



Safeguarding Children and Young People: Policy & Procedures

Policy statement:

This Safeguarding Children and Young People policy outlines Refuge4Pet’s responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and should be read alongside our values and has its foundations in the principles of listening to and believing all survivors of domestic abuse – adults, children and young people.

The policy has been informed by Cornwall, Plymouth, Devon and Torbay’s Local Safeguarding Children Boards and the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 document. This policy seeks to clarify roles and responsibilities within the organisation and is aligned with the 5 core values of Trauma Informed Practice: Safety, Trust, Choice, Collaboration and Empowerment.

Safeguarding leads at Refuge4Pets

Everyone at Refuge4Pets has a responsibility to safeguarding the physical and emotional wellbeing of children and young people.

Refuge4Pets acknowledges however the importance of having named personnel who staff members and volunteers can refer to where possible safeguarding issues arise.

Within the Women’s Centre Cornwall the following people have a lead role around safeguarding children and young people:

Safeguarding Leads	Name	Contact Details
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mary Wakeham	07947382457
Safeguarding Lead (Trustee)	Dina Holder	

Introduction

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Confidentiality and Information Sharing Policy, Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy, Whistle Blowing Policy and Information Sharing Policy and Professional Boundaries Policy.

Refuge4Pets believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibilities to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practices, which protect them.

A child for the purposes of this policy, as defined by the Children's Act 1989 & 2004, as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

Refuge4Pets recognises:

- all children have a right to enjoy a life free from harm and abuse.
- the welfare of children is paramount.
- all children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or identity, culture, language, religion or belief.
- all children and young people should be encouraged to fulfill their potential.
- Refuge4Pets has a duty of care to all children and young people who come into contact with the organisation either directly, by engaging with the service, or indirectly by an adult making Refuge4Pets aware of the child/young person.
- openness must be encouraged in concerns relating to child protection matters because child abuse thrives on secrecy.
- The Children Act 1989 helps to protect children and bring the perpetrators to justice. If someone abuses a child, they are committing a criminal offence and can be prosecuted and imprisoned.

Scope and purpose of the policy

This policy applies to all paid staff, voluntary staff, trustees, temporary staff and anyone else working on behalf of Refuge4Pets. All staff and volunteers working on behalf of Refuge4Pets will receive training on this policy.

All people accessing support will be made aware of our safeguarding policy and confidentiality and information sharing policies at the initial or subsequent contact meeting.

The purpose of this policy is to set out Refuge4Pet's approach and commitment in relation to protecting children and young people who Refuge4Pets come in to contact with, either directly or indirectly, from all forms of harm and abuse.

Safeguarding children and young people is everyone's responsibility. All staff and volunteers are accountable for responding appropriately to safeguarding and child protection issues.

Definitions of abuse

"Child abuse" or "maltreatment" constitutes 'all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation, including online and in person, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity.

NSPCC specify "cruelty to children" or "child abuse" as 'behaviour that causes significant harm to a child. It also includes when someone knowingly fails to prevent serious harm to a child.

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

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving high levels of violence, whether the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape/oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, such as involving children in looking at or in the production of sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming children in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capabilities, as well as over protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. **It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.** It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child although it may occur alone.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy because of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

Sexually exploited children and young people: This may include children and young people who have been coerced into sexual 'activity' and abuse by gangs or who may be the victims of trafficking. Risks to young people in these situations are likely to be high.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) / cutting: Female genital mutilation (FGM) / Cutting is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured, or changed, but there is no medical reason for this to be done. It is also known as female circumcision or cutting, and by other terms, such as sunna, gudniin, halalays, tahur, megrez and khitan, among others. FGM / Cutting is usually carried out on young girls between infancy and the age of 15, most commonly before puberty starts. It's illegal in the UK and is child abuse.

Forced marriage: is when a woman or girl faces physical pressure to marry (for example, threats, physical violence or sexual violence) or emotional and psychological pressure (e.g., if they are made to feel like they are bringing shame on the family). It also includes marrying someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they're pressured to or not)

This may involve children and young people under the age of 18 being taken out of the UK and forced in marriage overseas – as well as here in the UK
Forced marriage is illegal in the UK.

