



# Safeguarding Children and Young People's Procedure

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## 1. Purpose of Procedure

Safeguarding is concerned with:

- Preventing abuse
- Protecting abused children and
- Making safeguarding personal - a person-centred approach which achieves the outcomes that are in the best interests of the child.

The overall aim of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Procedures is to:

- Ensure the protection from abuse of children and young people with whom Guide Dogs' staff and volunteers and others who come into contact with them through Guide Dogs activities.
- Give appropriate advice to Guide Dogs staff in their dealings with children and young people.
- All children and young people under the age of 18, who receive services from Guide Dogs or otherwise come into contact with Guide Dogs staff and volunteers are deemed to be vulnerable and have the right to be protected from abuse.
- Through their day-to-day contact with children and young people and direct work with families, all staff and volunteers have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect. They have a duty to report actual or suspected abuse.
- Guide Dogs acknowledges that its staff and volunteers are not specialists in recognising where abuse may occur, or has already taken place. However, if abuse is suspected advice should always be sought from the Safeguarding team since all staff and volunteers have a 'duty of care' under the law.

- Ensure that at no point should a member of staff or volunteer engage a child in an activity that might be construed by others as inappropriate or outside of their role.
- This document provides a framework within which all staff and volunteers and those working with Guide Dogs will operate, in their dealings with children and young people and is underpinned by relevant legislation listed in [Appendix 1](#).

## 2. Preventing Abuse

While it is not possible to prevent all abuse, there are a number of steps staff and volunteers can take to reduce the risk of abuse occurring. Staff and volunteers should:

- Know what abuse is.
- Understand how it can happen.
- Be alert to indicators of potential abuse situations.
- Know the procedures for reporting concerns and poor practice.
- Provide appropriate support for the child.
- Maintain a safer working environment.

### Definitions:

A child or young person in need of protection in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, is someone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. Once they turn 18, they are legally an adult.

In Scotland the definition of a 'child' varies. In most situations, a child is someone who is under 18 particularly around a 'child in need' and 'child protection'. (See [Section 21](#) of Scotland's National Guidance for Child Protection 2021 for information relating to children 16 and under).

## 3. Procedure Instructions

### Recognising abuse and harm

- Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights.
- Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts.
- Abuse may be in the form of physical, sexual, emotional, neglect or exploitation.
- Abuse can take a variety of forms including, in person and virtually online, through deprivation of liberty, abuse related to protected characteristics, exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups including; trafficking, extremism leading to radicalisation, cuckooing and county lines.

Staff and volunteers have a duty to report all form of abuse or neglect.

(For detailed **definition** of categories of Abuse - see [Appendix 2](#))

(For detailed **indicators** of Abuse - see [Appendix 3](#))

Children and young people can be abused by anyone with whom they come into contact. Statistically, children are more likely to be abused by someone they know and trust rather than by a stranger. Abuse can also take place in any context. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting.

## **Child protection procedures - Introduction**

All forms of abuse perpetrated by both adults and other children or young people, can have an extremely serious impact on children and young people both at the time the abuse but can last a lifetime. Research suggests, children with behaviour and learning difficulties or a disability are at increased risk of some forms of abuse, i.e. sexual abuse and neglect, when compared with children who are not disabled. This means that many of the children with whom Guide Dogs will come into contact will constitute a highly vulnerable group by virtue of their vision impairment, possibly coupled with other disabilities. It is therefore essential that all staff and volunteers are alert to the indicators of abuse and are confident in their knowledge of how to report abuse. By sharing a concern, the chances of abuse occurring can be radically reduced or prevented; and where abuse has already occurred, the child or young person can be appropriately protected from further abuse.

### **4. Child protection concerns**

A child protection concern may come to your attention in a number of ways including:

- A child or young person may disclose abuse they have experienced. Children tend to tell someone they know and trust. Sometimes children try to tell adults in a variety of indirect ways; in written form, a letter or story or act out the abuse. They may tell you that the abuse is happening to someone else rather than to them. Or give you just a hint to see how you react.
- Another adult or child may disclose or a family member or colleague sharing their concerns with you.

