
- Staff
- Volunteers
- Other people who come into contact with The Children's Society through its work

3.3.3 Trustees discharge their safeguarding responsibilities by:

- convening the Risk, Audit and Compliance Committee (RACC), which maintains oversight of safeguarding issues within the organisation on behalf of the Board of Trustees

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>

- appointing a lead Safeguarding Trustee, who is a member of RACC and is the board's named expert on safeguarding. They provide expert advice and guidance to the board on safeguarding matters linked to discharging their duties. They are invited to attend, and will receive copies of all documentation relating to the Corporate Strategic Safeguarding Group, and will report their own assessment of the work of the group to the RACC as appropriate.
- receiving an annual safeguarding report, and commissioning specific audits or deep dive assessments into any area pertaining to safeguarding within The Children's Society
- giving due scrutiny and consideration to any concerns identified by the RACC or by the Executive Director of Youth Impact.

3.3.4 **The Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** is the senior accountable individual for all aspects of safeguarding across the organisation. This includes ensuring that there is a strong culture of safeguarding across the work of The Children's Society and that there are clear reporting processes, structures, and line management accountability to safeguard children and adults at risk.

3.3.5 The CEO discharges their responsibilities by:

- ensuring that the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) are held accountable for safeguarding within their respective domains and across the organisation as a whole
- receiving regular safeguarding updates from the Executive Director of Youth Impact and Head of Safeguarding and Quality Practice, and getting directly involved in the management and oversight of safeguarding matters deemed in need of escalation.

3.3.6 **Executive Leadership Team (ELT).** Each member of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) is accountable for safeguarding matters within their domain. This includes ensuring that robust reporting and escalation processes are in place appropriate to the area of work, and that employees and volunteers are adequately trained and supported in safeguarding matters.

- 3.3.7 **The Senior Leadership Team (SLT).** ELT delegate the operational oversight of safeguarding to members of their senior leadership team (SLT). This includes having oversight of any safeguarding concerns within their area, that employees are seeking expert safeguarding advice appropriately, and that there are systems in place to ensure that safeguarding matters are being appropriately reported and escalated in a timely manner.
- 3.3.8 **Executive Director of Youth Impact.** The Executive Director of Youth Impact is operationally accountable for safeguarding within the Youth Impact domain (YI) and holds corporate accountability for ensuring that safeguarding policy and practice is developed, implemented, managed and monitored across the charity.
- 3.3.9 The Executive Director of Youth Impact also provides specific expert advice to the CEO, ELT and Board of Trustees on significant safeguarding matters.
- 3.3.10 The Executive Director of Youth Impact discharges their responsibilities by:
- chairing the Corporate Strategic Safeguarding Group, which includes senior representatives from across the organisation. The group oversees the organisation's safeguarding risk register, ensuring activities to manage risk are regularly monitored, with robust action planning.
 - working with the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Practice to ensure robust safeguarding reporting and governance structures are in place and they are operating effectively, including safeguarding and quality practice reporting.
 - directly managing the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Practice, who is responsible for corporate safeguarding functions and to ensure quality practice across all The Children's Society direct delivery and the management of the specialist Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team. This includes oversight of corporate and practice safeguarding training and development and implementation of best safeguarding practice across the charity.
- 3.3.11 **Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team.** The corporate safeguarding and quality practice functions operate from within the Youth Impact domain and are responsible for providing expert safeguarding and

practice advice and guidance across the charity, and for ensuring safeguarding improvement and development activity.

- 3.3.12 **Managers.** All managers across all teams have operational responsibility for the safeguarding practice and improvement of all employees within the services and teams / knowledge groups they directly manage, including volunteers.
- 3.3.13 **Employees and volunteers.** All employees and volunteers have the responsibility to recognise, report, and record safeguarding concerns about children, young people, and adults at risk in line with this policy document and associated guidance. This includes a responsibility to work closely with local authorities in order to share current information and effectively take part in multi-agency discussion.
- 3.3.14 Volunteers must work with employees directly on the reporting and recording of safeguarding concerns as per the [Volunteers Handbook](#).

4 Procedures

4.1 Safeguarding procedures for all employees

- 4.1.1 If an employee is informed about or concerned about the abuse of a child, young person, or adult at risk, they must take the following steps:
- Always place the child or adult's welfare and interests as the paramount consideration.
 - Make safeguarding personal using a person-led and outcomes-focused approach. Employees must talk with the child, young person, or adult at risk about how best to respond to their safeguarding situation in a way that enhances their involvement, control, and choice throughout the safeguarding process.
 - Employees should be mindful of and aware of issues related to power, privilege and oppression. Self-awareness and reflection are critical in this process to ensure that one's own values, beliefs and judgements are not imposed. It is important to recognise that our own lens and experiences can play out in actions and behaviours.
 - Listen carefully and actively to the person – at this stage, you need to know enough to assess immediate and current risk, but should not be asking probing questions to gather evidence. Let the person guide the pace.

- Do not show shock at what is being said. This may discourage the child or adult from talking, as they may feel you are unable to cope with what they're saying, or perhaps that you're thinking badly of them.
- Do not investigate. If anything needs to be clarified in order to understand the safeguarding risk, ask clear, open questions:
 - use the TED rule: tell, explain and describe
 - ask 'what, when, who, how, where' questions
 - ask 'do you want to tell me anything else?'
 - do not ask any 'why' questions as these can suggest guilt or responsibility.
- Remain calm and reassure the person that they have done the right thing by talking to a responsible adult.
- Never promise to keep a secret or confidentiality. The Children's Society works within wider statutory systems and must collaborate in order to effectively support and care for children, young people, and adults at risk. It is important that this fact, and its implications of transparency and reporting, are emphasised in early and ongoing conversations.
- Ensure the child or adult at risk understands what will happen next with their information.

4.1.2 If the person disclosing is a child or vulnerable adult, employees have a duty to ensure that the information is passed on in order to keep them safe.

If a child requests confidentiality, employees must explain The Children's Society requirements, for example, 'I'm really concerned about what you have told me and I have a responsibility to ensure that you are safe'.

4.1.3 The December 2020 update to Working Together clarifies that the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

4.1.4 If the person disclosing is an adult, employees have a duty to pass on information if someone is at immediate risk of harm, and to encourage and support the adult to share information and seek support.

Employees must ask for the adult's consent to take up their concerns. If the adult does not agree, or if employees do not believe that the adult has capacity to make a decision about consent, they must consult with The Children's Society Safeguarding and Quality Practice team and refer to The Children's Society's Mental Capacity Act [guidance](#) for more information.

- 4.1.5 Where there are concerns or allegations about an adult employee or volunteer who is working with children or adults at risk (often called someone in a "position of trust") within The Children's Society, employees must immediately inform the Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team and follow the Managing Allegations and Concerns about an Employee or Volunteer who works with Children, Young People or Adults at Risk Policy and Procedures.

4.2 Responding to a safeguarding concern

Immediate risk of harm

- 4.2.1 If an employee or volunteer believes a child or adult to be at immediate risk of harm or abuse, and/or a criminal offence is taking place, they must take immediate steps to protect that person by calling 999.

Employees/volunteers must then contact their line manager/volunteer co-ordinator to let them know what has happened and to take advice on next steps.

- 4.2.2 If the employee works or volunteers outside of the Youth Impact domain, the manager must then consult with The Children's Society Safeguarding and Quality Practice team, who will advise on other steps that may be required.
- 4.2.3 If an emergency arises outside of a service's usual working hours employees must use the emergency out of hours contact number (020 3284 8687) to notify the manager on duty of any referral to the police. The Senior Manager on duty will record any advice and actions taken within an on-call duty log.
- 4.2.4 Employees must record their safeguarding concerns and actions (or those raised by volunteers) on Mosaic on the same day.

If there is any barrier to being able to do this, employees must discuss this with their manager on the same day, to agree who will make the record.

4.2.5 The Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Act 2003 provides a mandatory duty for reporting FGM. This legislation requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to make a report to the police where, in the course of their professional duties, they either:

- Are informed by a girl under 18 years that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- Observe physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 years and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth.

No Immediate risk of harm

4.2.6 Employees and volunteers must consult with a line manager/volunteer coordinator as soon as possible on the same working day of the safeguarding concern.

If working outside of the Youth Impact domain, the line manager must then consult with the Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team who will provide advice, guidance, or instruction.

4.2.7 If there are concerns that a child is, or has been, at risk of abuse, employees must make a referral on the same working day to the local authority children's services in the area where the child is living (or is found). Employees must take guidance from their manager as needed.

4.2.8 For safeguarding concerns raised by volunteers, a service manager must appoint an appropriate employee to make the referral. This must be done as soon as possible on the same working day.

Employees must (subject to issues of confidentiality or other sensitivities) keep volunteers informed as to the outcome of the referral.

4.2.9 A safeguarding workflow must be started on Mosaic on the same working day of any safeguarding referral being raised or when a new safeguarding concern is shared with social care, and/or the police, when the child or young person is already open to them.

4.2.10 Employees must discuss safeguarding concerns for an adult with their manager. Employees and managers must consider the safeguarding concerns and the adult's individual circumstances to decide if a referral is warranted, including a consideration of:

- Empowerment – what does the person want? What rights need to be respected? Is there a duty to act, are others at risk of harm?
- Protection – is this person an adult at risk? What support do they need? Is capacity an issue? Should others (such as a carer) be involved?
- Proportionality – have risks been weighed up? Does the nature of the concern require referral through multi-agency procedures?
- Partnership – what is the view of others involved? How do multi-agency procedures apply?
- Accountability – is there a clear rationale on which to base a decision?

The Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team can also be contacted for advice, information and guidance.

Concerns from the general public

- 4.2.11 Employees in the supporter care team, and any team/services/knowledge groups across The Children’s Society which has external facing emails or social media accounts, may receive safeguarding concerns from the general public via email, social media, or the supporter care telephone line.
- 4.2.12 Where such concerns are received via email or social media, these must immediately be passed onto the Safeguarding and Quality Practice team via safeguarding@childrenssociety.org.uk. This email is monitored 9-5 Monday to Friday. If a safeguarding issue is raised outside of these times the out of hours emergency contact phonenumber should be used (0203 284 8687).
- 4.2.13 Where the concern is received via telephone, the recipient must:
- listen to the concern
 - as soon as possible during the call, advise the caller that their concern will be passed onto The Children’s Society’s Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team

- take the caller's contact details and send these to the Safeguarding and Quality Practice team via safeguarding@childrenssociety.org.uk or
- via a phone call (020 7841 4477)
- inform their line manager once they have passed on the safeguarding concern.

4.3 Recording safeguarding concerns

4.3.1 Safeguarding concerns raised to the Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team from outside the Youth Impact domain will be recorded by the Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team.

4.3.2 For those within the Youth Impact domain, employees are asked to factually record on Mosaic what the child or adult has told them (in the child or adult's own words) or what the employee has observed – as soon as possible.

Employees must include the date, time, place and observations of behaviour.

4.3.3 If practical barriers exist to prevent employees making timely entries in Mosaic, they must discuss this with their manager on the same day as the safeguarding concern.

4.3.4 Volunteers must consult with their volunteer manager – or in their absence the Service Manager - to provide the necessary information for the manager to record concerns on Mosaic.

4.3.5 Accurate records are vital for our work. If colleagues fail to record accurately, or if they write down their interpretation of the child or adult's account (as opposed to a factual account), this may lead to inadmissible or unusable evidence should the information be required for court processes.

4.3.6 Employees must not contact any individual about whom an allegation or concern is being raised. This could be putting the person making the allegations in serious danger, for example, where domestic violence is taking place. It could also prejudice an investigation.

4.3.7 If a manager decides that a referral to the local authority children's services or adults social care is not warranted, this decision must be recorded by the service manager on Mosaic as a case note under the

case note type: 'Decision not to make a referral to social care' (with evidence to support decision making). Service managers must be sure to include the reasons why this decision was reached.

4.4 **Making a referral**

Making a referral to a local authority

- 4.4.1 Any sensitive information sent outside The Children's Society must be sent using an encrypted email.
- 4.4.2 Referrals must be made on the same day where harm or risk of harm has been identified. If concerns arise out of office hours, referrals must be made to the local authority out of hours service.

4.4.3 **For a child:**

Employees must make referrals to the local authority children's social care services, following local procedures. Employees must always confirm the referral in writing via secure email.

Where possible, employees must discuss their concerns with the child's parent/carer, and an agreement should be sought for a referral to the local authority children's social care. Employees must only do this if it does not increase risk to the child (through either delay, or the parent/carer's possible actions or reactions).

If employees decide not to seek parental permission before making a referral to children's social care, they must record and date this in the child's file case notes in Mosaic along with reasons. This must also be confirmed in the referral to children's social care via secure email.

