

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy V2.4

Contents page

Item	Page number
Introduction & Policy Statement	2
Organisation and Responsibilities	3
Online Safeguarding Statement	5
Safer recruitment & safer working	7
Good practice - Safeguarding Guidelines for working with children	7
Guidance on physical contact	8
Social Media	8
Photography	9
Safeguarding during NCO residencies/courses	9
Responding to safeguarding concerns	10
Information and contact details for safeguarding leads	12
Safeguarding reporting	13
Training	15
Working with Partner Agencies	15
Confidential information, data protection & retaining records	16
APPENDIX A - Definitions of abuse	18
APPENDIX B - Recognising signs of abuse	21
APPENDIX C - Radicalisation and Extremism	27
APPENDIX D - Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) & NSPCC contact details	28
APPENDIX E - NCO safeguarding reporting form	29
APPENDIX F - Useful contacts	32

Introduction

The National Children's Orchestras of Great Britain (NCO) is a charity established to advance the education and training of children and young people in music and orchestral performance. NCO exists to:

- provide a world class foundation in orchestral performance and musicianship to musically talented children in the UK aged between 7 and 14 years.
- ensure that children with potential have an opportunity to access the training NCO provides, irrespective of financial means, background, or disadvantage.

NCO's core activity is the operation of residential orchestral courses and concerts for three national age banded orchestras. These are held at designated educational establishments during school holidays. NCO also runs non-residential activities that take place in different locations across the year.

This policy has been written by NCO's Safeguarding Lead and adheres to all current government law and guidance on safeguarding children, including The Children Act 1989 and 2004, *'Working Together to Safeguard Children'* 2018 (updated February 2024), The Human Rights Act 1998, *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'* 2025, and the DFE Guidance *'After-school, community activities and tuition: safeguarding guidance for providers'*.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the NCO Board of Trustees and Chief Executive. Copies and subsequent amendments will be made available to all employees, staff members, and volunteers. The success of this policy depends on the active support of all paid staff, including employees, staff working on short-term contracts, permanent contractors, and volunteers, including Trustees, in order to achieve its objectives.

NCO recognises the need for a well-defined policy setting out the standards it aims to achieve for safeguarding the children within its care. This Safeguarding Policy clearly outlines the organisation's responsibilities in the context of safeguarding, as well as more detailed responsibilities of key employees and staff.

Policy Statement

NCO believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience harm or abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children by a commitment to practice that protects them.

NCO recognises that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religious belief, or lack thereof, sexual orientation or identity have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Working in partnership with children, their parents/carers and other agencies is essential in promoting children's welfare.

- All NCO employees, staff and volunteers, including Trustees, are carefully selected and trained and accept responsibility for safeguarding the children they come into contact with.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Provide protection for the children who participate in NCO activities.
- Provide employees, staff, and volunteers with clear guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child has experienced, may be experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing, harm.

This policy is mandatory for anybody working for or on behalf of NCO; it applies to all paid employees as well as staff working on short-term contracts, permanent contractors, and volunteers including Trustees. The policy must be applied whenever there is a concern about a child or young person or about the behaviour of an adult.

NCO will endeavour to safeguard children by:

- Valuing them, listening to them, and respecting them.
- Adopting robust procedures and a code of conduct for employees, staff, and volunteers.
- Conducting thorough recruitment and selection processes including necessary safety checks in respect of references, declarations, and DBS checks.
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice appropriately with stakeholders.
- Reporting, to Social Services or the Local Authority Designated Officer, any suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering, or is at risk of suffering, harm, or abuse.

Providing effective management for employees, staff and volunteers through supervision, support, and training, including guidance on what to do if an individual is worried about a child or young person.

Organisation and Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees

The Charity Commission is clear that it is the Board of Trustees that have primary responsibility for safeguarding in their charity. In fulfilling their duty of care to NCO, Trustees need to take steps to safeguard and take responsibility for the children and young people with whom NCO works. This means:

- Acting in their best interests.
- Taking all reasonable steps to prevent any harm to them.
- Assessing and managing risk.
- Ensuring safeguarding policies and procedures are in place.
- Taking a lead in the ongoing monitoring and reviewing of processes to ensure that the safeguarding measures being implemented are effective.
- Responding appropriately to allegations of abuse.

