

Safeguarding policy

Including children, adult, domestic abuse, stalking, people at risk of radicalisation (Prevent), modern slavery & female genital mutilation.

Policy written by:	Emily Walters		
Signed off by:	Name: Emily Walters	Role:	Director
Date implemented:	01.05.2022		
Version no:	5		
Date for review:	23.10.2026 Reviewed and updated 11/02/2026		
Date approved:	23.10.2025		

Previous versions of the Safeguarding policy and procedures will be retained for a period of 10 years.

Introduction

Hope Meadows Equine Assisted Recovery CIC (hereafter referred to as “Hope Meadows”) is committed to working in partnership with other agencies to protect children (including unborn babies) and adults from abuse and neglect, including radicalisation. This includes those experiencing domestic abuse, stalking, female genital mutilation and modern slavery. Protecting adults and children may require the sharing of information with statutory agencies where there is a suspicion of risk to the public.

Hope Meadows recognises its priority should always be to ensure the safety, well-being and protection of unborn babies, children, and adults within the project and to the wider public. That it is the role of all staff and volunteers to act on any allegation, suspicion or evidence of abuse, neglect or radicalisation, and report their concerns to a responsible person, manager &/or agency as determined within this policy and related procedures.

Purpose & Principles

The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of staff, volunteers and trustees working on behalf of Hope Meadows in relation to safeguarding beneficiaries, their families and members of the public.

The procedures set out what action staff, volunteers and trustees must take where abuse, neglect and radicalisation is suspected or known about.

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone. Hope Meadows has suitable arrangements to ensure that beneficiaries are safeguarded against the risk of abuse by means of a) taking reasonable steps to identify the possibility of abuse, neglect or radicalisation b) prevent it before it occurs and c) responding appropriately to any allegation, suspicion or evidence of abuse, neglect or radicalisation.

Making Safeguarding Personal is about engaging with people about the outcomes they want and then ascertaining the extent to which those outcomes are realised. It seeks to achieve:

- a personalised approach that enables safeguarding to be done with, not to, people
- practice that focuses on achieving meaningful improvement to people's circumstances rather than just on 'investigation' and 'conclusion'

- an approach that enables people to know what difference has been made.

Everyone has the right to live free from abuse and neglect and to be treated as an individual and with respect and dignity. We recognise our duty to safeguard the people we work with from abuse. We will ensure all our staff, trustees, volunteers and sub-contractors are safely recruited and suitably trained. They will know how to recognise abuse, prevent it from happening and act appropriately on any allegation or information received.

This policy is informed by and aligned with:

- *Working Together to Safeguard Children*
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)*
- *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused* (DfE)

Hope Meadows is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects current statutory guidance and inspection standards.

Roles & Responsibilities in relation to Safeguarding

Directors

Directors must ensure that there they designate a Safeguarding Lead and ensure that this role receives appropriate supervision and oversight. Directors should ensure that they approve the safeguarding policy and its procedures on an annual basis, and that it is updated in accordance with legislation and commissioning arrangements. The Directors must ensure that Hope Meadows has a clear process for staff / volunteer safeguarding induction, mandatory training, reporting, recording, escalation of safeguarding and any concerns and allegations against staff / volunteers.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Name of Safeguarding Lead	Beth Fuller
Contact details	07805399372 beth@hopemeadows.co.uk

Staff (paid or unpaid) and volunteers working in the voluntary and community sector have a vital role to play in delivering services and activities to a range of people in varied settings, therefore it is essential that Hope Meadows designate a safeguarding lead.

The safeguarding lead is responsible for developing a policy and procedures which is accessible to staff and volunteers, that the policy is reviewed and updated on an at least an annual basis. They are responsible for ensuring that staff, volunteers and trustees have access to safeguarding procedures at induction and suitable mandatory training and supervision (where appropriate) for their role and that this is recorded with a refresher at least every three years. The safeguarding lead will have a sound knowledge of safeguarding issues and will be the person that staff, volunteers and trustees discuss concerns with and agree a process for recording, reporting and escalating these concerns within the responsible agencies or to Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust as the commissioner.

The safeguarding lead must ensure that all safeguarding activity is recorded and reported to the appropriate agency responsible for safeguarding and Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust as the project's commissioner to demonstrate compliance with Section 11 Children Act (2004), Care

Act (2014), Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015), Serious Crime Act (2015), Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004) and Regulation 13 of the Health and Social Care Act (2008) (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014; safeguarding service users from abuse and improper treatment.