- Children may exhibit some indicators some of the time this should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. There may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour such as a death or crisis in the family or the birth of a child or a medical condition which may explain psychological changes or impaired development, e.g., withdrawn, tired, sensitive, and emotional, learning difficulties. Your knowledge of a child or young person over time may help you to understand whether there is cause for you to be concerned. Careful consideration of all available information is required. Even if the concern is not a child protection matter it may still require some attention or action to promote the welfare of the child or young person. If in any doubt at all about whether or not a child may be the victim of abuse, **always** talk over your concerns with your line manager and report to the Safeguarding Team in Guide Dogs.

## 5. What to do if you have a concern - responding to actual or suspected abuse

(See [Appendix 4](#) Child Protection Concern Flowchart)

When you have any cause for concern that a child or young person may be, is being, or has been in the past, the subject of abuse, **YOU MUST ALWAYS:**

### Recognise

- Take concerns, allegations or disclosures of abuse seriously, however insignificant they may seem.

### Respond

- **Act without delay;** the child or young person, or other children or young people may be at risk. If you think that the child or young person may be in danger you should immediately locate your most appropriate line manager or The Safeguarding Team in Guide Dogs or in the partner agency, to report your concern. If the child is at immediate risk call 999 and ask for the appropriate service, Police/ Ambulance.
- Give absolute priority to the child or young person's health and safety.
- Respond to the child or young person calmly and with reassurance, so as not to frighten or cause concern.
- **Listen carefully** to what the child tells you. Avoid interrupting and keep questions to an absolute minimum - you are **NOT** investigating. Questioning a child can contaminate evidence and make it impossible for the police to take the action they might need to take in order to protect the child in the longer term or compromise an investigation.
- Do not make assumptions or jump to conclusions either by overreacting or underestimating the extent of concern or danger for the child or young person. Carefully consider all the available information with an open mind.

- **Never promise confidentiality to a child. Explain** that you are not allowed to keep information about a child at risk of harm to yourself. Explain that you may have to tell certain people to help the child and to make sure that they are safe. If possible, keep the child informed about what actions you are taking. (For further information around confidentiality refer to the Safeguarding Children Code of Conduct)

Record

- Make a written record as soon as possible (but not in front of the child)

Report

- As soon as possible (but by the end of the same working day at the latest), you must make a written record of your concerns submitted via [Report a Safeguarding concern](#) or contacting the Safeguarding Team on 03451430199 or email [Safeguarding@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:Safeguarding@guidedogs.org.uk). You may also be required to complete the partner agencies child protection documentation (please refer to their procedures) This must be done whether or not the concern is reported to the Children's Services and/or the Police. Once your referral has been reported via Guide Dogs safeguarding reporting tool you will receive a reference number which you must place on the young person's critical information pages on GDI to confirm that a Safeguarding referral has been submitted. The Safeguarding Team for Guide Dogs will separately and securely store all records of the concern and liaise with HR / Volunteering regarding any staff members or volunteers involved in allegations.

N.B. Write your report as factually as possible. This means writing information that can be substantiated in fact. You may include your opinion, but this must always be based on fact. For example, 'Jilly was sobbing and shaking and it seemed to me that she was distressed' rather than 'Jilly seemed upset'. Remember that your record may be used as evidence in court. Do not delay reporting the concern, in order to record the concern. Recording can be completed after reporting the concern.

## **6. Allegations Against Members of Staff and Volunteers**

An allegation may be made against a member of staff or volunteer by a child, young person parent/carer, member of the public or by another member of staff or volunteer. Closely adhering to the Safeguarding Code of Conduct will minimise the chances of a member of staff having an allegation made against them. However, it is impossible to eliminate the risk of such allegations altogether.

[Low Level Concerns](#) and [Whistleblowing](#) are the mechanisms by which staff and volunteers can voice their concerns about another member of an organisation, in good faith, without the fear of repercussion. All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to bring matters of concern about a colleague's conduct to the attention of the appropriate senior manager, usually your line manager. This is particularly important when the welfare of a child may be at risk.

Where the concern, allegation or disclosure is against the person to whom you report, then you must report your concern **immediately** to the Safeguarding Team.

Failure to follow procedure to report a concern will be investigated and may lead to disciplinary action.

### **You / your line manager (Guide Dogs) has a duty to:**

Fact find and collate the information and assess the situation, you must not carry out an investigation or make the decision in isolation, this should always be carried out with The Safeguarding Team.