Safeguarding is a standing item at every NCO quarterly Board meeting. This covers all serious safeguarding incidents that have been reported since the last meeting. Serious incidents are:

- Any referrals to external agencies including LADO, Children's Services, DBS, and Prevent
- Any significant matters relating to child behaviour which have resulted in children being removed from NCO activities.

The Trustees with responsibility for safeguarding are also responsible for informing the Charity Commission of any serious incidents, as above.

Chief Executive

The CE is responsible for:

- The implementation, maintenance, monitoring, and review of this policy, across NCO.
- Leading by example in actively promoting safeguarding practices.
- Keeping up to date with current safeguarding legislation.

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) [Head of Safeguarding and Support]

The DSO is also responsible for:

- Responding in a timely manner to any allegations of abuse.
- Keeping written records in line with NCO's Data Protection and Privacy Policy.
- Referring cases to Social Services, as necessary.
- Ensuring that the appropriate levels of safeguarding training are conducted throughout all areas of the organisation.
- Attending any meetings relating to safeguarding with external agencies.
- Keeping up to date with current safeguarding legislation.
- Responding to positive enhanced DBS checks.
- Reporting any high-level safeguarding concerns to the Trustees.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) [Support Manager]

The DSL is responsible for:

- Managing safeguarding incidents during NCO courses and reporting to the DSO.
- Ensuring course delivery staff (including music tutors, conductors, and support staff) have signed a declaration stating they have read and will adhere to this policy.
- Documenting all safeguarding concerns and reporting them to the DSO
- Supporting the DSO with relevant paperwork.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) [Assistant Support Manager]

The DDSL is responsible for:

- Supporting the DSL on all safeguarding matters during NCO courses.
- Covering the DSL's duties when necessary.

Managers [Office based and Delivery]

Managers are the key to the success of this policy. They are accountable for the safeguarding standards within their area of control. Specifically, they are responsible for:

- Ensuring the Safeguarding Policy is communicated and implemented within their team.
- Making sure they and their staff understand the safeguarding arrangements within NCO.
- Informing, instructing, and supervising employees and staff members
- Ensuring all incidents relating to safeguarding are reported to a Designated Safeguarding Officer.

All Employees and staff members

All employees and staff members are responsible for:

- Making sure they understand the part they play in relation to safeguarding children at NCO.
- Co-operating with managers in following the safeguarding arrangements set out in this policy.
- Reporting any concerns or suspicions of abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- Reporting any concerns about the behaviour or actions of any members of staff (full time, or part time employees, freelance staff, or volunteers) towards the children NCO work with.

online safeguarding statement

NCO believes that no child taking part in NCO activities should ever experience abuse of any kind, including when they are online. Children should be able to use the internet to assist their personal development and access the NCO online programme as part of their membership; however, NCO also realises that safeguards need to be in place to ensure children are kept safe at all times when they are online. NCO will follow the Online Safety Act 2023 and inform Ofcom of any harmful online material reported by NCO staff, parents, or members.

NCO appreciates that there are different risks attached to delivering musical education online rather than in person. NCO has a duty of care to all children it works with to protect them and keep them safe from harm when they use an online platform to take part in its work. NCO also has a duty of care to its employees and staff members to keep them safe when they are delivering work online.

NCO investigates and reviews the suitability of all online applications/channels it uses to keep in touch with musicians and deliver musical education, prior to these applications/channels being used. This highlights the potential risks and enables NCO to put in place any necessary measures to limit risk and keep everyone safe when they are taking part in NCO activity online.

NCO will keep children safe online by:

- Providing parents/carers and children with clear information in their Member Handbook about safeguarding online and making sure children are set up on different online apps safely.
- At the point of signing up for membership, children and their parents/carers will agree to the NCO behaviour agreement, which includes expectations for behaviour on online platforms and/or at online events.

- Ensuring that usernames, logins, online session invitations, and passwords are used effectively.
- Ensuring that the settings for each online video/audio call will reduce risk of uninvited people joining the private/closed session.
- Developing an online safety agreement to use with children, parents/carers and NCO employees and staff members that will work to create and maintain clear boundaries.
- Implementing a clear guide/code of conduct for NCO employees and staff members specifically around delivering programmes online.
- Ensuring there are specific pastoral staff on each online session to keep track of who is online and manage behaviour while tutors/other team members focus on teaching.
- Developing clear and robust procedures to enable NCO to respond appropriately to any incidents of inappropriate online behaviour, whether by an adult or a child/young person.
- Reviewing and updating NCO's online security regularly.
- Ensuring personal information about the adults and children who are involved in the organisation is held securely and shared only as appropriate (For more information about this see NCO's Data Protection and Privacy Policy).
- Providing supervision, support and training for employees, staff, and volunteers about online safety, where appropriate.