4.4.4 **For an adult:**

If the adult consents to safeguarding procedures and a referral, employees must follow the local Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) procedures. Employees must take action on the same working day that the concerns were noted and consent obtained.

If the adult does not consent to contacting other agencies, and has the mental capacity to make that decision, employees must provide information and advice to the adult. This must include a summary of the concerns and advice of other services that the adult may choose to access.

Mental capacity and referring

4.4.5 In order to assess capacity of a child or adult, employees should apply the two-stage test. To do so, employees must answer two questions:

(1) Is there an impairment of, or disturbance in the functioning of a person's mind or brain? This could be due to long-term conditions such as mental illness, dementia, or learning disability, or more temporary states such as confusion, unconsciousness, or the effects of drugs or alcohol.

If the answer to the above is 'yes', employees then must consider:

(2) Is the impairment or disturbance sufficient that the person lacks the capacity to make a particular decision when they need to?

A person is unable to make their own decision if they cannot do one or more of the following:

- understand information given to them
- retain that information long enough to be able to make the decision
- weigh up the information available to make the decision
- communicate their decision – this could be by talking, using sign language, or even simple muscle movements such as blinking an eye or squeezing a hand.

Every effort must be made to find ways of communicating with someone before deciding that they lack capacity to make a decision based solely on their inability to communicate. Employees will need to involve family, friends, carers, or other professionals.

The assessment must be made on the balance of probabilities, for example, is it more likely than not that the person lacks capacity? Employees must be able to show in their records why they have come to a conclusion that capacity is either present or lacking for the particular decision.

4.4.6 If an adult at risk of abuse is perceived to lack the mental capacity to make the decision regarding a referral, employees and their managers must consider what is in the adult's best interests. A referral without consent must be made in cases where:

- there is an emergency or life-threatening situation
- other people are, or may be, at risk – including children

- sharing the information could prevent a serious crime
- a serious crime has been committed.

4.4.7 If a serious crime has been committed, managers must also contact the police following the local Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) procedures. This must happen on the same working day the concern was noted.

Referrals when working with a partner organisation

4.4.8 If the safeguarding concern arises within the context of The Children's Society working with a partner organisation or service (or example a school or college), employees must check with their manager for any agreed safeguarding processes contained in the Service Level Agreement/service contract, or any other relevant partnership agreements. Usually, this will involve contacting the designated officer within the partner organisation. Employees must also consider any local safeguarding children or adults multi-agency arrangements, including their local child protection or adults at risk procedures which are detailed on the Local Safeguarding Children Partners and Local Safeguarding Adult Board Websites.

4.4.9 In such cases, both The Children's Society's and the partner organisation's policies must be followed.

Referral responses: What to expect from the local authority

4.4.10 For a child:

Children's social care services are required to provide referrers with a response within 24 hours of receiving a referral and acknowledge receipt to the referrer. Responses may include:

- referral progressing to a social work assessment
- no further action
- signposting to another service
- a recommendation that the referring agency or another agency undertake an early help assessment (or that the referral remains within early help services).

If no response has been received within 72 hours, The Children's Society employee or their service manager must contact the local authority children's social care again and, if necessary, ask to speak to a line manager to establish progress.

If the local authority's response is inadequate, or doesn't sufficiently address the risk of harm, employees must discuss this with their manager on the same day. The manager must then review the details on the same day and make a decision to take action regarding any escalation required (refer to procedure [4.10](#), 'Escalating a concern'). All escalations must be recorded via the Safeguarding Workflow in Mosaic.

4.4.11 For an adult:

4.4.12 Adult social care services do not have a statutory obligation to respond within a specified timeframe. Local response timeframe targets may operate; these are available on the individual local authority Safeguarding Adult Board website. Responses may include:

- no further action
- an enquiry under Section 42 of the Care Act (refer to procedure [4.9](#), 'Working with adult services')
- where the circumstances are deemed not to trigger the Section 42 safeguarding duty, the local authority may choose to carry out proportionate safeguarding enquiries in order to promote the adult's wellbeing, and to support preventative action. This could include signposting.

4.4.13 If no response has been received within 72 hours, the employee or service manager must contact the local authority adult's social care again and, if necessary, ask to speak to a line manager to establish progress.

4.4.14 If the local authority's response is inadequate, or it doesn't sufficiently address the risk of abuse, employees must discuss this with their manager on the same day. The manager must then review the details of the situation on the same day and make a decision to take action regarding any escalation required (refer to procedure [4.10](#), 'Escalating a concern'). Support from the Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team can be sought at any time, if needed.

Making referrals to child in need or early intervention services

4.4.15 In cases where a local authority children's service decides that a child is not at risk of harm, consideration must be made about whether other services are required.

Employees in the Youth Impact domain must be familiar with the services on offer from a range of agencies, including how these are accessed in the relevant local area.

- 4.4.16 Employees must ensure that the consideration of services and support provided recognises, affirms and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each. Services should be sensitive to the culture and heritage of the young people it supports and be considerate of the differences among people and the cultural groups that may arise.
- 4.4.17 Any referral or signposting to other agencies for help and support for a child and family must be recorded on the Mosaic file. Volunteer Managers must ensure they record this information on behalf of volunteers.

4.5 **Working with local authority children's social care**

- 4.5.1 It is vitally important that all employees work collaboratively and transparently with relevant children's social care services, regardless of their particular role at The Children's Society.
- 4.5.2 Employee's active involvement in conversations, meetings, and individual risk management or strategy development adds depth and detail to statutory processes.

While employee's relationships with children, young people and adults at risk are unique and personal, work cannot effectively take place in a silo.

Children who have a child protection plan or who are in care

- 4.5.3 Where employees have safeguarding concerns about a child or young person who already has a child protection plan, is in care, or is in receipt of other services from the local authority, they must ensure that an up-to-date copy of the plan is recorded on Mosaic.

In these instances, local authority children's services will often not accept a formal safeguarding referral, despite current concerns. While an employee may have a view that the local authority in question is potentially unlikely to take specific action on the new information or change in circumstances, they must still share the information.

This is essential in order to ensure the local authority has relevant and up to date information and therefore, that The Children's Society is undertaking effective partnership work.

4.5.4 Employees must take the following steps:

- New safeguarding concerns must be shared with the local authority and confirmed in writing to the allocated social worker (or in their absence, their manager, duty social worker, or local authority out of hours team) as soon as possible on the same day.
- A safeguarding workflow must be started on Mosaic on the same day.
- If the safeguarding concern is not fully addressed within the existing child's plan, this must be reported to the social worker in line with the plan and confirmed in writing in the same timescales as above.

Receiving a response

- 4.5.5 In cases where an employee does not receive a satisfactory response from the children's social care social worker or manager, or they believe it will not adequately address the risk of abuse or neglect, employees must raise concerns with their manager on the same day of such conclusions.

The manager must then review the details of the case on the same day before making a decision and take action regarding any escalation required (refer to procedure [4.10](#), 'Escalating a concern').

4.6 **Contributing to a Section 47 (s.47) enquiry**

Initial strategy discussion

- 4.6.1 When a local authority has identified that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer significant harm, they will convene an initial strategy discussion. This strategy discussion should be used to:

- Share available information.
- Agree the conduct and timing of any criminal investigation.
- Decide whether enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 must be undertaken.

- 4.6.2 A strategy discussion might take the form of a multi-agency meeting or phone calls, and more than one discussion may be necessary. If an employee is invited to participate or is asked to report into such a discussion, they must inform a manager the same day that the request has been made.

The manager must then review the Mosaic file and ensure the discussion is attended by a suitable employee.

The employee attending must take a full record of decisions made during the discussion. These minutes and other documents discussion must be read and saved to the relevant Mosaic file when they are received. The local authority should send out any formal minutes from the discussion within 5 working days.

If support or advice is needed, employees can contact The Children's Society Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team.

Multi-agency checks as part of the Section 47 enquiry

- 4.6.3 If a strategy discussion decides that multi-agency checks are required, it is likely that the relevant service will be contacted to contribute to these enquiries.

In such cases, employees must notify their manager on the same day they are contacted by the local authority.

Managers must then ensure that employees understand the purpose of the checks and what is required. An employee, not a volunteer, must respond to such enquiries, and should record details of information asked, and information provided on the Mosaic record.

- 4.6.4 Case records must be read, and any employees or volunteers who have had recent contact with the child or family must be invited to share their views.
- 4.6.5 Any new concerns, changes in circumstance, unusual activity from family or friends, or changes in behaviour in the child must be shared with the local authority. Additionally, the local authority must be made aware of any involvement from other agencies with the child or family.
- 4.6.6 Agency checks that are made by telephone – including the information shared – must be confirmed in writing to the local authority on the same day as the call.

Section 47 enquiry outcomes

- 4.6.7 There are several possible outcomes to a s.47 enquiry:
- The decision is made to take no further action. If employees

disagree with this outcome, they must raise concerns with their manager on the same day. The manager needs to then decide if they want to share any concerns with regard to the outcome to the local authority. All interactions such as this should be recorded on Mosaic.

- The decision is made to provide other support services.
- Concerns are substantiated and the child is assessed to be at risk of significant harm. There must then be a child protection conference within 15 working days of the strategy discussion.

4.7 **Attending a child protection conference**

Employees to attend a child protection conference

- 4.7.1 Service managers must decide which employee will attend a child protection conference.

The only exception to this is when a The Children's Society advocate is attending a child protection conference with a young person.

Preparing a child protection conference report

- 4.7.2 Written reports must be prepared for the conference, which must be agreed with and countersigned by a National Operations Manager/National Programme Manager. The written report must include details of:

- The Children's Society's involvement with the child and their family including details of when the work with TCS began and the origin of the initial referral
- information and concerns regarding the child's development needs presented objectively and with a holistic inclusive approach; this should include recognition of cultural sensitivities as well as highlighting any areas of oppression or discrimination which create particular barriers or obstacles
- a professional view on the capacity of the parents/carers to meet the needs of the child within the family and environmental context
- which specific children are the subject of the conference, addressing any known circumstances for all children in the household.

Sharing the report

- 4.7.3 In most cases, the author of the report must share it with the child and/or their family in advance of the meeting and at least 24 hours prior to the meeting, unless doing so would put the child at further risk of harm or jeopardise any ongoing investigation.
- 4.7.4 When considering whether to share the written report with family members or agencies, employees can seek advice from the records, archives and data protection manager, and the Safeguarding and Quality Practice team.
- 4.7.5 If the child or another family member disagrees with something in the report, and a difference of opinion remains after discussion, this must be brought to the attention of the conference chair either verbally or in writing.

Employees must then inform the service manager and National Operations Manager/National Programme Manager of the disagreement.

- 4.7.6 The conference report must be made available to the conference chair at least two working days in advance of an initial conference and five days in advance of a child protection review conference, or as detailed by the local safeguarding arrangements.

Recording the conference outcome

- 4.7.7 Whatever the outcome of the conference, the employee attending must record the following on Mosaic within five working days:
- A record of their attendance
 - A summary of meeting decisions
 - Any actions affecting The Children's Society

The employee must also save the minutes of the meeting and any plans produced as soon as possible following receipt.

- 4.7.8 Service managers are responsible for ensuring that child protection conference minutes are received and checked by employees who attended the meeting.

Any amendments must be agreed with the service manager and submitted to the chair within the locally stipulated timeframe.

Disputing a conference outcome

- 4.7.9 If an employee does not agree with a decision or recommendation made at a child protection conference they attended, they must ensure this is noted in the meeting record.

Employees are asked to then discuss concerns with their line manager, and must use the relevant local safeguarding partners' escalation procedures to address this as soon as possible after the conference has concluded.

Employees must inform their National Operations Manager/National Programme Manager and Head of Youth Practice/National Programmes of their dissenting view on the same day.

4.8 Contributing to a child protection plan

Child protection plans and the local authority

- 4.8.1 When a conference decides that a child should be the subject of a child protection plan, a local authority children's social worker must be appointed as lead social worker to coordinate all aspects of the inter-agency child protection plan. This role holder may also be called the 'lead professional' and in this circumstance will not be an employee of The Children's Society.

Core group

- 4.8.2 The core group is responsible for the detailed formulation and implementation of the child protection plan. The meeting must occur within 10 days of the initial conference. A key aim of the plan is to enable work with the family to reduce risk to a point where professionals agree that there is no requirement for the child protection plan. Members must undertake their roles and responsibilities effectively in accordance with the agreed plan.
- 4.8.3 All action points of core group meetings must be recorded. Analysis of the risk of harm to the child must be made, and all the information must

be shared with the lead social worker and the core group. All core group members are responsible for keeping a record of the outcome of the meeting.

- 4.8.4 A record must be made on the child's Mosaic file of information shared, and with whom, by the employee attending the core group. Record decisions and actions on the same day. Employees must save minutes and plans onto Mosaic as soon as they are available.