**Immediately contact the Safeguarding Team in Guide Dogs on 03451430199** and, where appropriate, your line manager in the partner agency and agree whether a referral should be made to Children's Services at the local authority and / or the police.

If the situation is deemed not to meet the threshold for a criminal offence the decision may be taken to carry out an internal investigation only (which must be conducted promptly, with full records being kept).

However, where there is still cause for concern, Guide Dogs and/or partner agency must report this to the appropriate Children's Services department / Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) and / or the police. These agencies are specifically charged with undertaking statutory duties relating to children at risk of abuse, including investigations. A reported concern may simply result in advice being given to the person against whom the allegation has been made; or it may go further depending on the context and evidence being offered. All staff must cooperate fully with any subsequent investigation.

It may be necessary to suspend a member of staff or volunteer from duty, if allegations of abuse have been made against them. If this decision is taken, suspension should be actioned promptly to ensure that risk of further abuse is

minimised and any opportunity to interfere with evidence is minimised. The decision to suspend should be made in consultation with the People Services Team / Volunteering and Safeguarding and in line with the Guide Dogs Disciplinary Policy and Procedures for either Staff or Volunteers. Suspension is a neutral act and may be necessary to undertake an investigation to determine if the person against whom the allegation has been made is, in fact, a risk.

The Guide Dogs Safeguarding Team will maintain a register of concerns detailing all concerns raised and actions taken. Do not record sensitive information on the child's electronic record of GDI. Information should only be available to those on a need-to-know basis. You will receive an automated Safeguarding Reference number once you have logged your concern via the Pawtal, this reference number must be placed on the child's GDI critical information page under Safeguarding.

Care must be taken to ensure that records and personal details are maintained in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Where an adult discloses their own or another's childhood abuse, they should be sensitively encouraged to talk to, and to seek advice from, an appropriate agency. The perpetrator of the abuse may still have access to children, and it is possible that an historical investigation could be undertaken. The adult that was abused may need appropriate support to understand the potential seriousness of the matter. However, adults are not compelled to report the abuse they experienced.

Failure to comply with the Safeguarding Policy and related procedures will be investigated and may lead to disciplinary action

## **Related Policies or Processes**

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Policy

Safeguarding Children and Young People Codes of Conduct

Safeguarding Key Principles

Safeguarding Prevent Policy

Recruitment Policy

Whistle Blowing Policy

Low Level Concerns Procedure

All documents are available from the Knowledge Hub.

## Permissible exceptions

None identified at this time

## Governance Review & Approval Table:

The table below contains two rows and five columns.

	H&S	Protection of Children & Adults	Insurance	Legal
Date Reviewed	N/A	March 2022 March 2023	N/A	N/A

## Version control table:

The table below contains three rows and four columns. (Only the original approval date and the most recent amendment should be included in the table.)

Date	Version	Status	Details of Change
Jan 2020	9.0	Approved	Kathryn Ward - Director of People and Performance
05/10/20	9.1	Updated	Transferred to new template.
17/03/22	9.2	Updated	Updated links - Chris Roach
29/03/23	9.3	Updated	Updated Language Purpose of procedure 'activities outside of role.' allegations procedure, Appendix 1- Definitions of abuse, Animal and Human abuse and Online safety and abuse updated



# APPENDIX 1

## **Legislation and Guidance that underpins the Guide Dogs Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Code of Conduct: See Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Policy**

The following policies, procedures and processes are in place to help safeguard children and young people and Guide Dogs' employees and volunteers:

- Staff/volunteers selection, recruitment and induction policies
- My Contribution process, Supervision and 1-1's for staff
- Safeguarding Training and development
- Communication and reporting systems, Salesforce including Safeguarding and GDI Database and Fetch
- Disciplinary and grievance procedures staff and volunteers
- Public Interest Disclosure policy
- Complaints policy
- Business Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Codes of Conduct
- Equal Opportunities policy
- Appropriate Health and Safety procedures within Guide Dogs and any other agencies in which Guide Dogs' activities are undertaken.

## APPENDIX 2

### Definitions of Abuse

Children may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their day-to-day lives. These threats can take a variety of different forms, including: sexual, physical and emotional abuse; neglect; exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Whatever the form of abuse or neglect, practitioners should put the needs of children first when determining what action to take.