NCO will examine and risk assess any further social media platform, online communication application, or new technology it intends to use before it uses it. If any online abuse occurs, NCO will respond to it by:

- Having clear and robust safeguarding procedures in place for responding to abuse (including online abuse).
- Providing support and appropriate training for all employees and staff members dealing with any forms of abuse, including bullying/cyberbullying, emotional abuse, 'sexting,' sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.
- Making sure NCO's response to online concerns takes into account the needs of the person experiencing abuse as well as those who may have witnessed or been affected by it.
- The monitoring and evaluation of NCO's online procedures, including regular timetabled reviews to ensure an on-going, robust approach to online safeguarding.

Please refer to NCO's Social Media Policy, IT Policy, and Phones Policy and the NCO Member Behaviour Agreement for further information details about online safeguarding for children who are members of NCO.

General Arrangements for Implementing the Safeguarding Policy

Safer Recruitment

Safeguarding the children who NCO have contact with is considered at all times, including at the recruitment stage. All new employees, staff, volunteers including Trustees are required to attend an interview and provide references, as detailed in NCO's Safer Recruitment Policy.

An enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is undertaken with every employee, member of staff including freelancers, or volunteer or who will be involved in regulated activity.

All Trustees are required to hold an enhanced DBS check.

A basic DBS check will be required for all other employees, staff members including freelancers, or volunteers. Checks will be repeated every three years.

During the interview stage, all candidates wishing to work directly with children or young people will be required to outline their understanding of safeguarding and how it is relevant to the role they are applying for.

Safer Working

All employees, staff members, and volunteers, including Trustees, working for NCO have a responsibility to safeguard the welfare of the children with which they are working. In order to achieve this, all employees and staff members are required to follow NCO's staff code of conduct, which can be found in employee /staff contracts and handbooks.

Good Practice Safeguarding Guidelines for working with children

In order to effectively safeguard the children NCO works with, all employees and staff members must ensure they adhere to NCO's good practice safeguarding guidelines for working with children:

- Plan activities so that they involve more than one employee, member of staff, volunteer, or other relevant accompanying adult (e.g. Music Tutor).
- When meeting with a child or young person ensure that this takes place as publicly as possible. If privacy is needed, the door should be left partly open and other employees / staff members or volunteers should be informed of the meeting.
- Do not exaggerate or trivialise safeguarding issues.
- Respect a person's right to privacy.
- Do not let allegations made by a child or young person go without being addressed and recorded (using NCO's Safeguarding Incident Report Form, see appendix E).
- Do not deter anyone from making allegations through fear of not being believed.
- Do not engage in, or permit, abusive behaviour between children or young people e.g. ridiculing or bullying.
- Do not engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games with a child or young person.

- Do not make suggestive remarks or gestures or tell jokes of a sexually inappropriate or discriminatory nature to, or in front of, children or young people.
- Do not show favouritism to any individual.
- Do not allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour, such as tantrums or crushes. Deal with such behaviour firmly and fairly and if you are unsure how to deal with this please consult the DSO.
- Do not give a child or young person your personal contact details or social media information and do not communicate with them outside of the work you are doing with them.

Physical Contact

Employees, staff members and volunteers should not have unnecessary physical contact with a child.

NCO recognises that there may be occasions when physical contact is unavoidable or necessary for safety or educational reasons, for example:

- Providing reassurance for a distressed person.
- Administering first aid.
- When teaching a child how to hold a bow or instrument correctly.
- When working with a person with a disability who requests such assistance.
- Lifeguarding.

Wherever possible NCO employees and staff members should ask the person to agree to such contact and make every effort to explain their actions. This should be conducted openly and ideally with another employee, member of staff, or volunteer present. Employees / staff members should be aware of their positioning so that, where possible, others can clearly see the assistance being given. Employees, staff members, and volunteers should avoid doing things of a personal nature that the child / children are capable of doing themselves. However, when working with people with disabilities, personal care support is sometimes required. In these cases, there will be a personal care plan created.

Note: Employees / staff must not restrain young people unless they have received the specialist training required to do so.