Outcomes and review conferences

- 4.8.5 The plan is reviewed at a child protection review conference, which must be held within twelve weeks of the initial child protection conference. Further reviews should be held at intervals of not more than six months, for as long as the child remains the subject of a child protection plan.
- 4.8.6 The Children's Society must provide written reports for each conference whilst it is still directly involved with the child, or as part of the plan.

Employee responsibilities

- 4.8.7 When The Children's Society is working with a child with a child protection plan, management and employees must have full oversight as per the following procedures:
- Heads of Youth Practice/National Programmes must make sure they have access to the details of each individual through the provision of data and reporting.
 - National Operations Managers/ National Programmes Managers are responsible for arranging a recorded supervisory discussion with their Head of Youth Practice / National Programmes, regarding any child protection case with escalating concerns, for example, cases where The Children's Society disagrees with the decisions made during conference, or where there is evidence that plans are not progressing due to the ineffectiveness of other services and/or challenges in effectively completing a part of the plan allocated to a The Children's Society employee. As required any cases with significant escalations or reputational/financial risk should be raised to the Director of Youth Practice/ Youth Programmes and Innovation (as relevant) and Head of Safeguarding and Quality Practice.
 - All cases of children with a child protection plan (accept where cases are only held due to an advocacy service supporting the child within child protection conferences) should be reviewed

within a recorded supervisory discussion between the National Operations Manager/National Programme Managers and Service Managers at least 3-monthly, or more often as required to ensure that any areas of challenge, escalation or delay are addressed, and to ensure suitable senior management oversight.

- The decision to review a child protection case within supervision is a judgement that must be made by the service manager with the support of the National Operations Manager/National Programme Managers. The decision should be based around, but not exclusively to, the following factors:
 - How many child protection cases the team hold and what the current status of these cases are.
 - Any child protection case that are presenting a particular challenge to the organisation, or where outstanding practice needs celebrating.
 - Any cases which outline significant delay in the plan or provision of service to the child or family.
 - Any cases in which the future plans are not clear, or where risk level has changed.
 - Any cases the service manager has identified due to particular concerns raised by the worker and/or themselves.
 - Any case receiving an advocacy service for child protection conferences which has raised additional safeguarding concerns or has required escalation, and/or complaints.
- At every line management supervision meeting between an employee and a service manager, they must discuss all cases where there is a child with a child protection plan or any child where there have been new safeguarding concerns. This must include progress, compliance with the plan, new concerns or other issues. A summary of the discussion and any management decisions made must then be recorded on the relevant Mosaic record.
- Between supervision sessions, it is the responsibility of employees to alert the service manager of any increase in risk, new concerns or change of circumstances for the child. They must also ensure the Mosaic file is regularly updated with risk assessments and alerts based on the evolution of the work being completed.
- Supervision discussions and key decisions must be recorded by the supervisor on the employee or volunteer's supervision file and copied onto the Mosaic file for each child. Decision-making outside supervision must be recorded on Mosaic, with the rationale for the decision clearly indicated in the case note.

4.9 Working with adult services

Local authority enquiries: Section 42 of the Care Act

4.9.1 When the local authority becomes aware of a situation that meets the adult at risk criteria (refer to the [Glossary of Terms](#) for a full definition), it must make or arrange an enquiry under Section 42 of the Care Act.

4.9.2 If there is a Section 42 process, the local authority will then produce a report, which must be drafted and discussed with the adult at risk and their advocate.

If the advocate is a The Children's Society employee or volunteer, they must seek supervision from their service manager before conducting the meeting.

4.9.3 Reports should address general and specific personalised issues, including:

- views of the adult at risk
- whether outcomes were achieved
- evidence that Section 42 criteria were met
- any further required action, including by whom
- who supported the adult, and whether this is an ongoing requirement

4.9.4 Dependent upon the report findings, a multi-agency meeting may take place, and The Children's Society employees directly involved in the case may be invited.

In such circumstances, the employee must always inform their service manager, who will provide guidance, supervision, and support.

4.9.5 Employees must record key meeting decisions and The Children's Society's actions on Mosaic on the same day, as well as upload minutes and plans as soon as they are received.

4.9.6 Recommendations from the report will be monitored and taken forward. Agencies are responsible for carrying out the recommendations, which may be included in future safeguarding plans.

- 4.9.7 If The Children's Society is named in any plan, the relevant manager will be made aware. This manager must track and monitor the input and support provided under the plan, especially in employee or volunteer supervision. This will consider all of the identified risks and how they are addressed.

Local authority enquiries: Outside Section 42 of the Care Act

- 4.9.8 Where circumstances do not trigger a Section 42 safeguarding duty, a local authority may choose to carry out proportionate safeguarding enquiries in order to promote an adult at risk's wellbeing, and to support preventative action.

These enquiries should establish whether and what action needs to be taken to prevent or stop abuse or neglect. The Children's Society may be approached during such an enquiry and employees must inform their service manager in such circumstances.

- 4.9.9 Local authorities must aim to provide swift and personalised safeguarding responses, and involve the adult at risk in the decision-making process as far as possible. Local authorities should also record the following:

- information received from The Children's Society
- the views and wishes of the adult at risk
- decisions taken and the reasons for them
- any advice and/or information given.

- 4.9.10 The Children's Society employees must make a record on Mosaic of all relevant information in relation to decisions, outcomes, actions, advice, and information shared.

- 4.9.11 The local authority should decide very early on in the process who is the best person or organisation to lead the enquiry. The local authority retains the responsibility for ensuring that the enquiry is referred to the right place, and is acted upon.

If the local authority has asked someone else to make enquiries, it can challenge the organisation or individual making the enquiry if it considers that the process and/or outcome is unsatisfactory.

The Children's Society may be asked to make such enquiries.

Closing an adult services enquiry

4.9.12 Safeguarding processes can be closed at any stage by a local authority. In doing so, the local authority should advise all professionals involved on how and who to contact, with agreement on how matters will be followed up with the adult at risk if there are further concerns.

4.9.13 Following a safeguarding enquiry where a care management assessment, Care Programme Approach (CPA), reassessment of care and support, health review, placement review, or any other pre-booked review is due to take place, it is good practice for a standard check to be made with agencies that there has been no reoccurrence of concerns.

Employees who are contacted as part of such a check must record the details of the conversation in Mosaic.

4.9.14 If employees are concerned that the local authority is closing the process and the adult is still at risk, they must inform their manager on the same day of concerns being raised.

Managers within the Youth Impact domain must review the case and, if they agree with the employee, follow the escalation process (refer to procedure [4.10](#))

Managers outside of the Youth Impact domain must consult with the Safeguarding and Quality Practice team.

4.10 Escalating a concern

Escalation procedures within the Youth Impact domain

4.10.1 If an employee within Youth Impact believes that a local authority or another agency is not responding to a concern in a suitable or timely way, they must raise their concerns with their manager.

Employees must raise their concern and the potential need for escalation as the concern occurs and develops and must record the conversations and outcomes on Mosaic.

4.10.2 Service managers must then review the concerns and, if agreed, contact the local authority team manager to discuss the decisions and issues of concern.

A record must be made of the outcome of this discussion on Mosaic. Employees and service managers must agree who will be responsible for recording decisions and agreed actions.

- 4.10.3 If the matter warrants further escalation, service managers must follow local authority escalation processes and notify The Children's Society's National Operations Managers / National Programme Managers.
- 4.10.4 National Operations Managers/National Programme Managers, alerted by service managers to unresolved concerns, must take further escalating action with local authority senior managers when required.
- 4.10.5 If a National Operations Manager/National Programme Managers has been unsuccessful in their escalation attempts, they must alert their Head of Youth Practice/National Programmes.

Heads of Youth Practice/National Programmes may also need to escalate concerns if National Operations Managers / National Programme Managers are not successful with their escalations. Heads of Service must inform the relevant Youth Impact Director in such cases.

- 4.10.6 If, following escalation action, the outcome does not address the safeguarding concerns, the National Operations Manager/National Programme Manager or Heads of Youth Practice/National Programmes must take the matter up with the Local Safeguarding Children Board, three local safeguarding partners, or the Safeguarding Adults Board.
- 4.10.7 Conversations with a service or National Operations Manager/National Programme Manager must be recorded on Mosaic within five working days.

Escalation procedures outside of Youth Impact

- 4.10.8 If an employee outside of the Youth Impact domain believes that a local authority or another agency is not responding to a concern in a suitable or timely way, or that safeguarding concerns are not being responded to suitably, they must raise their concerns with their manager.

Employees must raise their concern and the potential need for escalation as the concern occurs and develops.

- 4.10.9 Managers must then discuss the concern with the Safeguarding and Quality Practice team, who will maintain a record of this and advise on further action.

Responsibilities in escalation and managing safeguarding risk

- 4.10.10 Safeguarding is a multi-agency activity. Children, young people, and adults at risk can only be kept safe when agencies working together effectively and efficiently. The Children's Society employees at all levels must be clear on their responsibilities in the management of safeguarding risk for children young people and adults at risk.
- 4.10.11 **Employees** must play an active role in managing safeguarding risk by:
- identifying safeguarding concerns (new or changed) quickly
 - discussing these with managers as soon as possible
 - sharing concerns quickly with local authority and police as relevant
 - quickly escalating concerns where the response is insufficient or slow
 - participating in multi-agency planning activity
 - supporting children, young people, and adults at risk to consider how they can take action to help protect themselves
 - recording their conversations, decisions and actions in Mosaic.
- 4.10.12 **Service managers** must play an active role in managing safeguarding risk by:
- prioritising conversations with employees/volunteers who have safeguarding concerns
 - supporting employees to think through concerns and decide a suitable course of action with statutory partners
 - quickly escalating concerns within the local authority as required
 - discussing safety planning strategies for the young person or adult at risk with the employee
 - escalating concerns to the National Operations Manager/National Programme Manager when circumstances require it
 - ensuring discussions and decisions are recorded on Mosaic.
- 4.10.13 **National Operations Managers/National Programme Managers** are expected to play an active role in managing safeguarding risk by:
- prioritising conversations with service managers who have safeguarding concerns requiring escalation
 - taking swift action to escalate concerns with the

- local authority as circumstances require
- ensure safety planning
- ensuring employees, volunteers and service managers feel adequately supported
- reporting escalated safeguarding concerns regularly to relevant members of The Children’s Society’s senior leadership team
- informing and working with family, friends and/or other support networks as appropriate.

Safety planning when escalating concerns

4.10.14 A safety plan is an action plan specifically addressing the known safeguarding concerns and risks for an individual child, young person, or adult at risk.

4.10.15 When escalating concerns, there may be a delay between informing the local authority of new or changed concerns and receiving a suitable response.

Employees may therefore have information about a young person or adult at risk that the local authority has not yet heard and acted upon.

4.10.16 After escalating a concern in a local authority and waiting for an appropriate response, employees and managers will likely share a sense of needing to manage or “hold” risk in the intervening period until the local authority responds suitably.

4.10.17 This risk management is best done through safety planning in partnership with the young person, family or adult at risk in order to help remove, mitigate and better manage risks present or risks that are of concern; and should feature:

- identifying the risks present to the individual
- considering potential changes to current circumstances that can be made to reduce the risks present
- generating practical, realistic responses to risks
- considering the physical and emotional needs of the person at risk when exploring potential actions and changes
- developing an emergency safety plan with suitable phone numbers.

Escalation for a child protection conference

- 4.10.18 If an employee is concerned that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm, and the local authority has decided not to call a child protection conference, they must raise their concerns with their line manager immediately.

The line manager must then escalate this matter according to normal escalation procedure.

- 4.10.19 If concerns remain, The Children's Society can formally request that local authority children's social care convene an initial child protection conference.

Statutory guidance states that children's social care should convene a conference where one or more professionals, supported by a senior manager or a named/designated professional, request one.

- 4.10.20 Employees must record any conversations with their service manager or Youth Practice Programme Manager/National Programme Manager relating to these escalations on Mosaic within five working days.

4.11 Consulting The Children's Society Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team

The Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team provides tailored support depending on the circumstances of the safeguarding issue. This may be guidance, advice, or instruction.

- 4.11.1 Any safeguarding concerns noted outside of the Youth Impact domain must always lead to a consultation with the Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team through a direct conversation with a member of the team.

- 4.11.2 Any safeguarding concerns noted within the Youth Impact domain must be responded to by the appropriate manager (as outlined in procedure [4.10](#), 'Escalating a concern').

However, when the safeguarding concern is unusual, complex or of a serious nature, the Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team must also be notified. The Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team must then decide whether further support is needed.

Should managers require advice, guidance or instruction, the Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team can always be consulted through a direct conversation with a member of the team.