The following definitions are based on those from Working Together to Safeguard Children (Department of Health, Home Office, Department for Education and Employment, 2018) (National Assembly for Wales 2000); Co-operating to Safeguard Children Guidance 2017 (Act 2002) (Northern Ireland); National Child Protection Guidance Scotland Guidance 2021 (Act 2014).

#### Physical Abuse

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.

#### Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment 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 as far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

## Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual on-line images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

## Neglect

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 as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born it may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, 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.

## Other sources of Stress for Children and Young People

Research has shown that children can be significantly affected by other factors such as domestic violence, parental drug or alcohol misuse or parental mental illness. These sources of stress may have a negative impact on a child's health and development because they affect the parent's capacity to respond to a child's needs. It is important that Guide Dogs staff and volunteers recognise if these factors are affecting a child or young person adversely and take similar steps for the other described forms of abuse.

## Bullying

All staff should be familiar with appropriate Guide Dogs policies.

Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves.

Bullying can include:

- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, etc. Verbal name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing.
- Disabled children may be more vulnerable.
- Emotional tormenting, ridicule, humiliation and continual ignoring of individuals. Racial taunts, graffiti and gestures.
- Sexual abusive comments and unwanted physical contact.

Guide Dogs staff/volunteers should identify, deter and report any form of bullying behaviour.

## Exploitation

This can include any of the other forms of abuse, where a young person is taken advantage of, this can be by adults or other children.

It can also include using a child to carry out criminal activities including ‘**County Lines**’ where children carry drugs and other stolen goods/ money from one location to another often by train, coach or bus so that criminals avoid being identified. Also includes:

**Human Trafficking** and **Modern Slavery** where children are moved across borders, Country and County for exploitation see all of the above categories which can apply.

## Online abuse

Digital safeguarding refers to the policies, procedures and practices relating to digital and online spaces and how we interact with others. The same safeguarding principles apply to Guide Dogs’ activities, whether these take place digitally or in-person. However, there are specific considerations to take into account with online initiatives, as digital technology has brought about new safeguarding issues. For example, perpetrators of exploitation, abuse and harassment can hide behind fake photos and profiles, and the online disinhibition effect leads to the rise of trolling and cyberbullying. Images, videos and texts can be sent easily to large groups of people, and once images or data have been shared digitally, it is almost impossible to delete or recall them. Digital safeguarding simply means taking the necessary steps to stay safe online.

The following risks should be taken into account when considering digital safeguarding, these fall into three categories; Content Risk, Contact Risk and Conduct Risk:

- Content Risk - Risks that are produced as a result of the material that people can access online. People may be exposed to this content actively or

passively, and it may produce a harmful effect. Content may be illegal to possess or share e.g., sexually exploitative images of children or radicalising videos. Inappropriate and offensive content is more subjective, and includes political information; commercial adverts or spam; violent, extremist or hateful material; sexually exploitative or sexual material; and content which is discriminatory based on someone's race, ethnicity, nationality, class, socioeconomic status, age, sex and gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, religion, language or other status.

- Contact Risk - Risks that are produced as a result of others' online behaviour when the digital and physical worlds are drawn together. Individuals may have information about them shared or may be engaged in ways which lead to harmful consequences. The types of behaviour which people may experience include:
  - Non-contact sexual abuse and exploitation - including grooming, flashing, being persuaded to perform sexual acts online, and being exposed to sexually exploitative images or videos.
  - Distribution of private and sexual images, e.g. the distribution of sexually exploitative images or videos without an individual's permission.
  - Harvesting, tracking and illegal sharing and possession of information - including having personal data collected, processed or shared without the individual's consent or on another unlawful basis.
  - Increased exposure to cybersecurity risks, e.g. by having malicious content shared such as ransomware, apps or other active content or malicious code.
  - Bullying and trolling which could lead to physical contact, threats or violence.
  - Friend requests or private/direct messaging.
- Conduct Risk - Risks that are produced as a result of people's own online behaviour, which may put themselves and others at risk. People may download something illegally, bully, harass or exploit others, unintentionally reveal their location, create and upload sexual material or sext (send someone sexually explicit photographs or messages via mobile phone). This may also include online activism or breaking confidentiality of closed spaces by reposting, sharing, downloading or in other ways transmitting information that leads to harassment, exploitation, or other harm in another setting.