Violent extremism: This may involve children and young people under the age of 18 being exploited and coerced into risky and illegal behaviours based around ideology.

Digital / online abuse: This can take the form of Cyberbullying; online Grooming; exposure to inappropriate or harmful material online e.g., gambling content, pornography, or violent content; exposure to content that promotes worrying or harmful behaviour such as suicide, self-harm or eating disorders; becoming victims of cyber-crime such as hacking, hoax/scams, fraud and identity theft; radicalisation and extremism online; sexting and online abuse or exploitation

Key responsibilities

Refuge4Pets endeavours to Safeguard Children and Young People by:

- All Safeguarding Leads ensuring that Safeguarding Decision Reports (see Appendix 2) and safeguarding referral details are held on Lamplight and collated quarterly for review.
- Scheduling quarterly meetings to review and audit safeguarding cases

Operational responsibilities

- Safeguarding Leads have a responsibility to keep up to date with national developments within Child Protection guidance and legislation and to inform/train all staff and volunteers accordingly.
- Safeguarding Leads must have a Level 3 Multi-Agency Safeguarding Training.
- The Refuge4Pets CEO is responsible for ensuring the Safeguarding Policy is up to date and meets the current reporting requirements and expectations of the Local Safeguarding Children's Boards.
- Refuge4Pets have a nominated Board member who has overall responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection.
- Safeguarding discussions are a mandatory part of one-to-one line supervision, peer supervision and team meetings.
- Ensuring all concerns and allegations of abuse are taken seriously by trustees, staff and volunteers and responded to appropriately – this may require a referral, in line with the procedure, to Children's Social Services and in emergencies the Police.
- Undertaking checks on staff and volunteers, at the recruitment stage, through the Disclosure and Barring Checks Service.
- Evaluating and reviewing these policies and procedures every year or when significant changes in legislation require it.
- Work collaboratively with Cornwall, Plymouth, Devon and Torbay Local Safeguarding Children's Boards to keep up to date with and adhere to their policies and procedures.

Responsibilities of Refuge4Pets staff and volunteers

- To have read and understood the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures.
- To take appropriate action in line with the policies of Refuge4Pets.
- To declare any existing or subsequent convictions. Failure to do so will be regarded as gross misconduct, possibly resulting in dismissal.

Support for those who report abuse

All those making a complaint or allegation or expressing concern, whether they are staff, people accessing support, carers or members of the general public should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously.
- Their comments will be treated confidentially wherever possible, but their concerns may be shared if a child or young person is at risk of significant harm.
- Staff and volunteers will be given support, if necessary, in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

People accessing support have the right:

- To be made aware of this policy.
- To be advised when Refuge4Pets is going to make a Child Protection report unless in doing so it is likely that a child, young person, or other individual will be put at risk of harm.
- To be involved in the process of reporting a Safeguarding issue as appropriate.
- To understand how their data is stored within Refuge4Pets.

Procedural guidance

Training:

Refuge4Pets will make sure that all staff and volunteers are given basic Child Protection training. New recruits will receive training on the organisations Child Protection Policy during their induction. Staff will also be required to attend external Safeguarding and Child Protection training.

Suspicion:

Any suspicions or concerns of Child Protection/Safeguarding issues must always be raised with the designated safeguarding lead or safeguarding lead (Trustee) in their absence, at the earliest possible time (See Flow Chart, Appendix 1, for how to raise concerns). Following the discussion a decision will be made about the course of action to be taken. Clear dated written records detailing the concern and the decision as to what action is to be taken must be kept (safeguarding disclosure form). If a disclosure/referral is to be made without the consent of the person accessing support, this must be discussed with the designated safeguarding lead or safeguarding lead (Trustee) in their absence.

Confidentiality:

- Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, so be clear with service users about where boundaries lie and when confidentiality may be broken.
- Confidentiality will not be broken **unless** there is a concern about **significant risk/harm to a child or young person, vulnerable adult or an individual's life is at risk.**
- If confidentiality cannot be maintained, the information will only be shared with relevant people and outside of these people will remain subject to the Confidentiality and Information Sharing Policy. Support will be provided to the person accessing support if appropriate.