- 4.11.3 The Safeguarding and Quality Practice team MUST be consulted if:
- an allegation or safeguarding concern is made against The Children’s Society employees or volunteers
 - the death or serious injury of a child or adult working with The Children’s Society occurs
 - a Rapid Review or Child Safeguarding Practice Review is announced
 - a Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) is announced, or any other statutory review
 - efforts to escalate a safeguarding issue are not proving effective.

4.11.4 Employees or volunteers should contact The Children’s Society’s Safeguarding and Quality Practice team with general, non-urgent safeguarding inquiries or practice questions at safeguarding@childrenssociety.org.uk and on the duty number (020 7841 4477); and is available during working hours (Monday – Friday 9 – 5pm, excluding bank holidays).

This email address must not be used solely for any matters requiring an urgent response.

4.12 **Contributing to a learning review**

4.12.1 Employees asked to contribute to a learning review (for example a child safeguarding practice review, a domestic homicide review, or a serious incident investigation) must ensure that the relevant Director is told immediately.

The Executive Director of Youth Impact and the Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team must then be informed within one working day.

4.12.2 If the team is required to use The Children’s Society’s incident logging, any request to contribute to a learning review must be logged as an incident as soon as possible, but as minimum within five working days via [SharePoint](#).

4.12.3 The Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team will provide guidance to the Director and liaise with the practice systems team on the process for securing relevant hard copy notes and digital data.

The Heads of Youth Practice/National Programmes (or in their absence the Director of Youth Practice / Youth Programmes & Innovation) are responsible for ensuring the documents are secured on the same day of becoming aware of the review.

The Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team will then oversee the appropriate retention of this data for the duration of the review process.

- 4.12.4 The Director / Heads of Youth Practice/National Programmes alongside the National Operations Managers/National Programme Managers must ensure that employees and volunteers who are, or who have been, directly involved with the child, young person or adult at risk are appropriately supported.
- 4.12.5 The systems team (Tech and Data) will make sure that Mosaic records, and any relevant secondary systems, are locked. Only the people who need access for the purpose of the review should be able to access these records except where agreement is given by the Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team to enable continued timely and appropriate case work by an employee.
- 4.12.6 Following a request from a local area Safeguarding Children Board/Partnership for a Rapid Review, the Heads of Youth Practice/National Programmes should inform a suitable member of the service to complete the relevant paperwork and provide this to The Children's Society Senior Safeguarding and Quality Practice (SQP) Manager for approval within 3 working days. The Senior SQP Manager will forward the completed report to the local area Safeguarding Children Board/Partnership and liaise with them over next steps.
- 4.12.7 All local area learning requests (such as child safeguarding practice reviews and safeguarding adult reviews) must be notified to the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Practice for review and approval prior to being sent by the Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team to the local area. The Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team will be responsible for liaising with the local area over next steps and monitoring of any internal action plans.

4.13 **Safeguarding in complex circumstances**

- 4.13.1 The Children's Society has a strategic focus on working with children, young people and adults at risk of or experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage. This means employees and volunteers are supporting

people who are especially vulnerable and for whom complex safeguarding risks are present.

- 4.13.2 Working with highly vulnerable people places increased importance on effective and ongoing risk assessment, sharing information and intelligence, and collaborating with statutory and voluntary partners to help keep individuals as safe as possible.

Intelligence in this context refers to any information about a child, young person, adult at risk (or about the risks they face) that is specific to a location, person, and pattern or addresses a wider contextual concern.

- 4.13.3 The Children's Society employees must work collaboratively, regardless of their particular role with the child, young person, or adult at risk.

- 4.13.4 Supporting young people and adults at risk in complex safeguarding circumstances requires The Children's Society to take a highly collaborative approach to safeguarding. Employees may need to:

- escalate safeguarding concerns if the local authority response is deemed inadequate
- share ongoing intelligence with police and work intensively with safeguarding partners to manage the risks present (safety planning)
- share intelligence with any relevant professional networks where it will add to or improve multi-agency action plans
- press the local authority for a contextual safeguarding response if this is not occurring (refer to procedure [4.15](#) for further information on contextual safeguarding)
- assess the risks to the young person's family and to the employees involved.

- 4.13.5 Safeguarding in complex circumstances can be a markedly different task to that of more traditional scenarios. Employees and volunteers must talk with their managers if they are concerned about (or even have a mild suspicion of) any of the complex circumstances as outlined in the procedures below. Support and guidance are also available via the Safeguarding and Quality Practice team.

- 4.13.6 When working with people in complex safeguarding situations, it is important that any criminal behaviour does not overshadow the duty to safeguard the child or adult at risk.
- 4.13.7 Where there are multiple vulnerabilities, professional networks are very important. Risk assessments of either the child or adult at risk, and for the employee, must be completed and be informed by multi-agency work.
- 4.13.8 Employees must follow the usual escalation processes where there are any concerns about partner engagement or action.
- 4.13.9 In cases of complex safeguarding, risk management and safety planning must be regularly updated.

4.14 **Age assessment and age disputes**

- 4.14.1 Most unaccompanied children arriving in the UK have their age accepted upon arrival, but in some cases, where there is little or no documentary evidence of the child's age or if the child is felt to look like an adult, the Home Office or local authorities may dispute the age stated by the child.
- 4.14.2 It is important to remember that age determination is an inexact science, and the margin of error can sometimes be as much as five years either side, especially around the time of puberty; and it can be impacted by the assumptions, perceptions and value base of the persons or agencies questioning the age of an unaccompanied child. As an employee of/volunteer at The Children's Society, it is essential that we remain aware and alert to any prejudicial responses both internally and externally and take action to ensure that these are challenged and addressed.
- 4.14.3 In cases where there is a dispute regarding the age of the young person, the young person must be treated as a child by the local authority while the dispute is ongoing (refer to local statutory guidance).
- 4.14.4 The age of an unaccompanied child is extremely important. It determines a child's access to education and support, effects the way in which their asylum claim is processed and can even be a decisive factor in a claim for asylum. Age is central to identity, and the age assessment process can be very damaging for children who are disbelieved.
- 4.14.5 Age assessments can be challenged. If a The Children's Society employee or manager believes this is warranted, they must follow the

escalation procedure in this document. The Children's Society may require solicitor support for such a challenge.

- 4.14.6 Refer to the [Glossary of Terms](#) for a full definition of age assessment and age disputes in the context of unaccompanied children.

4.15 **Contextual safeguarding**

- 4.15.1 Contextual safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships young people form – in their neighbourhoods, through their networks, at school and online – can feature violence and abuse. More information can be found [here](#).

- 4.15.2 Because young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of contexts, responding to contextual safeguarding concerns means working with children's social care, and other relevant partners, to collectively assess the risks for young people and plan suitable interventions.

Quality contextual safeguarding action plans will assess and plan interventions in all the spaces in which a young person (or group of young people) are deemed vulnerable to abuse.

- 4.15.3 Where employees are concerned about contextual safeguarding factors for a child or young person (or group of children or young people) they must speak with a local authority and provide information about what they know.

Local arrangements may vary, however employees must encourage the local authority to explore a contextual response. Some areas will have co-located teams with a wide brief and oversight of multiple threats. Others will have specific teams based around one threat.

Multi-agency panels bring together information about the relevant threats. The Children's Society must work with partners to understand the threats individually and in relation to each other.

- 4.15.4 While contextual safeguarding work occurs, all relevant safeguarding processes for individual children must operate in parallel.

4.16 Intelligence sharing

- 4.16.1 Soft intelligence is very important when working contextually to safeguard children and young people and must be treated as a safeguarding concern. Sharing intelligence (information employees have gathered that may be relevant to crimes being committed) can help establish patterns and themes and improve clarity on the risks present.
- 4.16.2 If employees are given information that relates to a child, young person, or adult at risk about immediate harm, they must call 999 immediately and make a referral to social care in accordance with this policy.
- 4.16.3 If an employee receives information about criminal activity either through direct practice with young people and adults or via members of the public – this must be reported by calling the police 101 line.

Employees should firstly consult with their manager before sharing the information with the police to consider risks present for the child or young person. Conversations with the police must be recorded on Mosaic. For more details about information sharing refer to guidance on the Intranet.

- 4.16.4 Employees must ensure they receive a crime reference number for the information shared, and must check with police that they have all the key risk information and intelligence available.
- 4.16.5 If employees know the investigating officer on a specific case, they must inform them of all known information, to ensure it is managed effectively.
- 4.16.6 Where employees have concerns about a child, young person, or adult at risk that is connected to travel on public transport, they can also contact the British Transport Police – who will also participate in multi-agency strategy meetings where relevant.
- 4.16.7 Employees may be aware of local “hot spot” areas of concern. Sharing information on these can help police target resources effectively and build a more detailed picture of the safeguarding risks within neighbourhoods or communities.
- 4.16.8 Employees may also present information at multi agency child exploitation (MACE) meetings or the local area equivalent. These are exploitation-centred meetings facilitated by local authorities. Intelligence will be recorded in the meeting minutes and information shared effectively with statutory bodies.

Employees must discuss any information with their line manager ahead of sharing it in the MACE forum, and record the discussion in case notes on Mosaic and in a safeguarding workflow.

4.17 **Complex, organised or multiple abuse**

4.17.1 Complex or organised abuse involves one or more abusers and a number of abused children. For a full definition, refer to the [Glossary of Terms](#).

4.17.2 Where complex or organised abuse is suspected, the relevant service manager must take the lead in notifying relevant authorities via the following procedures:

- The service manager must make a referral to the police as soon as possible on the same day.
- They must also contact the relevant children's social care services as soon as possible on the same day.
- The relevant Youth Impact Director must inform the Executive Director of Youth Impact.
- An internal teleconference must take place within one working day of the concern. This must include the service manager, National Operations Manager/National Programme Manager, a member of the Safeguarding and Quality Practice team, and the employee who initially noted the concern. This meeting must ensure:
 - the safety and welfare of the child/children are being duly considered by all
 - the preparations for any joint work with other agencies are in place
 - relevant records have been or are being secured
 - employees are being appropriately supported
 - appropriate resources are deployed to the team, including access to legal and other specialist advice and information
 - members of the team are themselves supported with accessing The Children's Society employee assistance programme
 - suitable accommodation and administrative support are available for the team.
- The National Operations Manager/National Programme Manager must write an internal briefing note setting out

the issues and the potential implications to relevant senior managers and leaders within one day of attending the meeting.

- The Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team must convene a temporary internal steering group to oversee operational involvement on the matter.

4.17.3 Where there are concerns about The Children's Society professionals working with children, the Managing Safeguarding Allegations or Concerns Regarding Employees or Volunteers policy document applies.

The designated officer in the local authority (formerly known as the LADO) must be informed. The sensitivities and complexity of the concern must be clearly highlighted. This is coordinated by the Safeguarding and Quality Practice team in all cases.

4.18 **Court proceedings**

4.18.1 Children and adults working with The Children's Society with may come in contact with court in the following contexts:

- as a victim of a crime when they appear as a witness
- via the Family Court, in private proceedings where decisions about which parent or family member they will live with, and contact arrangements with the non-resident parent
- Care proceedings where the local authority seeks to share Parental Responsibility for the child by gaining a Care Order
- when they are charged with a criminal offence.

4.18.2 A child cannot be interviewed by the police without an Appropriate Adult being present.

Where there is no parent/carer or family member, often local Youth Offending Services or local authority social workers who have undertaken Appropriate Adult training can fulfil this role.

4.18.3 Any The Children's Society staff working with an alleged victim or perpetrator in an ongoing criminal trial must note the following, (Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) Guidance: Provision of Therapy for Child Witnesses Prior to a Criminal Trial):

- The CPS and the police must be informed of any pre-trial therapy or support being proposed, taking place, or which has been undertaken.
- In newly arising allegations, support should be offered only after the child or young person has given their statement of evidence to the police, which includes a video-recorded interview. However, in existing cases where therapy is already underway, a decision about how to proceed is best made after a discussion at a multi-disciplinary meeting which includes the child’s therapist; disruption of therapy should be avoided.
- Detailed factual records of therapy must be kept and made available to the CPS as required. Legal advice should be obtained before release.

4.19 **Organised Crime Groups and Networks²**

- 4.19.1 Young people exploited through organised crime groups are at risk of violence and attempts on their life. They are victims of child criminal exploitation. A child who is a victim of organised criminal groups, or serious youth violence may have suffered, or may be likely to suffer, significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse or neglect.
- 4.19.2 An organised criminal group is a group of individuals who are normally led by adults whom involvement in crime is for personal gain (financial or otherwise). This involves serious and organised criminality by a core of violent members who exploit young people and adults with care and support needs. This may involve the movement and selling of drugs and money across the country, known as ‘county lines’ because it extends across county boundaries.
- 4.19.3 Children and adults are exploited by organised criminal groups to move and store drugs, money and weapons. Organised criminal groups will use coercion, intimidation, and violence (including sexual violence) to exploit children and adults into this activity. Those exploited can

² When talking about exploitation by organised criminal groups or networks, TCS chooses not to use the term “gang” believing that this gives a false impression of a group that young people have some agency over or make choices about their involvement with. This is clearly not the case for young people criminally exploited and serves to minimise and undermine effective safeguarding responses.

become indebted and exploited further to pay off debts, often referred to as 'debt bondage'.