Digital safeguarding means protecting everyone at Guide Dogs from online harms like:

- Creeping - Persistently checking up on someone on social media. Creepers hide from you by not inviting, commenting, or responding on Facebook and other social media platforms.
- Cyberstalking - Repeatedly using electronic communications to harass or frighten someone. For example, by sending threatening messages.
- Doxing or Identity Theft - Takes place when someone gets hold of personal information about you - such as your real name, address, job, other personally identifiable data and posts it on the internet without your consent.
- Discrimination - Abuse on the grounds of protected characteristics - It can be an offence to stir up hatred - 'inciting hatred' - on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics.
- Disinformation - Deliberate intent to spread wrong information.
- Hacking - Accessing or using computer systems or networks without authorisation, often by exploiting weaknesses in security.
- Harmful online challenges - Online challenges sometimes show people doing dangerous things. People share these posts on social media, encouraging others to do the same.
- Hoaxes - A lie designed to seem truthful.
- Impersonation or 'catfishing' - Where someone pretends to be someone else online. This is often by taking photos from social media to build a fake profile.
- Misinformation - Where someone shares information they think is correct, but it isn't.
- Online bullying - Offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting behaviour and abuse of power online. This can humiliate or denigrate people.
- Online harassment - Unwanted contact online intended to violate someone's dignity. It could be hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive.
- Online Scams - Scams are happening more and more through the internet and email. You're more likely to fall victim to fraud or cyber offences above any other crime. These could include phishing emails, fake websites and other ways to get your money.
- Promotion of self-harm, suicide and eating disorders - Content encouraging these harmful behaviours on social media.
- Promotion of violent behaviour - Recording of an assault for the purpose of widely sharing the recording.
- Radicalisation - Radicalisation aims to inspire new recruits, embed extreme views and persuade vulnerable people to support a cause. This may be through a direct relationship, or through online gaming and social media.

- Sexual exploitation and grooming online - Developing a relationship with a child with the intention of abusing them. Offenders use emotional and psychological tricks to build relationships. The abuse can take place online or offline.
- Sharing of illegal and inappropriate imagery - ‘Illegal’ means child sexual abuse imagery and imagery that incites violence, hate or terrorism. ‘Inappropriate’ could mean sharing pornography, or violent or hateful content.
- Trolling - Intentionally upsetting, shocking or winding up selected individuals or groups of people.
- Oversharing personal information - This includes information that makes someone identifiable, like their name or phone number. It may also include identifying details based on someone’s protected characteristics.

## The Links Between Animal and Human Abuse

**When animals are abused, people are at risk; when people are abused, animals are at risk**

The NSPCC and RSPCA have recognised links between cruelty to animals, domestic violence and child abuse. These different forms of abuse have been often thought of as unconnected and they are frequently dealt with separately through disconnected agencies and reporting channels. However organisations across the world continue to research these links and raise awareness. It is important to understand the links so that professionals can intervene as early as possible to detect and/or prevent abuse to children, vulnerable adults and/or animals.

[The Links Group](#) (UK) states: Abuse of people includes child abuse, domestic abuse and abuse of vulnerable adults/ older people. There is robust evidence that animals can also be abused in households where people are being abused.

The NSPCC lists three categories of animal abuse as follows:

- Physical Abuse: includes kicking, punching, throwing, burning, microwaving, drowning, asphyxiation or giving the animal drugs or poisons. Animal welfare professionals need to be alert to the possibility of non-accidental injuries (NAIs) in the same way that child protection professionals need to be.
- Sexual Abuse: is defined as any use of an animal for sexual gratification
- Neglect: is linked to the Five Welfare Needs and a failure to provide adequate food & water, a suitable environment, opportunities for natural behaviour, companionship, and/or veterinary attention when necessary.

In many abusive situations, perpetrators threaten the above actions to coerce and control adult and child victims, to instil a sense of fear and make victims feel trapped.

“It was a form of control, a threat of violence; ‘I can do this to the dog, I can do this to the cat. You’d better toe the line or you will be next.’”