Social Media

The Internet can be accessed through various devices including mobile phones, computers, tablets, and game consoles. Although the Internet has many positive uses, it is the most common way indecent images of children are distributed. Furthermore, social networking sites, chat rooms and instant messaging platforms are increasingly used by online predators to “groom” children. Social media and messaging applications are being used more and more by children and young people as a means of bullying their peers and distributing inappropriate images. In order to safeguard NCO employees, staff members, and the children NCO works with, the good practice outlined in NCO’s Social Media Guidelines (for employees/staff members) and in the NCO Member Behaviour Agreement (for members and their parents/carers) must be followed.

Photography

Photos of young people taking part in NCO programmes and activities are an excellent way of communicating and promoting the work it does, but when personal information is added to photographs, these images can be used to identify children and put their safety and privacy at risk. Photographs can also be adapted for inappropriate use. To manage the risks associated with photographing children and young people, all employees/staff members must comply with NCO's rules around photography:

- Employees /staff members are not permitted to take photographs of children or young people on their personal phones or devices e.g. tablets or cameras.
- if employees /staff members, volunteers, or parents witness anyone taking photos of children at an NCO event on their personal phones, this must be reported to the DSO or Safeguarding Lead on the residential as soon as possible.
- NCO will ensure that they collect media consent which are digitally authorised by children's parents/carers, before they are photographed/involved in a video recording, detailing the potential uses of the images e.g. in publicity or advertising.
- NCO has a central file where all images of children are stored to ensure GDPR compliance.
- NCO will hire professional photographers from time to time. This person will undergo a DBS check as they will have access to the images of children on their electronic devices post-courses.

Safeguarding during NCO activities (residential and non-residential)

NCO employees / staff members who are responsible for organising residential activities for children must follow the strict procedures outlined below. By following safeguarding best practices NCO can protect children participating in its music programmes:

- Adults should not share a bedroom with a child or young person, however, in very rare situations, a parent/carer may need to share a room in order to care for a child e.g. if they are disabled.
- Support Team members and NCO Nurses should not enter the bedroom of a child without the company of another worker if the child is alone,. In emergencies, where this has to happen, the employee / staff member should prop open the door so people can see into the room.
- Bedrooms of only two young people should be avoided where possible.
- Bedrooms must not be mixed male and female.
- Children or young people who identify as Transgender, Non-Binary or Gender Fluid will require a care plan in terms of bedroom allocation and use of bathrooms. They should have their own room and have use of shower facilities that allow for privacy.
- Adults and young people must use separate shower facilities.
- Designated Safeguarding Leads are to be on duty throughout the night in case of any emergencies. The DSLs will share between them an emergency phone that they can be contacted on day or night during courses.

- Support staff are on hand day and night to support and safeguard the children in NCO's care.
- All instrument groups will have their own Support Team worker that will check on them throughout the day.
- Children will have regular breaks from musical activity so they can relax, wind down, and make new friends through taking part in social activities (you can read more about this in NCO's Health and Wellbeing Policy).
- Employees / staff members that are not members of the Support Team will, where possible, be accommodated in different accommodation blocks.
- There is a nurse on hand day or night to provide medical treatment and support for children who are unwell. NCO nurses are qualified nurses with enhanced DBS checks.
- At the start of an NCO activity parents/carers will be required to register their child at the sign in desk which will be managed by the NCO Support Team. At the end of the event/course the parents/carers are required to sign their child out using the same sign in/out desk. This process ensures that children are picked up and taken home safely by the appropriate people.

Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

NCO employees, staff members, or volunteers may become concerned about a child or young person in a number of ways:

- A child or young person may disclose that they or someone else has been, is being, or is at risk of being, abused.
- There may be concerns due to the child's behaviour or presentation.
- Concerns may be raised about the behaviour of an adult, who may be an employee / member of staff, a volunteer, another professional or a member of the public.
- A parent, carer, relative or member of the public might share their concerns about a child or young person with NCO.

In all cases, the following procedures must be followed. When a child or young person wants to confide in you:

- Stay calm and listen carefully to them.
- Tell them you take what they are saying seriously.
- Encourage the child or young person to talk.
- Do not interrupt whilst they are recalling events.
- Ask questions only to clarify your understanding of what you are being told.
- Do not investigate or ask leading questions (this is the job of the police or Social Services).
- Do not ask them to repeat their account.
- Do not promise to keep the information secret. Explain that you have a duty to pass the information on to those who can help.
- Tell the child or young person what you are going to do next.
- Do not confront any alleged abuser.