- 4.19.4 A child or adult at risk could be both a victim and a perpetrator of abuse within the organised crime group activities. This requires professionals to assess and support their welfare and wellbeing needs at the same time as assessing and responding in a criminal justice capacity. Refer to procedure [4.15](#) and [4.16](#), 'Contextual safeguarding' and 'intelligence sharing'.
- 4.19.5 There are levels of organised crime based on the level of criminality, organisation, planning and control, a contextual understanding of the systems of organised crime is required to enable a robust safeguarding and criminal justice response. The definition can therefore be fluid, but in all cases in which it is suspected that a child or adult has been or is being exploited through organised criminal groups The Children's Society safeguarding procedure must be followed (Refer to procedure [4.2](#) 'Responding to a Safeguarding Concern').
- 4.19.6 Partnership working is extremely important when supporting young people exploited by organised crime groups or networks. Young people may be moved out of borough or area in order to protect them.
- Thorough risk assessments and safety planning (for the young person and their wider family and friends as relevant) are critically important.
- 4.19.7 As detailed by section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act, frontline staff employed by the police, local authorities, National Crime Agency and the Gangmasters Licensing Authority have a duty to notify the Home Office if they encounter a potential victim of modern slavery in England and Wales. Frontline staff employed by UK Visas and Immigration, Border Force and Immigration Enforcement must also comply in accordance with Home Office policy. The Modern Slavery Act outlines all victims of exploitation and trafficking fall within this category. The Children's Society employees should work alongside these agencies to ensure relevant National Referral Mechanism (NRM) referrals are made.

4.20 **Digital safeguarding**

- 4.20.1 Online based forms of child or adult at risk, physical, sexual or emotional abuse can include bullying via mobile telephones or online (internet) with verbal and visual images.

- 4.20.2 Information communication technology (ICT) can be used to facilitate a wide range of abuse and exploitation, including online based physical abuse (such as children constrained to fight each other or filmed being assaulted), radicalisation, sexual exploitation, or exploitation for criminal purposes.
- 4.20.3 If an employee or volunteer suspects that a child, young person or adult at risk is being, or has been, subjected to physical, sexual and emotional abuse through the use of information and communication technology (ICT) they must make a referral to the local authority refer to procedure [4.4](#).
- 4.20.4 Intelligence must also be shared with the local police force by calling 101, or 999 if there is a risk of immediate harm. (Refer to procedure [4.16](#) 'Intelligence sharing'). Each police force area will have a dedicated unit overseeing online investigations.
- 4.20.5 If the concern is in regard to the sexual abuse or grooming of a child online, a referral may also be made to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP), which is part of the UK's [National Crime Agency](#) (NCA). Where an employee is unable to establish a local police force area in relation to the abuse, a referral to CEOP must be undertaken. CEOP will make the necessary arrangements to liaise with appropriate police force areas.
- CEOP is tasked to work both nationally and internationally to bring online child sex offenders, including those involved in the production, distribution, and viewing of child abuse material to the UK courts. Referrals can be made at www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/.
- 4.20.6 The police will often be interested in securing any evidence of online abuse. Employees must take advice from the police and/or CEOP regarding deleting content, and taking steps to preserve or record evidence of online harm (e.g. screenshots).
- 4.20.7 The Children's Society has a comprehensive [IS user policy and procedure](#) for employees and volunteers, which applies to all users of The Children's Society's IT systems including contractors, temporary employees, volunteers, service users (i.e. children) parents/carers and partner organisations.

4.21 **Domestic abuse**

- 4.21.1 For a full definition of domestic abuse, refer to the [Glossary of Terms](#).

- 4.21.2 If employees suspect a child or adult at risk to be involved in domestic violence or abuse (whether as a victim, bystander or perpetrator), they must discuss this with their line manager on the same working day as concerns arise.
- 4.21.3 If the concerns present an immediate threat to the safety and welfare of the individual, employees must take care not to put themselves at risk, and to seek the assistance of the police.
- 4.21.4 A child who is within a household where there is domestic abuse may be considered a child in need, and therefore a referral to the local authority must be made (see procedure [4.4](#). This may also be true of a young person under 18 who is perpetrating abuse.
- 4.21.5 If at any time a view is reached that an incident, or an accumulation of incidents, may be placing a child at risk of significant harm, a referral to the local authority must be made.

Line managers must make a supervisory record of any discussions, including decisions on actions that are to be taken, and by whom.

- 4.21.6 Where an employee or volunteer has a concern about an adult at risk who may be the victim of domestic abuse, they must follow the relevant safeguarding procedures in this policy document.

4.22 **Non-Recent (Historical) abuse)**

- 4.22.1 Non-recent abuse is an allegation of neglect, physical, sexual, or emotional abuse made by, or on behalf of, someone who is now 18 years or over, relating to an incident that took place when the alleged victim was under 18 years old.
- 4.22.2 If the non-recent abuse happened within the care of The Children's Society, or while The Children's Society was providing a service, employees must refer to the separate Non-Recent Abuse Policy document. All occurrences of such are overseen and managed by the Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team.
- 4.22.3 If an employee becomes aware of a non-recent abuse allegation, they must discuss this with a member of the Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team, or a senior manager providing cover, as soon as possible on the same day.

Employees must retain notes of any conversations regarding non-recent abuse allegations.

4.23 **Managing safeguarding allegations or concerns regarding employees or volunteers**

- 4.23.1 If safeguarding allegations or concerns relate to a The Children's Society employee or volunteer, they must refer to the separate [Managing Allegations policy](#) document.

This policy will apply when there are allegations or concerns relating to safeguarding practice raised, from any source, that an employee or volunteer is behaving in a way that may pose a present or future risk of harm to a child, children or adults at risk (this may be about their behaviour, both within, or outside work).

- 4.23.2 Employees must not alert the individual in question of their concerns before taking advice from a member of the Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team, as subsequent enquiries may potentially be compromised.
- 4.23.3 Where there is a specific identified child at risk of significant harm from that employee or volunteer, the children's safeguarding process must run in parallel. The Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team will advise on this.
- 4.23.4 If an employee receives a complaint that features a concern or allegation of potential risk or abuse about an employee or volunteer, the complaints process must be suspended. The Managing Allegations policy and process (and where applicable, the safeguarding policy and process) must instead take precedence.

4.24 **Missing children, young people and adults at risk**

- 4.24.1 For a full definition of a missing person, refer to the [Glossary of Terms](#)
- 4.24.2 When determining whether a person is missing, employees must trust their instincts and knowledge of the person's circumstances and the connected/contextual risk factors.
- 4.24.3 Where appropriate, employees may contact relevant family, carers, or other professionals to discuss concerns.

Notifying authorities

- 4.24.4 If employees or volunteers are concerned that someone is missing, they must dial 101 and make a missing person's report immediately or attend the local police station in person.

Employees and volunteers do not have to wait 24 hours before reporting. They must make a report to the police as soon as they think a person is missing.

- 4.24.5 All important information should be given to the police about the person's vulnerability and any threat to life they are aware of. Dependent on the police force area, they will risk assess and grade the missing report as no apparent risk, low, medium, or high based on the information provided. Each police force area makes its own arrangements regarding how they risk assess missing episodes of children and young people within their local area.

If an employee or volunteer makes a missing person's report, they must inform their manager and a record kept of all action taken on Mosaic.

- 4.24.6 All reports of missing persons must be recorded by the receiving police area. The police will reassess each individual who is reported missing at regular intervals. They will be considered missing until located and their wellbeing or otherwise is established.
- 4.24.7 If an employee is in disagreement with the category of risk outlined by the local police force area, in particularly if a 'no apparent risk' or 'low risk' category is assigned in the case of a child or adult at risk. The employee should follow procedure [4.10](#).
- 4.24.8 Employees must also inform the allocated social worker for the child, young person, or adult at risk, along with other professionals in the network where joint working, a risk assessment or safety plan are in operation.

Taking action during the period a person is missing

- 4.24.9 If employees are concerned that someone is missing, they should take steps to locate them (alongside notifying the authorities as outlined above).
- 4.24.10 People who work with The Children's Society may go missing in the context of multiple vulnerabilities and risk factors. This may include

factors connected to organised crime groups, trafficking or sexual / criminal exploitation.

When children go missing, it is critical for TCS to work closely with their professional network.

- 4.24.11 When a person goes missing, the local authority must have oversight of the situation. Local authorities will usually have their own response to reports of concerns that a child or young person has gone missing.

In some cases, employees may need to advocate for the young person to be considered as missing where the local authority is reluctant to do so, or where action is slow or inadequate. This should be undertaken as per the escalation processes within this document, refer to procedure [4.10](#).

- 4.24.12 For missing children and young people, local authority responses may include one or more strategy discussions involving family and key professionals. The meeting aims must be to:

- assess and understand risks
- agree a plan to locate the child or young person
- identify actions to reduce the likelihood of the child or young person going missing in the future
- ask the network about potential disruption activity (refer to the glossary of terms for a definition) that may recover the child or prevent future missing episodes.

If employees are concerned this is not happening, they must escalate this following the usual processes.

- 4.24.13 Alongside the professional network, employees must think contextually and refer to the risk assessment and safety plan to agree next steps.

Repeated missing episodes or prolonged missing

- 4.24.14 Where an employee has concerns about a pattern of frequent short missing episodes, or when a person is missing in the long-term, they must request regular strategy meetings (if these are not already happening).

- 4.24.15 Where the local authority has a disrupting exploitation team, strategy meetings usually take place weekly (where risks are very high) or fortnightly.

- 4.24.16 If employees are concerned about potential trafficking or modern slavery, they must request to a first responder agency (police, local authorities, National Crime Agency and the Gangmasters Licensing Authority) that a National Referral Mechanism referral is made.
- 4.24.17 If employees are concerned about a lack of proactivity at any stage regarding a person being missing for any length of time, they must escalate their concerns using the usual process (refer to procedure [4.10](#), 'Escalating a concern').

Return home interview/conversations

- 4.24.18 When a child or young person is found or returns to their home or care setting, they must be offered an independent return interview (also known as a return home interview).
- 4.24.19 The Local Authority must ensure that children missing within their local area have arrangements in place to prevent them going missing and to protect them when they do, this includes the provision of Independent Return Home Interviews.
- 4.24.20 Independent return interviews provide an opportunity to uncover information that can help protect children from:
- the risk of going missing again
 - risks they may have been exposed to while missing
 - risk factors in their home.
- 4.24.21 Return home interviews must be carried out within 72 hours of the child returning to their home or care setting. This must be an in-depth interview and is normally best carried out by an independent person (not a carer).

4.25 Prevent (preventing radicalisation)

- 4.25.1 Current legislation requires all agencies working with children, young people, and adults at risk to play a role in preventing and deterring their possible radicalisation – whether on grounds of religion, culture, or for other ends. Extremism can take many different forms, including far-right extremism.
- 4.25.2 While the Prevent duty is a high-profile one, it is quite rare as a practice issue for The Children's Society employees/volunteers. Certain

behaviours or risks for a young person can indicate criminal exploitation as opposed to radicalisation and are far more likely.

Employees are strongly encouraged to closely examine available evidence, assess indicators, and discuss these with a manager experienced in work with such issues, or the Safeguarding and Quality Practice Team, before taking a view on the potential of radicalisation risk.

- 4.25.3 While the nature of the risk to the child or young person or adult at risk may raise security issues, the process for responding to likelihood of significant harm or vulnerability is the same as for any other safeguarding concern.
- 4.25.4 If an employee becomes aware of a situation or information that a violent act is imminent, or where weapons or other materials may be in the possession of a young person, adult at risk, or member of their family, they must take the following steps:
- Call 999 as soon as it is safe to do so
 - Contact a line manager immediately for guidance and support and consider together whether further information-sharing is required. Consideration must be given to the possibility that sharing information about the concerns with the child's parents/carers may increase the risk to the child, and it may therefore not be appropriate to inform the parents/carers at the referral stage.
 - Make a referral to the local authority. Whilst many of these referrals will be received by local authorities as early intervention services, the referral must be recorded on Mosaic in a safeguarding workflow.
 - Make a referral to the local police prevent team (call 101 for details) and discuss any concerns in relation to assessing risk in relation to safeguarding individuals from suspected extremist or terrorist behaviour and what further actions to take. As a result of this you may be required to attend a Channel Panel to see if the criteria is met for intervention to the person through the Channel Panel process. Each local authority was required to establish a Channel Panel under provisions in the Counter- Terrorism and Security Act 2015.
 - Where concerns are highlighted in relation to radicalisation requiring a referral to the local police prevent team, the relevant Youth Impact Director and Head of Safeguarding and Quality Practice must be informed.