Neglect of an animal may also be present alongside self-neglect in adults, which is another complex area of safeguarding.

At Guide Dogs we have seen other related safeguarding issues:

- Sighted perpetrators of domestic abuse making people with VI feel incompetent and incapable, which can include being critical about their care or handling of their guide dog; or controlling when the dog can be worked.
- Guide dog owners using (or intending to use) a dog to meet and influence vulnerable adults or children in order to have inappropriate contact with them, for example grooming them to enable sexual abuse.

It is important, therefore, that at Guide Dogs’ staff and volunteers are observant about the care and treatment of all animals within the household, including guide dogs/ buddy dogs as part of their work with service users, whatever role they may work within.

## Reporting Concerns

Guide Dogs staff and volunteers **must always** report concerns about the abuse/neglect of animals by adults or by children without delay by contacting your most immediate manager or Safeguarding. Unfortunately, exemplary treatment of animals does not necessarily indicate that children or vulnerable adults will necessarily be well cared for or mean that an adult is not neglecting themselves. Adequate treatment of animals, including guide dogs, should not therefore be seen as an indication that no risk exists.

The Safeguarding team will support all aspects of the situation and be able to advise on resources for people and sometimes animals, for example specialist pet fostering services.

Refs:

The Links Group (2023) - Suspected Abuse of Animals and People: Guidance for the veterinary team - [The Links Group](#) [The Links Group](#)



Lockwood, R. & Arkow, P. (2016) Animal Abuse & Interpersonal Violence: The Cruelty Connection and its Implications for Veterinary pathology - [Animal Abuse and Interpersonal Violence \(sagepub.com\)](#)

Wakeham, M (2021) Animal Abuse as a Strategy of Coercive Control - University of Bristol [Animal Abuse as a Strategy of Coercive Control — University of Bristol](#)

## **The Prevent Strategy** - Section 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act

2015 places a duty on Local Authorities to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism” and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support; Guide Dogs staff who come into contact with children need to be familiar with Prevent and know what to do in the event that they have concerns where a child may be at risk, share information and seek guidance from Safeguarding and their relevant local authority. All staff working with children must complete the mandatory Prevent training online learning programme and advice to be sought from the Safeguarding Team regarding any concerns.

## **DOLs - Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards** 16- and 17-year-olds

Where there are concerns that a young person aged 16-17 appears to have their liberty compromised, Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights protects the right to liberty and security of that person. No person - of any age - shall be deprived of their liberty unless (a) it is justified on a ground specified in Article 5, such as being of “unsound mind”, and (b) it is done in accordance with an Article 5-compliant legal procedure. If a care regime, which amounts to a deprivation of liberty, is not justified and/or not authorised by a legal procedure, there is a human rights violation.

## **Article 5 of the Human Rights Act**

How deprivations of liberty must be authorised.

1. Under 16s who are confined and unable to consent: parents can give valid consent if that is an appropriate exercise of parental responsibility.
2. Those of any age under an interim/final care order who are confined and unable to consent: Article 5 safeguards are required.
- 3 17-year-olds who are confined and lack capacity to consent: Article 5 safeguards are required.

4. Those under 18 who are able to make the relevant decision and object to their confinement: Article 5 safeguards are required.

A referral to a Local Authority would be justified if it is felt that a child's liberty was being compromised.

## APPENDIX 3

### Indicators of Abuse - Recognising Child Abuse

Recognising child abuse is not easy, and it is not your responsibility to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place or if a child is at significant risk. You do, however, have a responsibility to report any concerns you may have appropriately in accordance with these procedures.

The following information is not designed to turn you into an expert but it will help you to be more alert to the signs of possible abuse.

#### Physical abuse

Most children will sustain cuts and bruises in their daily life. These are likely to be in places where there are bony parts of their body, like elbows, knees and shins and will result from them exploring their environment. The pattern of accidental injuries is usually random, e.g. a scratch here and a bump there.

Some children, however, will have bruising which can almost only have been caused non-accidentally. An important indicator of physical abuse is where bruises or injuries are unexplained or the explanation does not fit the injury, or when it appears on parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e.g. on the cheeks or thighs. The injuries may be more uniform as is the case with linear bruising where the outline of an implement used to beat the child may be visible. A delay in seeking medical treatment when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern.