- As soon as you can, write down what the young person has said, ensuring that you use the child's own words (be careful not to include your personal views).
- Avoid making notes in front of the child, however, if they are saying a lot and you are conscious you might forget some key things ask the child or young person if it is okay for you make some notes while they speak.
- Report to your Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately or as soon as you can, and definitely before the end of the day (see next section for details of DSO).

Please note: Reporting a child or young person's disclosure of abuse is not a betrayal of their confidence. It is your duty, and it is a necessary procedure to allow protective action to be taken.

If you sense that a child or young person may be going to tell you about abuse, but then stops speaking or changes the subject, let them know that you are always ready to listen to them and remind them of the Childline number: 0800 1111.

If the child or young person has communication difficulties or English is not their first language, pass this information on so that an appropriate interpreter can be identified.

If you become concerned about a child or young person due to their behaviour, presentation or for any other reason:

- Do not trivialise or dismiss your concerns.
- If the child's or young person's behaviour is potentially sexually harmful to others, you must not seek justification for this e.g. 'it's just kids exploring their sexuality.'
- Report your concerns to your DSO as soon as you can, and definitely before the end of the working day (see next section for details of NCO Safeguarding Leads).

Information that may seem trivial can frequently form the missing piece of the puzzle and lead to protective action being taken. Children and young people who display sexually harmful behaviour need to have an assessment of their needs, including possible need for protection.

If you become concerned about the behaviour of an adult:

- Do not dismiss your concerns.
- Do not confront the person you have concerns about.
- Report your concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as you can. (see next section for details of NCO Safeguarding Leads).

It is vital that employees and staff members do not ignore or dismiss suspicions about another professional or colleague, regardless of the position they hold in the organisation or how well you know them. If your concerns are about a DSL or your DSO, speak to the Trustee responsible for Safeguarding. If your concerns are about the Trustee responsible for Safeguarding, then you should speak to either the DSO or your Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

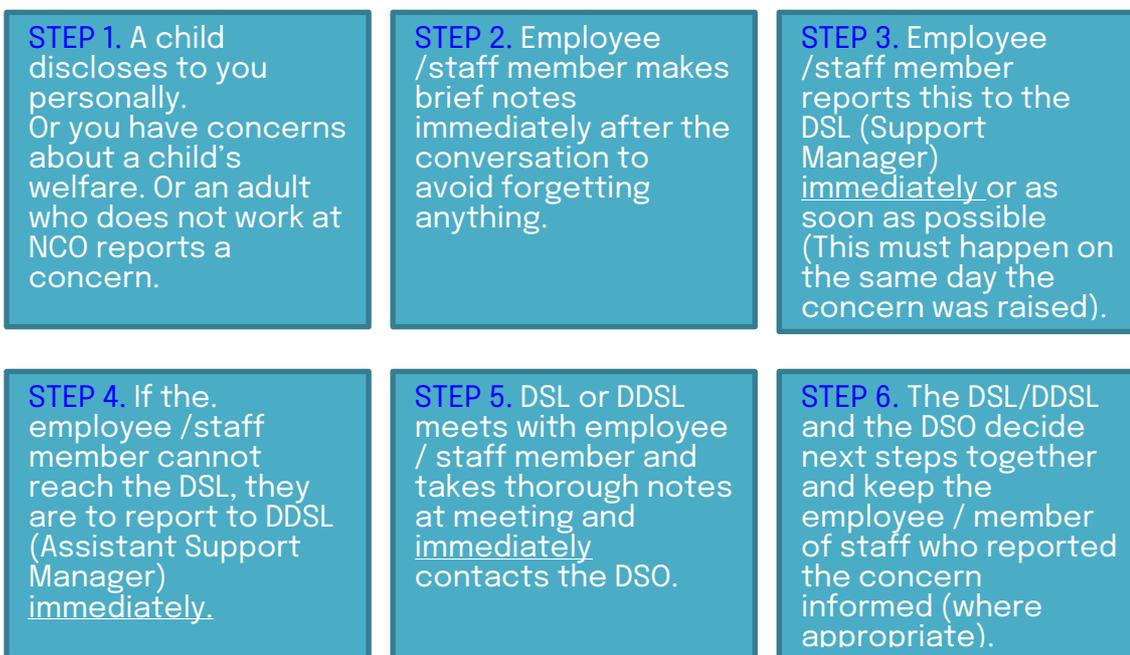
Your concerns will be taken in confidence and even if, after investigation, they are found to be mistaken, there will be no adverse consequences for raising the concern. The only exception to this is where it can be shown conclusively that the concerns were raised maliciously.