4.26 **Safeguarding children and adults who may have been trafficked**

4.26.1 Refer to the [Glossary of Terms](#) for a full definition of trafficking in relation to both children and adults. All children and adults at risk of exploitation are entitled to safeguarding and protection under the law irrespective of their immigration status.

4.26.2 While for adults it is necessary to identify an element of coercion in the context of trafficking, children are recognised as being unable to consent to their own exploitation.

Therefore, for a child to be recognised as trafficked, employees only need to identify that a child has been recruited, moved, or held by individuals for the purpose of exploitation.

4.26.3 If an employee comes into contact with a child or adult who may have been exploited or trafficked, they must immediately notify local authority social care and the police.

Where exploitation (or the intent to exploit) has already taken place, employees must request that they complete a referral to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

4.26.4 Referrals to the NRM must take place for all potential victims of trafficking and modern slavery. The individual can be of any nationality including British national children, such as those trafficked for child sexual exploitation (CSE) or child criminal exploitation (CCE).

4.26.5 A referral into the NRM does not replace or supersede established child protection processes, which must continue in tandem.

4.27 **Transitional safeguarding planning**

4.27.1 Refer to the [Glossary of Terms](#) of terms at the end of this document for a full definition of transitional safeguarding.

4.27.2 Where employees are working with a child who is approaching the age of 18 and where safeguarding concerns exist, they must establish with the local authority how the care needs of the young person will be placed at the forefront of any future support planning.

4.27.3 Assessment of care needs must include issues of safeguarding and risk. Care planning must ensure the young person's safety is not put at risk through delays in provision of the services needed to maintain their independence, wellbeing and choice. Planning must also consider:

- the information and advice the young person has received about adult safeguarding
- whether advocacy and support needs have been addressed
- whether a mental capacity assessment is needed and who will undertake it

4.27.4 If The Children's Society's employees or volunteers are advocating for the young person, plans must be established for this provision.

If the young person is a care leaver, they are entitled to a personal advisor from the local authority's children's social care until the age of 25 years.

4.27.5 The safeguarding adults referral route must be followed for anyone over the age of 18 years. However for care leavers, their personal advisor in the relevant local authority team must also need to be made aware of any concerns.

4.27.6 Line managers must ensure that any gaps in safeguarding transition planning with other agencies are discussed in supervision with employees and volunteers, and that a clear plan is developed on how this will be responded to (and documented in Mosaic).

4.27.7 Employees and volunteers must inform their line manager of any responsibilities for safeguarding transition planning that The Children's Society has taken on. The manager is responsible for ensuring such responsibilities are fully covered in the provision of the service and that records are kept of all relevant activity.

4.28 **Children as perpetrators of abuse: Child to parent/carer violence and peer on peer abuse**

4.28.1 Refer to the [Glossary of Terms](#) for a full definition of peer on peer abuse and child/adolescent to parent/carer violence.

4.28.2 Children and young people who themselves are perpetrators of abuse / harm to other children and/or adults (such as family members, including child to parent/carer violence) are likely to be children in need, and some may have suffered, or be likely to suffer, significant harm and be in need of protection. It is important to share any information pertaining to these concerns or behaviours with social care, which will inform social care's decision about how most appropriately to proceed. It is also important to consider any experiences of the child as a victim as well as

a perpetrator when sharing information with social care and/or the police.

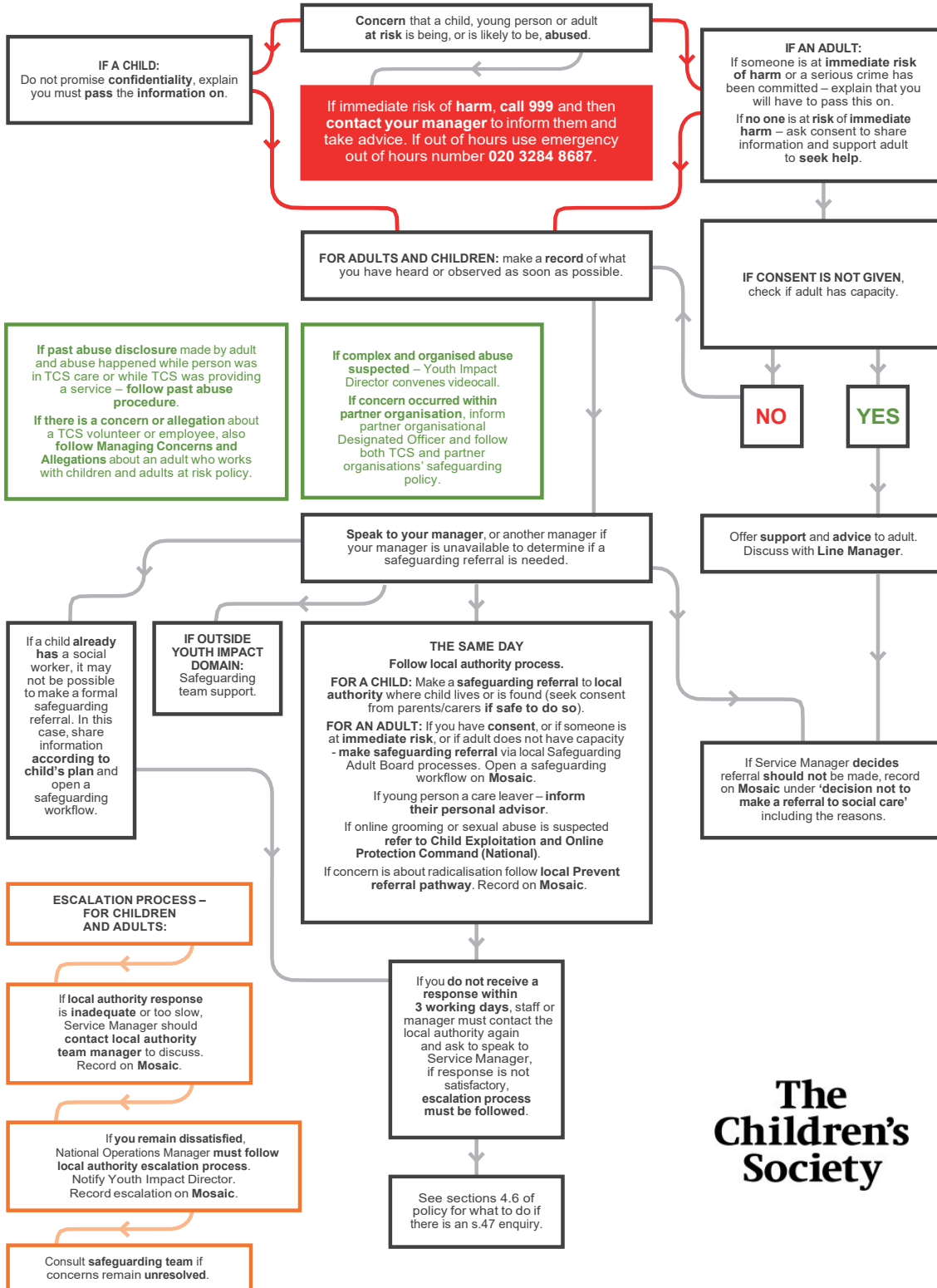
- 4.28.3 In all cases where a child harms, or is alleged to have seriously (including sexually) harmed another child or adult, a referral, verbally, and in writing, should be made to the relevant local authority for both:
- The child who is identified as the victim (if the victim is a child), and
 - The child who is known / alleged to have caused the harm.
- 4.28.4 Professionals must base their decision on whether behaviour directed at another child should be categorised as harmful or not on the circumstances of each case. It will be helpful to consider the following factors:
- The relative chronological and developmental age of the two children (the greater the difference, the more likely the behaviour should be defined as abusive)
 - Whether the alleged abuser is supported or joined by other children
 - A differential in power or authority (e.g. related to race, gender, physical, emotional or intellectual vulnerability of the victim)
 - The actual behaviour (both physical and verbal factors must be considered)
 - Whether the behaviour could be described as age appropriate or involves inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation
 - The degree of physical aggression, intimidation or bribery
 - The victim's experience of the behaviour and the impact it is having on their routines and lifestyle (e.g. not attending school)
 - Attempts to ensure secrecy
 - Duration and frequency of behaviour.
- 4.28.5 Employees should make a referral to local authority children's social care and/ or police in line with Referral and Assessment Procedure. This needs to:

- Include details of any sibling/s of the perpetrator, and or the victim. A referral must be made when there is a suspicion or an allegation of a child:
 - Having been seriously physically abused or being likely to seriously physically abuse another child or an adult
 - Having seriously harmed another child or an adult
 - Having seriously emotionally abused or being likely to seriously emotionally abuse another child or adult/s.

4.28.6 If the local authority's response is deemed to be inadequate, or it doesn't sufficiently address the risk of abuse, employees must discuss this with their manager on the same day. The service manager must then review the details of the situation on the same day and make a decision to take action regarding any escalation required (refer to procedure [4.10](#), 'Escalating a concern').

5. Appendices

Safeguarding flowchart



The Children's Society

6. Glossary of Terms

Adult at risk

A person aged 18 or over who is unable to look after their own wellbeing, property, rights, or other interests, and are at risk of harm (either from another person's behaviour or their own behaviour) due to disability, illness, physical or mental infirmity.

Adultification

Adultification (whereby 'notions of innocence and vulnerability are not afforded to certain children', (Davis & Marsh, 2022³) can impact children differently based on their personal and social demographics, research suggests that Black children are at an increased risk of experiencing this form of bias (Davis & Marsh, 2022), which may result in them being disproportionately represented in the data. In relation to Black girls, for example, evidence suggests that professionals held racialised stereotypes of them being 'strong' and 'aggressive', leading to the assumption they were less in need of support, protection and nurture (Epstein et al., 2017)⁴. Young Black people are at heightened risk of having their needs and rights undermined through adultification bias, that fails to recognise their innocence and vulnerability (Davis & Marsh, 2022)

Age assessments and age disputes

Where the Home Office or local authorities dispute the age stated by an unaccompanied child or young person arriving in the UK.

Young people prematurely judged to be adults miss out on the vital support and protection they are entitled to as children under UK law. They are housed with adults and they do not have access to the care and education they would receive as children. They may be detained and subject to legal processes as adults. This may put them at high risk of further harm and potential further trauma.

Home Office policy⁵ states that a decision should only be made to treat the claimant as an adult if either:

- a local authority Merton-compliant age assessment has been completed by a local authority, finding the claimant to be 18 or over, which the Home Office has agreed with after giving significant weight to the assessment and taking all reliable evidence into account
- two Home Office members of staff – one at least of chief immigration officer or higher executive officer grade – have independently assessed that the claimant is an adult because their physical appearance and demeanor very strongly suggests that they are 25 years of age or over

³ Davis, J., & Marsh, N. (2022). The Myth of the Universal Child. In D. Holmes (Ed), *Safeguarding Young People: Risk, Rights, Resilience and Relationships* (1st ed., pp. 111-128). Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

⁴ Epstein, R., Blake, J., & Gonzalez, T. (2017). *Girlhood Interrupted: The Erasure of Black Girls' Childhood*. The Georgetown Law Centre on Poverty and Inequality.

⁵https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1140168/Assessing_age_March_2023.pdf

- there is credible and clear documentary evidence that they are 18 years of age or over – unless the claimant’s physical appearance/demeanour ‘very strongly suggests that they are significantly over 18 years of age’, they should be treated as a child until a holistic assessment can be made by a local authority.

A local authority’s assessment must be as full and comprehensive as possible, and conducted in a clear, transparent and fair manner applying best practice guidance. The process includes both interviews and research and should be undertaken by two social workers who have been trained in age assessments. Children and young people should also have the opportunity to have an Appropriate Adult present in their age assessment interview.

[Refer to procedure 4.14](#), ‘Age assessments and age disputes’ for more information.

Appropriate Adult

The role of the Appropriate Adult is to safeguard the interests, rights, entitlements, and welfare of children and vulnerable people who are suspected of a criminal offence, by ensuring they are treated in a fair and just manner and are able to participate effectively in police processes.

A child cannot be interviewed by the police without an Appropriate Adult. Where there is no parent or family member, often local Youth Offending Services or Local Authority Social Workers who have undertaken Appropriate Adult training will fulfil this role. A The Children’s Society employee trained as an Appropriate Adult can also fulfil the role.

Children also have the right to an Appropriate Adult during an age assessment process.

Asylum seeker

Someone who has arrived in the UK and asked the government for asylum. Until they receive a decision as to whether or not they will be granted refugee status, they are known as an asylum seeker. In the UK, this means they do not have the same rights as a refugee or those a British citizen would.