Staff & Volunteers

It is all staff and volunteer's duty to attend safeguarding induction and training as set out by the Hope Meadows and to ensure they have evidence that they completed the training. It is the role and responsibility of all staff and volunteers to be aware of the safeguarding policy and procedures and to act on any allegation, suspicion or evidence of abuse, neglect or radicalisation, and to report these concerns to the designated safeguarding lead, manager &/or statutory agency as described within the Hope Meadows procedures. It is their duty to record the concern and action taken, reporting this to the designated safeguarding lead. Where a safeguarding concern is not acted upon or taken seriously by another agency or person then the staff / volunteer must escalate their concerns to the designated Safeguarding Lead.

Staff should follow the procedure of:

1. Document the concern, including necessary personal information and the person's own account of the incident. If the concern is immediate, staff are trained to keep the individual on site and phone for emergency services support.
2. Share this concern, as soon as practically possible, with our Safeguarding Lead (Beth Fuller)
3. A decision is made between the staff member and the DSL whether the concern warrants a report to the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Board, and/or immediate action
4. This is documented on our shared, password protected file.
5. Any outcome of a report to the safeguarding board is documented in the same way.

Definitions of Adult & Child Safeguarding

Adult safeguarding

Means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisation's working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard in their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances Care Act Statutory Guidance (2014, p230).

Adult at risk (vulnerable adult)

The safeguarding duties apply to an adult who: has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority are meeting any of those needs) and; is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect and as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse and neglect.

Young People Aged 19–25

Hope Meadows recognises that young adults aged 19–25 may remain vulnerable due to care experience, additional needs, trauma or exploitation.

Safeguarding responses for this group will:

- Reflect adult safeguarding principles under the Care Act 2014
- Recognise ongoing developmental and contextual vulnerabilities
- Promote autonomy while ensuring protection from harm

Child safeguarding

Is the action we take to promote the welfare of children aged under the age of 18 years and including unborn babies, protect them from harm and is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes (Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025)

Hope Meadows recognises that safeguarding does not end at referral and that children and young people at risk require ongoing, proportionate and child-centred support.

We will:

- Take a **trauma-informed approach** to safeguarding
- Listen to children and young people and take their views, wishes and feelings seriously
- Provide appropriate support during and after safeguarding concerns are raised
- Make reasonable adjustments to enable children to engage safely in activities
- Work in partnership with parents, carers and external agencies unless doing so would place a child at increased risk

Staff must be alert to changes in behaviour, attendance, presentation or engagement which may indicate emerging or escalating risk and respond in line with safeguarding procedures.

Definitions of Abuse & Radicalisation

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person(s) or group of people. Abuse may be a single or repeated acts.

Types of Abuse as defined by Care Act Guidance (2014)

Physical abuse – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

Sexual abuse – including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Psychological abuse – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

Financial or material abuse – including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Modern slavery – encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Discriminatory abuse – including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Organisational abuse – including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Neglect and acts of omission – including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Neglect (specific to a child) The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance 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 care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. (Working Together 2015)

Self-neglect – this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Further definitions of abuse and neglect can be found in the multi-agency procedures relating to the specific safeguarding domain.

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

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

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

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim."*

*This definition includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.' (Home Office 2013).

Honour Based Violence is a crime or incident, which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community'.

This definition is supported by further explanatory text:

"Honour Based Violence" is a fundamental abuse of Human Rights. There is no honour in the commission of murder, rape, kidnap and the many other acts, behaviour and conduct which make up "violence in the name of so-called honour".

It is a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and / or community by breaking their honour code.

Women are predominantly (but not exclusively) the victims of 'so called honour based violence', which is used to assert male power in order to control female autonomy and sexuality. Honour Based Violence can be distinguished from other forms of violence, as it is often committed with some degree of approval and/or collusion from family and/or community members (ACPO & CPS, 2013).

Forced Marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties where duress is a factor. Forced marriage is a violation of human rights and is contrary to UK law (HM Gov, 2000).

A forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both spouses do not (or in the case of some adults with learning or physical disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. (HM Government 2008).

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It has no health benefits and harms girls and women in many ways. It involves removing and damaging healthy and normal female genital tissue, and hence interferes with the natural function of girls' and women's bodies. The practice causes severe pain and has several immediate and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth also causing dangers to the child (HMGov 2014).

Mandatory Reporting Duty: Staff are reminded that Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a serious criminal offence and a form of child abuse.

Where a member of staff knows that FGM has been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 (through disclosure or direct observation), they have a legal duty to report this directly to the police. This must be done as soon as possible and no later than one working day.

All FGM concerns must also be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will provide advice and support and ensure appropriate safeguarding action is taken.

Stalking a pattern of unwanted, fixated and obsessive behaviour which is intrusive and causes fear of violence or serious alarm or distress (Paladin 2018).