Bruising may be more or less noticeable on children with different skin tones or from different racial groups and specialist advice may need to be taken.

#### The physical signs of abuse may include:

- unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body particularly if they are recurrent
- refusal to discuss injuries / Improbable explanations for injuries
- bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching), cigarette burns, bite marks, broken bones, scalds.

#### Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse:

- fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- bullying

- flinching when approached or touched
- reluctance to get changed, for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Depression
- over-compliant behaviour or a watchful attitude
- withdrawn behaviour
- running away from home
- significant changes in behaviour without explanation
- unexplained pattern of absence which may serve to hide bruises or other physical injuries

## **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse can be difficult to determine often children who appear well cared for may be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. Parents/carers may over-rely on their child for emotional support to such an extent that the child becomes burdened with adult problems. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix/play with other children.

### **The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:**

- a failure to thrive or grow, particularly if the child puts on weight in other circumstances, e.g. in hospital or away from their parents' care
- sudden speech disorders
- developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress

### **Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:**

- continual self-deprecation
- inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- habitual, self-comforting behaviour, e.g. hair twisting, rocking
- Air of detachment - 'don't care' attitude
- Does not join in/ has few friends
- Desperate attention-seeking behaviour
- Depression/withdrawal
- being unable to play
- fear of making mistakes
- self harm
- fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour

## Sexual abuse

Adults who use children to meet their own sexual needs can abuse both girls and boys of all ages, including infants and toddlers.

Usually, in cases of sexual abuse it is the child's behaviour which may cause you to become concerned, although physical signs can also be present. Less frequently, the child or young person will tell you about the abuse. Children who talk about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously.

### The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Bruises, scratches, burns or bite marks on the body
- injury to the genital/anal area
- scratches, abrasions or persistent infections in the genital/anal area
- sexually transmitted disease
- frequent, obsessive public masturbation
- wetting/soiling
- stomach pains
- discomfort when walking or sitting down
- pregnancy

### Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour, e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn, tearful or anxious
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people having nightmares
- running away from home
- sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level
- sexual drawings or language
- attempts to teach other children about sexual activity
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- self harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- substance or drug abuse
- suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults

## Neglect

Neglect can be a difficult form of abuse to recognise, yet it can result in some of the most lasting and damaging effects on children.

### The physical signs of neglect may include:

- constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- constantly dirty or 'smelly'
- loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
- inappropriate dress for the conditions