If a parent, carer, or other member of the public tells you of their concerns about a child, young person, or the behaviour of an adult at NCO:

- Do not leave it to them to make a referral to Social Services. You should report to the DSO immediately.
- Take adequate details about their concern and the identity of the child or young person involved.
- Report concerns to your DSO as soon as you can, and definitely before the end of the day (see next section for details of NCO safeguarding leads).

Concerns raised by members of the public should always be taken seriously and where necessary NCO should take responsibility to make a referral to Social Services. If you are dissatisfied with the response to any of your concerns, raise these again with your DSO. If you are unable or reluctant to do this, you can approach the Trustees responsible for Safeguarding Letty Stott and Alison Mears.

Internal reporting flow chart:



Designated Safeguarding officer (DSO)

NCO’s Designated Safeguarding Officer will be the Head of Safeguarding and Support and the Chief Executive. They will complete all training required in the DFE Guidance ‘*After-school, community activities and tuition: safeguarding guidance for providers.*’

If employees or staff members have any safeguarding concerns, they must raise these with the DSO and not with any outside agency. If the employee /staff member’s concern relates to the DSO, they should report their concern to the Trustee responsible for Safeguarding.

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL)

When delivering NCO events and courses the organisation appoints a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL). These team members have undertaken or will undertake Level 3 Safeguarding Training and are responsible for safeguarding children when they are in NCO’s care. The DSL will ensure all employees and staff on the course

adhere to this policy. If the DSL becomes unwell, is very busy, or has a day off the DDSL will take over. If a safeguarding concern is raised or a child makes a disclosure, the DSL and DDSL will contact the DSO immediately to seek relevant advice/guidance.

Trustee responsible for Safeguarding.

Their role is to support the Designated Safeguarding Officer if any serious safeguarding concerns occur. They also play a key role in updating the organisation's safeguarding policy on an annual basis. The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for approving amendments or changes to the policy.

NCO Safeguarding Leads contact details

Designated Safeguarding Officer - (Sophie Lewis, CEO)
Email: s.lewis@nco.org.uk

Siobainn Chaplin (Head of Safeguarding and Support)
Email: s.chaplin@nco.org.uk

Trustee responsible for Safeguarding. - Letty Stott
Email: c/o b.mackenzie@nco.org.uk