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism (HMGov, 2011).

Prevent the Government's countering terrorism strategy is known as CONTEST (2018). Prevent is part of CONTEST. The purpose of Prevent is at its heart to safeguard and support vulnerable people to stop them from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Prevent work also extends to supporting the rehabilitation and disengagement of those already involved in terrorism. Prevent works in a similar way to programmes designed to safeguard people from gangs, drug abuse, and physical and sexual abuse. Success means an enhanced response to tackle the causes of radicalisation, in communities

and online; continued effective support to those who are vulnerable to radicalisation; and disengagement from terrorist activities by those already engaged in or supporters of terrorism.

Prevent objectives

- Tackle the causes of radicalisation and respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism.
- Safeguard and support those most at risk of radicalisation through early intervention, identifying them and offering support.
- Enable those who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.

In addition to the types of abuse and radicalisation outlined above, staff are trained to be aware of the following:

Drugs and Substance Misuse

The misuse of drugs, alcohol or substances can be both a safeguarding concern and a potential indicator of wider harm, including exploitation, neglect or abuse.

The organisation recognises that:

- Substance misuse may increase vulnerability to Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Children affected by substance misuse, whether their own or within their family, may require safeguarding intervention

Youth Produced Sexual Imagery (Sexting)

Youth Produced Sexual Imagery refers to the creation or sharing of sexual images or videos by children under the age of 18.

The organisation recognises that:

- Such incidents are safeguarding concerns
- Children involved may be victims of coercion, exploitation or peer pressure
- The sharing of such imagery can constitute a criminal offence

Staff must:

- Not view, copy, store or forward images
- Report concerns immediately to the DSL
- Follow national guidance on managing incidents sensitively and lawfully

The priority will always be the **safety and welfare of the child**, not disciplinary action.

Child on Child Abuse (Peer-on-Peer Abuse)

Hope Meadows recognises that children can be harmed by other children and that such abuse can occur both online and offline.

This may include:

- Sexual violence or harassment
- Physical abuse
- Bullying or cyberbullying
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Coercive or controlling behaviour

All child-on-child abuse is taken seriously and will be responded to in line with safeguarding procedures. Victims will be supported and alleged perpetrators will also be safeguarded.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) are forms of abuse where children and young people are manipulated, coerced or deceived into criminal or sexual activity.

This may involve:

- Grooming through social media, online platforms or peer groups

- Coercion, threats, violence or debt
- Control over movement, finances, mobile phones or social relationships

Children may not recognise themselves as victims and may appear to be making choices when in fact they are being exploited.

Indicators may include:

- Unexplained money, gifts or possessions
- Changes in behaviour, attendance or peer groups
- Substance misuse
- Increased secrecy or use of multiple mobile phones
- Association with older individuals or gangs

All concerns relating to CCE or CSE must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL will assess risk and make referrals to Children's Social Care, police or other safeguarding partners in line with Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.

Online Safety – See Addendum One

Safer Recruitment including disclosure and barring service

Safer recruitment is designed to protect individuals' welfare where they come in to contact with professionals, including paid staff, students and volunteers. The overall purpose is to help identify and deter or reject individuals who are deemed to be at risk of abusing others. This includes the recruitment process using pre-employment checks to safeguard beneficiaries and Hope Meadows. These checks are embedded at the stages of application, interview, references, identify and corroborate gaps in vocation or employment. Hope Meadows comply with the Independent Safeguarding Authority vetting and barring regulations and ensure that all staff and volunteers engaged in regulated activity are appropriately Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked on engagement and then every three years.

Hope Meadows commitment to safer recruitment practices are ongoing, all staff receive regular supervision and training and have clear expectations regarding professional conduct and boundaries. *To be read alongside the Supervision Policy and Staff Disciplinary Policy.*

Any concerns regarding suitability to work with the Hope Meadows beneficiaries should be reported to the CEO or DSL and will be acted upon without delay.

Allegations Against Adults

Allegations made against staff or volunteers who work with children will be managed in accordance with statutory guidance.

Any concern that an adult has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may harm a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against a child
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk to children

Must be reported immediately to the DSL, who will contact the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** (contact details on the final page of this document) without delay. If the concern is regarding the DSL, staff members can contact the CEO or any of our directors.

Whistleblowing

The organisation is committed to fostering a culture where concerns can be raised safely and professionally.

Staff and volunteers must report concerns where they believe:

- Safeguarding procedures are not being followed
- A colleague's behaviour may pose a risk to children or young people
- Safeguarding concerns are not being taken seriously

Whistleblowing concerns may be raised internally or externally (contact details on the final page of this document) in line with statutory guidance. Staff will not be penalised for raising concerns in good faith.