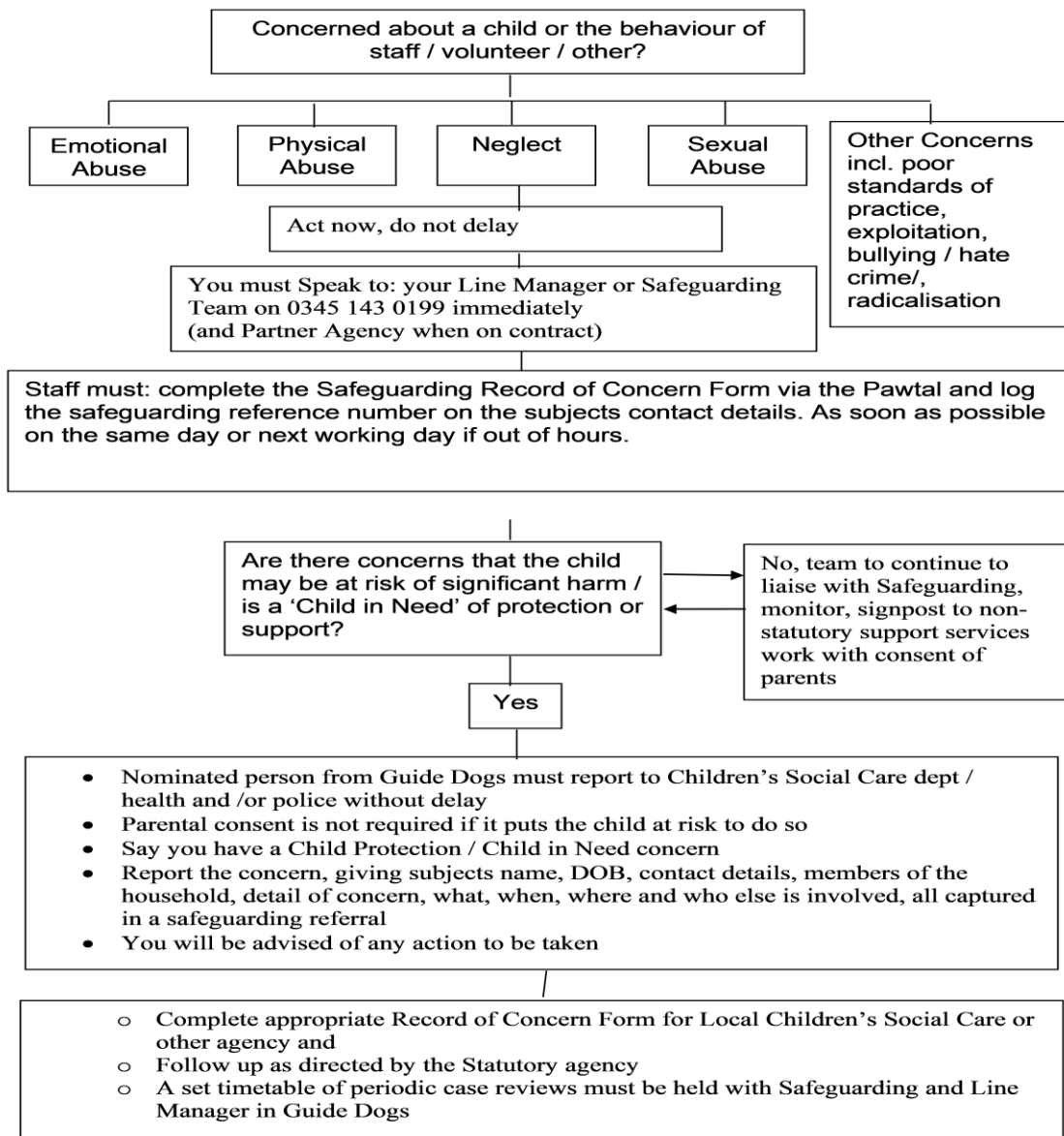
### Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect may include:

- complaining of being tired all the time
- not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- low self-esteem
- having few friends
- mentioning their being left alone or unsupervised

The above lists are not meant to be definitive but rather a **guide** to assist you. It is important to remember that many children and young people will exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and the presence of one or more **should not be taken as proof** that abuse is occurring.

There may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour, such as a death or the birth of a new baby in their family, relationship problems between their parents/carers etc. Any concern about a child which does not have a clear explanation should be discussed further with the Safeguarding Team or/ and the partner organisation to determine what intervention may be called for.

# Appendix 4 - Child Protection Concern Flowchart



## Text version of flowchart:

Step 1. Concerned about a child or the behaviour of staff/volunteer/other (could be emotional abuse, physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse or other concerns including poor standards of practice, exploitation, bullying/hate crime/radicalisation).

Step 2. act now, do not delay.

Step 3. You must speak to your Line Manager or Safeguarding Team on 01345 143 0199 immediately (and Partner Agency when on contract).

Step 4. Staff must: complete the Safeguarding Report a Concern Form via the Pawtal and log the safeguarding reference number on the subject's contact details. As soon as possible on the same day or next working day if out of hours.

Step 5. Are there concerns that the child may be at risk of significant harm/is a "Child in Need" of protection or support?

If No, go to Step 6.

If Yes, go to Step 7.

Step 6. Team to continue to liaise with Safeguarding, monitor, signpost to non-statutory support services work with consent of parents. Return to Step 5.

Step 7. Complete the following list.

- Nominated person from Guide Dogs must report to Children's Social Care department/health and/or police without delay.
- Parental consent is not required if it puts the child at risk to do so.
- Say you have a Child Protection/Child in Need concern.
- Report the concern, giving subjects name, date of birth, contact details, members of the household, detail of concern, what, when, where and who else is involved, all captured in a safeguarding referral.
- You will be advised of any action to be taken.

Step 8. Complete the following list.

- Complete appropriate Record of Concern for Local Children's Social Care or other agency and
- Follow up as directed by the Statutory agency
- A set timetable of periodic case reviews must be held with Safeguarding and Line Manger in Guide Dogs.



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