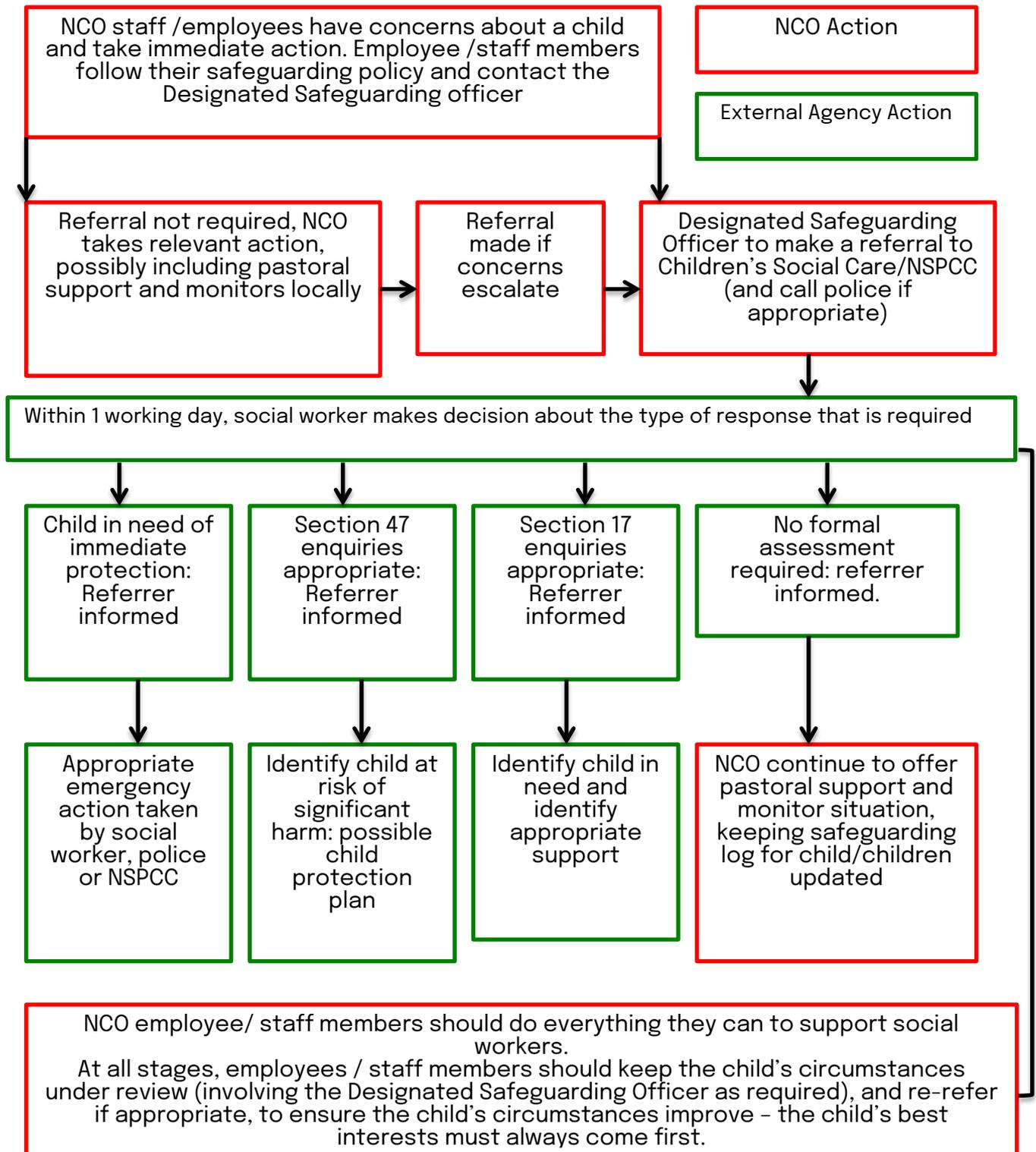
Trustee responsible for Safeguarding. - Alison Mears
Email c/o b.mackenzie@nco.org.uk

Process for reporting externally to Social Services

It is important for NCO employees / staff members to understand the process of how concerns are reported externally and what role Social Services play in protecting children after NCO has reported concerns. See flow chart below.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will follow the guidelines outlined in their job description. They may be required to discuss concerns with a DSO in a partner organisation, and they may be required to report to an outside agency.

Flow chart for actions where there are concerns about a child:



Jargon Key:

Section 17 – this means that Children’s Social Care will conduct something called a ‘Child in need’ assessment (CIN). This assessment will identify the needs of the child and ensure that the family are given the appropriate support in enabling them to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

Section 47 – this means that Children’s Social Care must carry out an investigation because they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Training

All NCO employees, staff, and volunteers including Trustees will undertake the appropriate level of safeguarding training:

- **DSO** – Advanced Level 3 Safeguarding Training.
- **DSL and DDSL** – Advanced Level 3 Safeguarding Training.
- **Safeguarding Trustees** – Level 3 Safeguarding Training
- **Nursing and freelance support staff** – internal level 1 training (delivered by Head of Safeguarding and support)
- **NCO employees / staff members working directly with children** – internal level 1 training (delivered by Head of Safeguarding and Support)

Employees and staff are required to attend or undertake the appropriate training course before they work with children.

Volunteers will receive safeguarding training relevant to the position in which they are volunteering.

Working with Partner Agencies

NCO often works in partnership with other external agencies such as boarding schools, specialist music schools, and music education hubs. It is vital that there is clarity in relation to safeguarding when two or more parties work in partnership. Appropriate procedures and responsibilities must be agreed in advance. In all circumstances, NCO will remain alert to indications that a child may be at risk or is suffering abuse, and concerns will be reported to the agreed designated person.

Concerns about the behaviour of an employee, a member of staff or a volunteer

These procedures should be used in respect of all cases where it is alleged that a person working with children and young people has:

- Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child or young person.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or young person.
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children or young people.

Concerns of this kind may be connected to the person's employment or voluntary activity with NCO or the way they present outside of their work setting.

It is important to resolve these cases as quickly as possible, consistent with a fair and thorough investigation. All allegations must be investigated as a priority to avoid any delay. The time taken to investigate and resolve individual cases depends on a variety of factors including the nature, seriousness, and complexity of the allegation.