Should staff and volunteers feel they need someone to talk to during the process; this should be discussed with their Line manager and/or a Safeguarding lead and extra external supervision may be accessed if appropriate.

Our principles:

- Our responsibility is not to investigate child protection concerns but to share information appropriately.
- We will explore all options related to the risks and benefits of a safeguarding referrals.
- We will be non-judgmental in our practice.
- Wherever possible we will inform people about any safeguarding referrals.
- No safeguarding decisions are made by one worker alone.
- All safeguarding referrals need to be discussed with and approved by the designated safeguarding lead or safeguarding lead (Trustee) in their absence.
- We will encourage and empower service users to refer themselves to safeguarding.
- Where possible we maintain an open and trusting relationship with service users as this will help to keep children safe.

Good practice guidelines:

Consent – It is good practice to try to gain the person's consent to share information. If it does not increase risk, all staff should inform the person if they need to share their information without consent. Consent should be informed; this means that the person giving consent should understand:

- Why the information needs to be shared.
- What information is being shared.
- What the information will be used for
- What the implications of sharing information are

It is important for all to be aware that consent can be withdrawn at any time.

Collaboration - Case reviews in the UK emphasise the importance of safe information sharing and collaboration between agencies so that professionals can fully understand any risks a child may be exposed to and take appropriate action to keep them safe.

Consult - It is essential that children, young people and/or adults are enabled by professionals to participate in matters that affect them, particularly any plans or arrangements that will affect them and/or their family and are consulted with regard to decisions that are likely to affect them individually.

Communication - It is essential that all communication is as accurate and complete as possible, and that it is clearly recorded. Accuracy is key; without this, effective decisions cannot be made.

Record - Good record keeping is an important part of professional accountability to children and their families; it will assist Designated Safeguarding Leads in meeting their key responsibility to respond appropriately to welfare concerns about children. It is important to:

- Record accurately, and as soon as possible, all details of disclosure/suspicion, including everything that was seen or heard, and any subsequent action taken, and discussions held. (Appendix 2, Safeguarding Decision Report Form).
- **Do not** paraphrase, interpret or assume, note down what the person said in their own words.
- The information should be factual, and any opinion should be stated as such.
- The account should include name, address and date of birth of all individuals involved and the time and date of the report.
- Safeguarding Decision Forms should be completed and uploaded onto Lamplight (see Appendix 2). They are collated by the designated safeguarding lead for and reviewed at quarterly Safeguarding Review meetings.
- If it is decided not to report to a relevant statutory agency a full explanation of how this decision was reached must be documented in case files/Lamplight and agreed by the designated safeguarding lead.

Line management supervision – All trustees, staff and volunteers are provided with a space in which they can highlight, discuss, and reflect on any safeguarding issues.

Referral procedure – see flowchart (appendix 1)

All cases of abuse or suspected abuse must be referred on as follows:

1. Take the matter, at the earliest possible time to the designated safeguarding lead or safeguarding lead (Trustee) in their absence who will decide whether further action needs to be taken.
2. The designated safeguarding lead or safeguarding lead (Trustee) in their absence will authorise and support any referrals to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) via the appropriate channel, who will assume a lead role in investigating the Child Protection issue. The designated safeguarding lead will ensure the referral is followed in writing within 48 hours. In an emergency the Police should be contacted immediately.
3. If it remains unclear whether a case meets child protection thresholds the designated safeguarding lead or safeguarding lead (Trustee) in their absence will contact or authorise contact with Children's Safeguarding at the local authority. They can provide advice, consultation and help in accessing services.

Action must still be taken if the allegation is withdrawn and there is a significant risk to the welfare of a child or young person, a vulnerable adult or the lives of others.

Referrals

Contact details local child safeguarding children's boards and referral forms can be found below and at:

<https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/> for Devon and Cornwall

Telephone referrals should be made to the Agency in the area that the child lives and followed up by email.