Information sharing, record keeping and confidentiality

Hope Meadows will ensure that any records made in relation to a disclosure, suspicion or allegation and referral are kept confidentially and in a secure place. Electronic communications such as emails must be sent and stored securely.

The most important consideration is whether sharing information is likely to support the safeguarding and protection of individuals.

Necessary and proportionate

When taking decisions about what information to share, you should consider how much information you need to release. Not sharing more data than is necessary to be of use is a key element of the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018, and you should consider the impact of disclosing information on the information subject and any third parties. Information must be proportionate to the need and level of risk.

Relevant

Only information that is relevant to the purposes should be shared with those who need it. This allows others to do their job effectively and make informed decisions.

Adequate

Information should be adequate for its purpose. Information should be of the right quality to ensure that it can be understood and relied upon.

Accurate

Information should be accurate and up to date and should clearly distinguish between fact and opinion. If the information is historical then this should be explained.

Timely

Information should be shared in a timely fashion to reduce the risk of missed opportunities to offer support and protection to a child or adult. Timeliness is key in emergency situations and it may not be appropriate or practicable to seek consent for information sharing if it could cause delays and therefore

place an individual at increased risk of harm. Practitioners should ensure that sufficient information is shared, as well as consider the urgency with which to share it.

Secure

Wherever possible, information should be shared in an appropriate, secure way. Practitioners must always follow their organisation's policy on security for handling personal information.

Record

"Information sharing decisions should be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share. If the decision is to share, reasons should be cited including what information has been shared and with whom, in line with organisational procedures. If the decision is not to share, it is good practice to record the reasons for this decision and discuss them with the requester. In line with each organisation's own retention policy, the information should not be kept any longer than is necessary. In some rare circumstances, this may be indefinitely, but if this is the case, there should be a review process scheduled at regular intervals to ensure data is not retained where it is unnecessary to do so." Information Sharing HMGovernment 2018.

Communication with Parents and Carers

We recognise the importance of working in partnership with parents and carers to safeguard children.

Parents and carers will normally be informed of safeguarding concerns unless:

- Doing so would place the child at increased risk
- It may compromise a safeguarding investigation
- A statutory agency advises otherwise

Decisions relating to communication will be recorded and reviewed.

For further staff guidance on data sharing for safeguarding see Appendix one.

Safeguarding contacts

Contact the police on 999 in an emergency and 101 non-emergency.

Safeguarding children:

Lincolnshire County Councils Customer Service Centre

☎ 01522 782111 Monday - Friday 8am-6pm.

<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/safeguarding/lscp>

Safeguarding adults

Lincolnshire County Councils Customer Service Centre

☎ 01522 782155

<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/adult-care/safeguarding-adults/>

Non-emergency help and advice for victims of domestic abuse:

EDAN Ending Domestic Abuse Now Lincs (countywide)

☎ 01522 510041 Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm

<https://edanlincs.org.uk/>

LPFT Safeguarding and Public Protection Website

[Safeguarding and public HYPERLINK "https://www.lpft.nhs.uk/contact-us/your-rights/safeguarding-and-public-protection"](https://www.lpft.nhs.uk/contact-us/your-rights/safeguarding-and-public-protection) protection : [HYPERLINK "https://www.lpft.nhs.uk/contact-us/your-rights/safeguarding-and-public-protection"](https://www.lpft.nhs.uk/contact-us/your-rights/safeguarding-and-public-protection): Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Trust (lpft.nhs.uk)

External Whistleblowing Support

If staff or volunteers feel unable to raise safeguarding concerns internally, or believe concerns have not been taken seriously, they may seek independent advice or report concerns externally.

NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line

☎ 0800 028 0285

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'ECWalters', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Signed:

Name: Emily Walters

Position: Founder & CEO

Date: 11th February 2026

Reviewed 10th February 2026

Reviewed 23rd October 2025

Reviewed 4th August 2024

Reviewed 21st August 2023

Reviewed 1st January 2022

Created 1st May 2021

Appendix One: ICO Data Sharing Code of Practice – Safeguarding Appendix

Guidance on Data Sharing for Safeguarding

Purpose

This guidance supports staff to share personal information confidently and lawfully where doing so is necessary to safeguard children. Data protection law is intended to **enable**, not prevent, appropriate information sharing in the public interest. Many of the steps in this Appendix are the remit of the DSL however it is important for all staff to have an awareness of the steps taken to safeguard Hope Meadows beneficiaries.