Anyone seeking protection is legally entitled to stay in the UK while awaiting a decision on their asylum claim. The right to claim asylum is embedded in international law.

Young people seeking asylum are very vulnerable. They are in need of a good immigration solicitor, safe accommodation suitable to their age, and a supportive social worker. Without these, young people seeking asylum are often isolated, at risk of abuse or exploitation, without access to appropriate services and education, unsuitably housed, destitute, and lack any real support from children’s social care. These factors are all likely to impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

For more information, refer to the ‘Age assessment and age disputes’ and ‘Refugee’ definitions in this glossary of terms.

Care Act 2014⁶

The Care Act 2014 provides a clear legal framework for how agencies work in partnership with other services to protect adults at risk. This places adult safeguarding on the same statutory footing as child safeguarding.

The Care Act defines an individual as an adult at risk, and states that specific adult safeguarding duties apply, to any adult who:

- has care and support needs
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect
- is unable to protect themselves because of their care and support needs.

In its definition of adults who should receive a safeguarding response, the Care Act also includes people who are victims of certain types of crime. For example, those who are experiencing sexual exploitation, domestic abuse or modern slavery.

However, an individual would only be defined as an adult at risk where there are care and support needs that mean they are unable to protect themselves.

Care order

Refer to 'Looked-after children: Local authority terms'.

Child criminal exploitation

When an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate, or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity. This may be:

- in exchange for something the victim needs or wants
- for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator
- through violence or the threat of violence.

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology ([refer to 4.20 for more information](#)).

Further information on contextual safeguarding, relevant to children and young people at risk of child criminal exploitation, is available on the Intranet.

Child in need (Section 17 (10) of the Children Act 1989)

A child or young person is considered a "child in need" if:

- they are unlikely to achieve, maintain (or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining) a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him/her of services by a local authority

⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

- their health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of such services
- they have a disability.

Where employees are referring a child in need as defined by the Children Act 1989 to local authority children's social care, they should wherever possible seek parental consent.

Child Protection Conference (CPC)

A meeting where safeguarding partners decide whether a child needs a child protection plan.

The local authority will call a child protection conference when they have investigated concerns about child abuse and they believe the child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

A lead social worker and members of the core group (refer to 'core group' definition in this glossary of terms) will be agreed at this meeting. The first conference is called the Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC).

Child protection plan (CPP)

The ICPC may decide that a child needs a child protection plan. The plan is developed to ensure the child is safe from harm and to prevent further suffering. The plan will also focus on promoting the child's health and development, and will also include actions to support the wider family so that they can better safeguard and promote the welfare of their child (provided this is in the best interests of the child).

Children's services

The department within a local council responsible for early help, children in need, children in need of protection, looked-after children and care leavers. Refer to the 'Looked-after children: local authority terms' definition for further details.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

A form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity. This may be:

- in exchange for something the victim needs or wants
- for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Child to parent/carer violence/adolescent to parent violence

There is currently no legal definition of child/adolescent to parent/carer violence and abuse. However, as with Domestic Abuse, it is likely to involve a pattern of behaviour

within a family unit which is violent and abusive. This can include physical violence from a child/ adolescent towards a parent/carer and a number of different types of abusive behaviours, including damage to property, emotional abuse, and economic/financial abuse. Violence and abuse can occur together or separately.

Abusive behaviours can encompass, but are not limited to, humiliating language and threats, belittling a parent, damage to property and stealing from a parent and heightened sexualised behaviours. Patterns of coercive control are often seen in cases of child/adolescent to parent/carer violence but some families might experience episodes of explosive physical violence from their adolescent with fewer controlling, abusive behaviours.

Complex and organised abuse

Abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of abused children. It may take place in any setting. The adults involved may be acting in concert, acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority (such as a teacher, coach, faith group leader, or in a celebrity position) to access and recruit children for abuse.

Such abuse can occur both as part of a network of abuse across a family or community and within institutions such as residential settings, boarding schools, day care, or in other provisions such as youth services, sports clubs, faith groups and voluntary groups. Organised abuse may also occur online or via phones, games consoles and computers. Although in most cases of complex and organised abuse, the abuser(s) is an adult, it is also possible for children and young people to be the perpetrators of such harm, with or without adult abusers.

Complex safeguarding

Criminal activity or criminal behaviour involving children and adults at risk when there is exploitation and/or a clear implied safeguarding concern. This includes:

- serious organised crime/ threat to life
- honour based abuse/forced marriage
- child/adult sexual exploitation
- child/adult criminal exploitation
- preventing violent extremism
- modern slavery/trafficking
- female genital mutilation (FGM).

Contextual safeguarding⁷

An approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, through their networks, at school and online can feature violence and abuse.

⁷ Contextual Safeguarding is a concept coined by Professor Carlene Firmin at the University of Durham. See video for an introduction: <https://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/media/vvdf2fma/what-is-contextual-safeguarding.png>

These safeguarding threats can take a variety of forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats including exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as those operating across county lines, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation, and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation.

Core group

A small group of key professionals and family members who meet within 10 days of an initial child protection conference, and then regularly while the child has a child protection plan to ensure it is effective.

Disruption

A term used within contextual safeguarding work to refer to activity that aims to interrupt current harm or exploitation taking place. Disruption activity attempts to answer the question, 'what can be done to change the environment for the child, young person, or adult at risk that will reduce or minimise the safeguarding risk?'

This question is best answered at multi-agency strategy meetings where agencies can explore how each can play a role in disrupting risk for a particular child or young person.

Police and local authority children's social care services have statutory powers to disrupt activity that is exploiting a child or young person. These powers vary according to the circumstances and are set out in the [Home Office's Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit](#).

Domestic abuse

Any incident – or pattern of incidents – of controlling, coercive, or threatening behaviour, violence, and abuse between those aged 16 or over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass – but is not limited to – psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional abuse. In some cases, young people can domestically abuse their parents and/or siblings, or adults at risk.

Domestic abuse often features:

- controlling behaviour, which is defined by 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, which 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.

Early help

Providing support early in the life of a problem, at any point in a person's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children and adult's at risk than reacting later. Effective help relies upon local organisations and agencies working

together to:

- identify children, families, and adults who would benefit from early help
- undertake an assessment of what kind of early help is required
- provide early help services to address the assessed needs of a child, adult, or their family that focuses on activity to improve the outcomes for the child or adult.

Each local authority is required to produce a “threshold document”, which describes the continuum of help and support available for a child, young person, or their family both above and below the statutory threshold. More information on this is contained in The Children’s Society safeguarding guidance.

After reading local threshold information, a The Children’s Society employee can initiate an early help assessment for a child or young person they are working with, or contribute to one initiated by another agency. While local arrangements may vary, there will be an individual or team within the local authority who can offer advice about early help and register early help assessments within their area.

Some local authorities provide early help services for adults. Employees can refer to the relevant local authority website for provision in the local area.

Education (safeguarding)

Refer to ‘Schools’ in this glossary for information.

Events

The Children’s Society runs meetings and events with supporters and young people or adults at risk in attendance.

Such meetings must be planned for, risk assessed, and recorded appropriately. The Children’s Society has a set of youth engagement principles to guide events involving children, young people and adults at risk.

If a safeguarding concern arises at an event, employees must follow the safeguarding steps outlined in this document.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act 2003. It is a form of child abuse and violence against women. FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons.

Perplexing Presentations (PP) / Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII) in children PP describes the commonly encountered situation when there are alerting signs of possible FII (not yet amounting to likely or actual significant harm), when the actual state of the child’s physical, mental health and neurodevelopment is not yet clear, but there is no perceived risk of immediate serious harm to the child’s physical health or life.

FII is a clinical situation in which a child is, or is likely to be, harmed due to parent/s behaviour and action, carried out in order to convince doctors that the child's state of physical and/or mental health and neurodevelopment is impaired (or more impaired than is actually the case). FII results in physical and emotional abuse and neglect as a result of parental actions, behaviours or beliefs and from doctors responses to these. The parent does not necessarily intend to deceive, and their motivations may not be initially evident.

Local safeguarding (children)

Local safeguarding arrangements are led by three safeguarding partners: local authorities, chief officers of police, and health. Prior to October 2019, this was known as a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

Local safeguarding partners make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs. A threshold document that sets out the local criteria for action should be published in a way that is transparent, accessible, and easily understood. This should include:

- the process for early help assessment and the type and level of early help services to be provided
- the criteria, including the level of need for when a child should be referred to the local authority children's social care for assessment and for statutory services as a:
 - child in need (Section 17 Children Act 1989)
 - child in need of protection (Section 47 Children Act 1989) where there is a reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Local safeguarding (adults)

Local authority Safeguarding Adults Boards (SABs) lead adult safeguarding arrangements across each locality, overseeing and coordinating the effectiveness of the safeguarding work of its member and partner agencies. SAB core duties are to ensure:

- local safeguarding arrangements are in place, as defined by the Care Act 2014 and statutory guidance
- safeguarding practice is person-centred and outcome-focused
- collaborative working to prevent abuse and neglect where possible
- agencies and individuals give timely and proportionate responses when abuse or neglect have occurred
- safeguarding practice is continuously improving and enhancing the quality of life of adults in its area.

Looked-after children: Local authority terms

The following terms are used by local authorities in reference to looked-after children:

- Accommodated (Section 20): when a child is looked after by foster carers or in residential care, and their parents/holder of parental responsibility has agreed to this voluntarily, or they are over 16 years and have agreed. The child's parents maintain full parental responsibility when their child is accommodated under section 20.
- Adoption: transfers all legal parental rights and responsibilities for a child to the adoptive parents. The birth parents of the child lose all legal access to their child once an adoption order is approved by the court. Adopted children may keep in contact with some of their birth relatives if agreed during the adoption process, as long as this is in the child's best interests (the child's safety and wellbeing is the first priority).
- Care leaver: a young person who has previously been in the care of the local authority and is living independently. There are many regulations around the status of a care leaver depending on at what age and for how long they were in local authority care.
- Eligible child: a child aged 16 and 17 who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who is still being looked after. Eligible children must be provided with a personal advisor, who will undertake a needs assessment and, based on identified needs, will draw up a pathway plan to outline the agreed action.
- Extension to 25 years old: where an individual who is under 25 years old, and who was previously open to the leaving care team under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, returns for support. This is done by contacting the leaving care team.
- Relevant child: a child aged 16 and 17 who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who has left care. This also includes young people who were detained (e.g. in a youth offending institution or hospital) when they turned 16, but who were looked after immediately before being detained.
- Former relevant child: a young person over 18 who was previously "eligible" or "relevant" but whose case was closed, for any reason. Local authorities support this group until aged 21.
- Former relevant child pursuing education: a former relevant child who is planning to continue education or training they can ask the council for support. If eligible, the local authority can support this group until the young person's 25th birthday.
- Qualifying child: any young person under the age of 21 (or 24 if in education or training) who stops being looked after, accommodated in a variety of settings, or privately fostered, after the age of 16. This also includes young people who are under a special guardianship order. Qualifying children are entitled to the following from children's services:

- 'keeping in touch' advice and support
 - payment for accommodation during college or university holidays (if young person is studying full-time away from home, up to the age of 25)
 - additional financial support for expenses related to their education, work or training up to the age of 25 (in some circumstances only).
- Care Order (CO): where a child is subject to a court order under Section 38 (interim) or a Section 31 (full) care order and is looked after by the local authority. This may be in foster care or residential care, or they could be placed at home with parents. The local authority shares parental responsibility with the parents or whomever has parental responsibility (this may be a family member or friend who has sought parental responsibility through the court).
 - Child Arrangements Order (CAO): introduced under the Children Act 2014, and decides where a child lives, when a child spends time with each parent, and any other contact that takes place. The child's mother, father, or anyone else with parental responsibility can apply for this order. The CAO replaces residence orders and contact orders (although some older children may be subject to these orders).
 - Parental Responsibility (PR): the legal rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority a parent has for their child. A person who has PR has the right to make decisions about the child's care and upbringing.
 - Private fostering: an arrangement whereby a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if the child has a disability) is placed for 28 days or more in the care of someone who is not the child's parent(s) or a connected person.
 - A connected person is defined as a 'relative, friend, or other person connected with a child'. The latter is likely to include people who have a pre-existing relationship with the child, for example a teacher who knows the child in a professional capacity.
 - Private foster carers can be from the extended family, for example a cousin or a great aunt, but cannot be a close relative. This is a private arrangement made between a parent and a carer, although the local authority should always be informed of these arrangements.
 - Respite care (also known as "short breaks"): there are two forms of respite care depending on if the individual is a child or adult:
 - For children: a form of short-term substitute care provided by someone other than the parents or usual carers for a child. The 1989 Children Act provides a clear framework for the provision of short-term care known as respite care. The Act requires children to be consulted about their needs, the services to be provided if a child is cared for using respite care. Local authority children's social care services will draw up a care plan, visit the

child from time to time, and review the placement(s) on a regular basis. Respite care can take different forms, such as support for the child to undertake particular activities, or overnight care.