Cornwall

Multi Agency Referral Unit (MARU) on 0300 123 1116 or email

multiagencyreferralunit@cornwall.gov.uk.

<https://ciossafeguarding.org.uk/scp/p/our-policies-and-procedures/referral-forms>

Devon County

Complete the [MASH contact form](#). Please:

- be succinct and use bullet points where possible
- include a summary of current and historical concerns alongside outlining what support has been put in place to address these
- record why you feel that Children's Social Care intervention is now needed and what that will add to the current support in place

If you believe that the concerns require an urgent response, for example, because the child is in immediate danger please telephone MASH on [0345 155 1071](tel:03451551071). You will also be required to follow this up promptly with a written contact form.

<https://www.dcfp.org.uk>

Torbay

If you are worried about a child please call the Torbay Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub on [01803 208100](tel:01803208100) or email mash@torbay.gov.uk

Out of office hours please call [0300 4564 876](tel:03004564876).

<http://torbaysafeguarding.org.uk/workers/hub/>

Plymouth

If you are worried about a child or young person, or think they are being abused, even if you are unsure, please contact:

Plymouth Gateway Service

Tel: 01752 668000

Select Children's Services - Option 1

Email: gateway@plymouth.gov.uk

<http://www.plymouthscb.co.uk/making-a-referral/>

Escalation

If a safeguarding referral has been made or there is already involvement of Children's Services, but the worker has concerns that the response from Children's Services is not at the appropriate level, or necessary actions are not being taken by Children's Services to safeguard children, then we consider using the local escalation or resolution procedures to ask for decisions and actions to be reviewed. See Appendix 3 for links to Thresholds Documents and Escalation procedures.

Responding to allegation of abuse against persons in a position of trust

Where an allegation of abuse is made against someone in a position of trust (i.e., someone whose job role involves regular contact and/or caring/supervisory responsibility for children or young people) the designated safeguarding lead or safeguarding lead (Trustee) in their absence should make a decision whether to make a “position of trust referral”. This would be done via the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

It is not the responsibility of anyone within Refuge4Pets to investigate whether or not a child is being abused. This is the responsibility of Children’s Services, the LADO and the police.

Allegations made against staff / volunteers

If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff or a volunteer:

- This must be reported immediately to the CEO and Safeguarding Lead (Trustee).
- The usual disclosure / suspicion and referral procedures must be followed.
- The member of staff / volunteer could be suspended from duties pending investigation. This is not an assumption of guilt but serves to allow the appropriate investigation to take place and protects the member of staff / volunteer from further allegations.
- A risk assessment will be carried out to determine whether or not the staff member is suspended from work or assigned other duties. Consideration may be given to enabling the member of staff/volunteer to complete duties that do not involve contact with children or vulnerable people, subject to individual circumstances. At all times, the safety and wellbeing of children will be the primary consideration.
- A full investigation will be carried out in line with the Refuge4Pets Disciplinary Procedures.

Support for people accessing the service

Remember if it is safe and appropriate to do so, keep the person accessing support informed of any developments and ensure that they have access to any support they may need.

Monitoring and review:

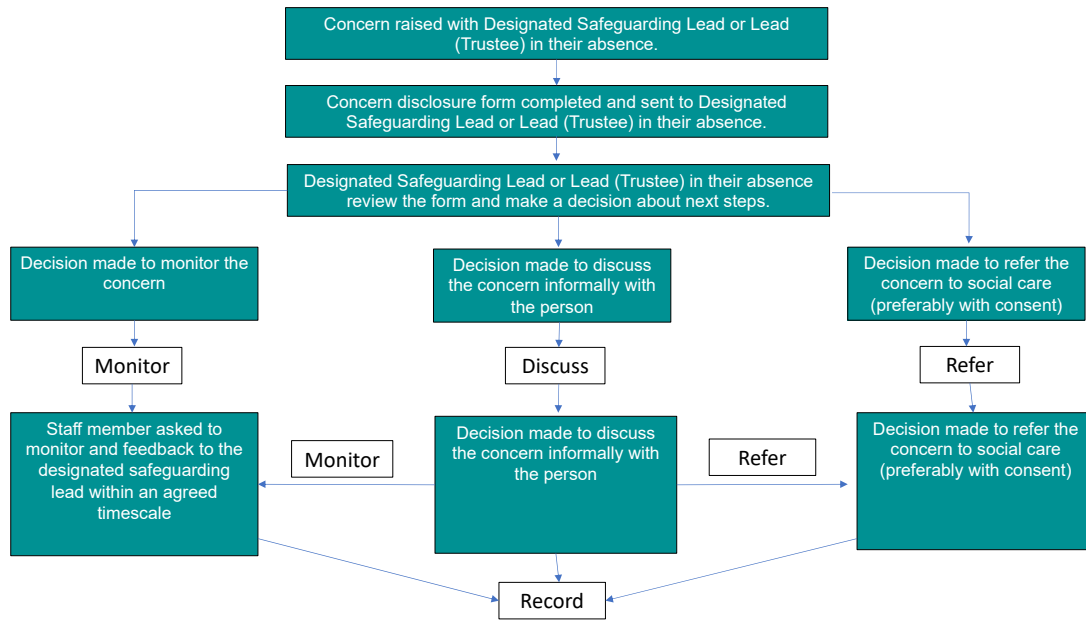
This policy will be reviewed annually, or more frequently if there are updates to child safeguarding policy, legislation or guidance.

Updates can be found on South West Safeguarding and Child Protection Group

<https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/>

https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/cornwall_scilly/amendments.html

Appendix 1 – Safeguarding Guidance Flow Chart



Appendix 2

Safeguarding Decision Report

Details of the Disclosure/Suspicion Everything that was seen/heard keep details factual, do not paraphrase, opinions must be stated as such.	
Location where disclosure made	
Discussions held, decisions made, actions taken Including referrals. If no referral made full explanation of how decision reached, this must be agreed by Safeguarding Lead or Champion.	
Name, Address and Date of Birth of individuals involved	
Time and Date of this Report	
Name	
Job role	
Sign	

Please provide your line manager with a copy of this report and upload onto Lamplight.

Appendix 3

Thresholds Documents and Escalation Procedures

Each area has a 'threshold document' which sets out how they assess what level of response is needed when child safeguarding concerns are raised. We should all be familiar with these documents and refer to them when making safeguarding referrals. We can use them to develop an idea from our perspective of what level response there should be (while understanding we do not have the full picture) and can reflect the language and points in the threshold document in our referrals to make it more likely that the response corresponds with our understanding of what is needed. If we are unhappy with the assessment, level of response from children's services, we can use the Escalation Policy to ask for the decision to be reviewed.

Devon

Devon Children and Families Partnership <https://www.dcfp.org.uk/>
Threshold Tool <https://www.dcfp.org.uk/training-and-resources/threshold-tool/>
Escalation Policy/Case resolution protocol <https://www.dcfp.org.uk/document/case-resolution-protocol/>

Torbay

Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership <http://torbaysafeguarding.org.uk>
Threshold Document <http://www.torbaysafeguarding.org.uk/publications/tscb-threshold-document/>
Professional differences (escalation) policy
<http://torbaysafeguarding.org.uk/publications/policies/>

Plymouth

Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership <http://www.plymouthscb.co.uk/>
Plymouth Assessment Framework (Thresholds)
<http://www.plymouthscbdev.delthosting.co.uk/plymouth-assessment-framework/>
Professionals Escalation and Resolution Policy <http://www.plymouthscb.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/2019-04-23-PSCB-Escalation-FINAL.pdf>

Cornwall

Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Safeguarding Children's Partnership
<https://ciossafeguarding.org.uk/scp>
Multi Agency Threshold Guidance
https://ciossafeguarding.org.uk/assets/1/cios_scp_threshold_guidance_july_2018_-_revised_15_08_18.pdf
Resolving Professional Differences Policy
https://ciossafeguarding.org.uk/assets/1/oscp_guidance_note_1_-_combined_report_and_guidance_document.pdf