Key Messages for Staff

- You can and should share information where a person is at risk of harm.
- Consent is **not usually required** for safeguarding.
- Share what is **necessary, relevant and proportionate**.
- If in doubt, seek advice — but **do not delay** sharing in an emergency.
- Always record your decision and reasoning.

When Information Should Be Shared

Information should be shared when it is necessary to:

- Protect a person from abuse or neglect
- Prevent serious harm
- Support safeguarding or child protection processes

What to Share

- Relevant personal data only
- Accurate and up-to-date information
- Enough detail to allow the recipient to act effectively

How to Share

- Use secure email to the DSL.
- Share with the appropriate person (DSL) or organisation only

Alignment with Working Together to Safeguard Children and Multi-Agency Arrangements

In line with Working Together, the organisation recognises that:

- Safeguarding is **everyone's responsibility**
- Early information sharing is critical to identifying and reducing risk
- No single agency can safeguard children alone

Information Sharing and Multi-Agency Working

Consistent with Working Together, staff should:

- Share information proactively with relevant partners where there are safeguarding concerns
- Respond promptly to requests for information from other safeguarding agencies
- Understand that lawful information sharing under data protection law supports statutory safeguarding duties

Decision-Making and Professional Judgement

Working Together emphasises the importance of professional curiosity and judgement. Staff should:

- Use their professional judgement when deciding whether to share information
- Balance the risk of sharing against the risk of **not** sharing

- Escalate concerns where they believe information is not being appropriately shared (See Whistleblowing)

Record Keeping and Accountability

In accordance with Working Together:

- Decisions to share or not share information must be clearly recorded
- Records should reflect the rationale, lawful basis and any exemptions applied
- Good record keeping supports continuity, accountability and effective multi-agency safeguarding

Training and Organisational Responsibilities

The organisation will ensure:

- Staff receive regular safeguarding and data protection training
- Policies support confident and lawful information sharing
- Learning from safeguarding practice reviews is reflected in procedures

This appendix should be read alongside:

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)
- Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership [procedures](#).
- The organisation's safeguarding, data protection policies

Policies and procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure continued alignment with statutory guidance and best practice.

Addendum One

Online Safety – Children, Young People, Staff and Volunteers

Online Safety Policy Statement

Purpose

This Online Safety Policy Statement sets out our commitment to safeguarding children and young people, as well as protecting staff and volunteers, when using the internet, mobile devices, social media and online platforms as part of our activities.

We recognise that digital technologies offer significant benefits for learning, communication and engagement, but also present risks that must be actively managed. Online safety is integral to our wider safeguarding responsibilities.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All children and young people engaged with our organisation
- All staff, volunteers and trustees
- All online activity carried out as part of organisational activities, whether using organisational or personal devices

Our Commitment

We are committed to:

- Keeping children and young people safe from online harm, including abuse, exploitation, bullying and exposure to inappropriate content
- Promoting safe, responsible and respectful online behaviour
- Supporting staff and volunteers to understand online risks and their safeguarding responsibilities
- Responding promptly and appropriately to online safety concerns

Expectations for Children and Young People

Children and young people are expected to:

- Use the internet, mobile phones, social media and online games safely and respectfully
- Protect their personal information and respect the privacy of others
- Treat others online with kindness and respect and not engage in bullying, harassment or harmful behaviour
- Tell a trusted adult if something online makes them feel worried, uncomfortable or unsafe

Expectations for Staff and Volunteers

Staff and volunteers are expected to:

- Model safe, responsible and professional online behaviour at all times
- Maintain appropriate boundaries with children and young people online
- Use organisational systems and accounts appropriately and securely
- Never use personal social media accounts to communicate privately with children or young people
- Report any online safety or safeguarding concerns immediately in line with the Safeguarding policy

Use of Devices and Online Platforms

We expect that:

- Organisational devices and systems are used appropriately and for their intended purpose
- Personal devices used during activities are managed in a way that minimises risk.

- Privacy settings, passwords and security controls are used effectively

Social Media and Online Communication

Hope Meadows will:

- Use social media responsibly and in line with our code of conduct
- Ensure online communication with children and young people is transparent, appropriate and, where possible, open to oversight
- Take action where online behaviour associated with the organisation is unsafe or inappropriate

Managing and Reporting Online Safety Concerns

All concerns relating to online safety, including cyberbullying, inappropriate contact, harmful content or grooming, must be reported to the DSL as soon as possible.

Training and Awareness

We will:

- Provide staff and volunteers with training and guidance on online safety and digital safeguarding, inline with LSCP Six Year Pathway
- Support children and young people to develop the skills and confidence to stay safe online
- Review emerging online risks and update our practice accordingly

This addendum is to be read in conjunction with the GDPR Personal Devices Policy.