- For adults: full-time carers of adults with complex needs may be entitled to respite care services in their local area. The main types of respite care are day care centres, home care from a paid carer, a short stay in a care home, respite holidays, and sitting services. Adult social care undertake a carer's assessment to determine the requirements and best options.
- Special Guardianship Order (SGO): an order of the court under the Children Act 1989 that grants the holder(s) parental responsibility over a child until the child reaches the age of 18. The SGO enables the special guardian to make day to day decisions on behalf of the child.

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The single point of contact for all safeguarding and early intervention concerns, and requests for support regarding children and young people. It is also the single point of contact for triaging and assessing all safeguarding concerns.

MASH brings together safeguarding professionals from services that have contact with children, young people, adults and families, making the best possible use of their combined knowledge and information to keep people safe from harm. Many local areas now operate a MASH for both children and adults' safeguarding, however it should be noted that different local areas will refer to the MASH with different terminology.

Mental capacity

Some people have difficulties making decisions, which is referred to as "lacking capacity". Under the Mental Capacity Act (2005) there are laws governing who can make decisions to safeguard adults at risk of abuse on someone else's behalf. An assessment of someone's capacity is an integral part of any safeguarding adult's assessment. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 states:

'A person lacks capacity in relation to a matter if at the material time he/she is unable to make a decision for him/herself in relation to the matter because of an impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain. Further, a person is not able to make a decision if they are unable to:

- understand the information relevant to the decision
- retain that information long enough for them to make the decision
- use or weigh that information as part of the process of making the decision
- communicate their decision (whether by talking, using sign language or by any other means such as muscle movements, blinking an eye or squeezing a hand).'

Missing person

Anyone whose whereabouts is unknown, whatever the circumstances or length of their disappearance. The person may, for example, have missed an agreed appointment, or they may have not been seen or heard from in the service for a few days.

[Refer to procedure 4.24](#), 'Missing children, young people and adults at risk' for instructions relating to missing people.

Modern slavery

The recruitment, movement, harbouring or receiving of children, women or men through the use of force, coercion, abuse of vulnerability, deception or other means for the purpose of exploitation.

National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

A framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and/or human trafficking. Only staff at designated First Responders Organisations, such as police and local authorities, can make a referral into the NRM.

Referral forms are sent to a Single Competent Authority (SCA) within the Home Office, who aim to make a reasonable grounds decision within five working days.

Individuals who are recognised as a potential victim of modern slavery through the NRM have access to specialist tailored support, which may include access to advice, accommodation, protection, and independent emotional and practical help. Further information about making a referral to the NRM is available in The Children's Society safeguarding and quality practice intranet page.

Online abuse and digital safeguarding

Online abuse is abuse via technology, and can occur to children and adults at risk across any digital platform or within any online space.

Digital safeguarding means:

- recognising the internet as a protective factor, enabling connection, learning, networks of support, and information
- promoting safe online behaviour to children, young people, adults at risk, and their families
- listening to children and adults at risk when they talk about their experiences in the digital world
- taking children, young people, adults at risk, and their families' online activity and networks into account when assessing, planning and providing support
- ensuring that any digital platforms promoted or used with children and adults at risk are safe
- ensuring that online behaviour with children and adults at risk is safe.

Organised Crime

Organised Crime is defined as planned and coordinated criminal behaviour and conduct

by people working together on a continuing basis. Their motivation is often, but not always, financial gain. Organised crime in this and other countries recognises neither national borders nor national interests.

Peer on peer abuse

Peer on peer abuse occurs when a young person is exploited bullied and / or harmed by their peers who are the same, or similar age; everyone directly involved in peer on peer abuse is under the age of 18. Peer on peer abuse relates to various forms of abuse (not just sexual abuse and exploitation). It is important to recognise that the behaviour in question is harmful to the child perpetrators as well as the victim.

Research indicates that girls and young women are more at risk of abusive behaviours perpetrated by their peers; however, it can also affect boys and young men, those with learning difficulties or disabilities, and LGBTQ+ children and young people.

There is no clear definition of what peer on peer abuse entails; it can however, be captured in a range of different definitions:

- **Domestic Abuse:** relates to a young person aged 16 and 17 who experience physical, emotional, sexual and or financial abuse, and coercive control in their intimate relationships;
- **Child Sexual Exploitation:** captures young people aged under-18 who are sexually abused in the context of exploitative relationships, contexts and situations by a person of any age – including another young person;
- **Harmful Sexual Behaviour:** refers to any young person, under the age of 18, who demonstrates behaviour outside of the normative parameters of development (this includes, but is not exclusive to abusive behaviours);
- **Serious Young Crime / Violence:** refers to offences (as opposed to relationships and contexts) and captures all of those of the most serious in nature, including murder, rape and GBH between young people under 18.
- **Peer on peer abuse** can refer to any of the above individually or as a combination, therefore professionals working with children and young people who are experiencing abuse from their peers, must respond to the needs of each of the definitions to uncover the level of complexity and respond in the most effective manner.

A key area in which peer on peer abuse occurs, is via bullying. Bullying is defined as a 'behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'. It can often begin with apparently trivial events such as name calling, spreading untruthful rumours, or leaving someone out of a group. It can feel like there is no escape for a child, because it can happen wherever they are, at any time of the day or night.

There are many types of bullying, which include:

- Cyberbullying
- Racist or religious bullying
- Sexual, sexist and transphobic bullying
- Homophobic bullying
- Disablist bullying.

Practice review

A review that takes place when a child, young person, or adult suffers a serious injury or death and there are concerns about the circumstances of the death and/or multi-agency working within the area.

A practice review may be a child safeguarding review, a safeguarding adult review, or domestic homicide review. If one of The Children's Society's services has been involved with a child or adult who is the subject of a review, employees may be asked to contribute.

The Children's Society is committed to full and meaningful cooperation and participation with any such review. Refer to The Children's Society's safeguarding guidance document for more information.

Pre-trial support

[Refer to procedure 4.18](#), 'Court proceedings' for information.

Prevent Duty

A strategy to reduce the threat of terrorism in the UK by working actively to stop individuals from supporting terrorism or becoming terrorists.

Prevent Duty is a legal requirement of all staff working in a school or registered Early Years environment in the United Kingdom. The Children's Society believes it should be the responsibility of everybody, regardless of their role, to pay attention to individuals who they believe may be at a greater risk of being radicalised, and to report any concerns they have to the police or local authority.

Prevent Duty is a form of safeguarding and an extension of the policies that should have already been in place prior to the Prevent Duty strategy's introduction.

Refugee

In the UK, a person becomes a refugee when the government agrees that an individual who has applied for asylum meets the definition in the Refugee Convention. The person is recognised as a refugee and is issued with refugee status documentation. Usually refugees in the UK are given five years' leave to remain.

They must then must apply for further leave, although their status as a refugee is not limited to five years.

The UN Refugee Convention defines a refugee as follows:

‘Owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country’ (Article 1, 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees)

Once a young person or adult at risk is granted refugee status, their legal status is more certain, however their support-needs can be very similar to those of asylum seekers. Refugee young people and adults at risk often struggle with mental health problems, insecure accommodation, destitution, and safety concerns associated with unsuitable accommodation.

Refer to the ‘Asylum seeker’ definition in this glossary of terms for more information.

Risk assessment

An analysis of what could cause harm in a piece of work with a child, young person, or adult at risk (either an individual or a group). In a risk assessment, risks are described alongside the steps needed in order to prevent these harms. This process includes:

- the identification of hazards (anything that might cause harm)
- considering who might be harmed and how evaluating the risk (the chance, high or low that someone could be harmed by the hazards, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be)
- deciding what precautions, or risk mitigations, are necessary.

Risk assessments are recorded, reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

Schools (and other educational establishments)

Schools have regular contact with children and young people, which puts their staff in a strong position to identify signs of abuse and neglect.

The Children’s Society employees must note that Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges (2022)⁸ requires all schools and colleges to:

- make a referral to the relevant local authority if they have a concern about a child’s welfare
- name a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will provide support to employees to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely

⁸https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1101454/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2022.pdf

with other services such as children's social care

- take part in multi-agency working in order to plan for safeguarding individual children
- have a child protection/safeguarding policy and process, which names the duties of the DSL.

At the point of commencing work with a school or college, all The Children's Society employees and volunteers must locate and read the school's child protection/safeguarding policy, be clear on the safeguarding process, and know which employee is the DSL.

Section 47 enquiry

An enquiry established by a local authority after a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

Child protection enquiries S47 (1) of the Children Act 1989 states, 'Where a local authority have reasonable cause to think that a child who lives or is found in the area and is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the authority shall make such enquiries as they consider necessary to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.'

Serious Incident Management

Serious incidents are relevant for The Children's Society services working in partnership with the NHS. The NHS Serious Incident Framework defines serious incidents as, 'adverse events, where the consequences to patients, families and carers, staff or organisations are so significant or the potential for learning is so great, that a heightened level of response is justified.'

Serious incidents include:

- unexpected or avoidable injury to one or more people, which results in serious harm
- unexpected or avoidable injury to one or more people, which requires further health care treatment in order to prevent death or serious harm
- actual or alleged abuse or neglect
- an incident (or series of incidents) that prevents, or threatens to prevent, an organisation's ability to continue to deliver an acceptable quality of healthcare services, including but not limited to:
 - failures in the security, integrity, accuracy or availability of information/or information governance issues
 - property damage
 - security breach or concern
 - systematic failure to provide an acceptable standard of safe care.

The Children's Society has developed a policy and procedure for responding to [incidents](#).

Strategy discussion

A discussion held with children's social care, police and health partners to determine next steps when the local authority receives a referral regarding a child who is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

Transitional safeguarding⁹

Safeguarding young people through the period in which they approach their 18th birthday, and therefore when they may start to access adult services.

While a child legally becomes an adult at the age of 18 years, experience of adversity in childhood can delay and extend the process of adolescent development. Young people who The Children's Society works with are particularly vulnerable to harm, where the effects of child abuse and other harm can last well into adulthood.

Many support services have a simply defined remit of working with those under or over 18 years of age. Assumptions about individual capacity and maturity (for example, for decision making or ability to live independently) are often inherent in adult services.

Safeguarding young people through this transition period can be challenging, and many adult services are not well suited to the needs of adolescents. Some local authority and safeguarding partner areas are developing new approaches to working with adolescents in transition – however this is not yet uniform.

Third-party suppliers

Any person or company who The Children's Society has a contract with, who is not an employee, a volunteer, or agency staff. This could include, but is not limited to:

- someone with a particular skill (such as a filmmaker, photographer, music, or drama specialist)
- a consultant
- an outdoor activity provider.

In the course of their work with The Children's Society, third-party suppliers may come into contact with children and young people. Therefore, in drafting a third-party supplier contracts, safeguarding matters must be taken into consideration.

The employee making the contract is responsible for ensuring all safeguarding precautions have been undertaken. This includes:

- a DBS check
- insurance
- suitable risk assessments for all activities.

⁹ <https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/all/news-views/2018/august/transitional-safeguarding-from-adolescence-to-adulthood/>

More information on contracting third-party suppliers, along with template contracts, can be found on The Children's Society's Intranet.

Threshold document

A document published by a local authority setting out the local criteria for safeguarding actions in a way that is transparent, accessible, and easily understood. Threshold documents should include:

- the process for early help assessment and the type and level of early help services provided
- the criteria (including the level of need) for referring to the local authority children's social care for assessment and for statutory services as a child in need or child in need of protection, where there is a reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

For adult safeguarding concerns, local authorities should produce guidance regarding local responses and procedures. Employees may check the relevant local authority website for this information.

Trafficking

The recruiting, harbouring, receiving or transporting people into a situation of exploitation through the use of violence, deception, coercion and/or force. Trafficking of children or adults is abuse. People are trafficked for many purposes, including sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, labour, benefit fraud and involvement in criminal activity such as drug distribution and cultivation, credit card fraud and theft.

Trafficking may involve movement across national borders (international human trafficking) or within the UK – whether across county lines or within a local area (internal trafficking).

Trafficking is closely associated with the term “modern slavery” as set out in the Modern Slavery Act 2015, which includes the offences of slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking.

Trafficking often involves individuals being exploited for multiple purposes, so it is important to take a wide perspective of the potential risks.

Refer to the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#) for more information on human trafficking.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Statutory guidance published by the Government for inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Key information from Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 is included in this policy document.