There may be up to three strands in the consideration of an allegation:

- Police investigation of a possible criminal offence.
- Enquiries and assessment by Social Services about whether a child or young person is in need of protection or support services.
- Consideration by an employer or regulatory body of action in respect of the individual.

If there is an immediate risk, appropriate action may need to be taken by the employee or member of staff, e.g., urgent involvement of police; suspension of employee / member of staff and removal from NCO premises; securing evidence; urgent medical attention.

Allegations and concerns should be reported immediately to the DSO. Once the allegation/concern has been reported to the DSO, they will then follow the procedures outlined in their job description.

If an allegation is made against someone from another organisation, this should be reported to the DSO as soon as possible.

Confidential information, data protection & retaining records

All children, young people, and their families are entitled to their privacy. However, where there are concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or young person, those concerns will need to be shared with the key decision makers along with relevant personal information about the person at risk. There is no legislation that prohibits the sharing of confidential and personal information where there are concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or young person, or where a criminal act may be, or may have been committed.

If a concern, allegation, or disclosure is made, NCO employees/ staff members should make written notes at the earliest opportunity, and these should be passed to the DSL or DSO. The DSO must type up all written notes relating to a safeguarding issue and store on Sharepoint. Original handwritten notes must be shredded as soon as possible. During residential hard copy paperwork should be locked in a lockable document folder. After the course, this paperwork will then be sent to the DSO at head office, where it will either be kept in a secure filing cabinet (medical info) or uploaded to Sharepoint (safeguarding). Electronic documents relating to safeguarding are saved on NCO's Sharepoint in a restricted folder that can only be accessed by identified employees/ members of staff.

All safeguarding records should be kept until NCO is confident that the information is held accurately with the authoritative agency responsible for taking further safeguarding action i.e., partner agencies such as Social Services or the police. A chronology of decisions made, and actions taken by NCO employees/ staff can be kept on file once the detailed records are

deleted or destroyed. Records should be kept for 25 years from the child's date of birth. More information about safeguarding records can be found in the government document '*Working Together to Safeguard Children*' 2018.

If a concern is raised about an NCO employee, staff member, or volunteer that relates to behaviour that has harmed, or may have harmed a child or young person, possibly committed a criminal offence against a child or young person or behaved in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children and young people then:

- The Head of Safeguarding and Support and Chief Executive must be informed.
- The Designated Person receiving the information must follow the procedures outlined in their job description and Safeguarding Lead guidance document.
- A clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made, details of how the allegations were followed up and resolved, and of any action taken and decisions reached, will be recorded.
- A record will be kept in the person's confidential personnel file, and a copy should be given to the individual if appropriate.
- Such information will be retained on file, including for people who leave the organisation, at least until the person reaches normal retirement age, or for ten years if that is longer.

NCO has a duty to refer to the DBS any employees, staff members, or volunteers who have been dismissed, redeployed, retired/redundant or resigned where NCO believe that this person has either:

- Engaged in conduct that breaches safeguarding practice.
- Satisfied the harm test.
- Received a caution for, or been convicted of, a relevant offence.

The Chief Executive is responsible for making this referral to DBS and for informing the Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding.

The Trustee responsible for Safeguarding is responsible for notifying the Charity Commission of any serious incidents relating to safeguarding in line with the Charity Commission's Reporting Serious Incidents Policy.

Appendix A:

Definitions of abuse

“Child abuse” is a term used to describe the ill treatment of children including serious physical and sexual assaults as well as cases where the standard of care does not adequately support the child’s health or developmental needs. Children could experience abuse over a period of time, or it can be a ‘one-off’ incident. Abuse can be physical, sexual, or emotional and could happen in person or online, it can occur in a family or an institutional or community setting. The perpetrator may or may not be known to the child. *Working Together to Safeguard Children* 2018 sets out definitions and examples of the four main categories of abuse:

- **Physical abuse**
- **Emotional abuse**
- **Sexual abuse**
- **Neglect**

These categories can overlap, and an abused child frequently suffers more than one type of abuse.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is where physical harm occurs to a child, it may involve poking, pushing, hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, or suffocating a child. It may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child. It can also include “fabricated” or “induced” illness where a parent or carer simulates the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health in a child.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing, enticing, or tricking a child or young person into taking part in a sex act. It can include penetrative and non-penetrative acts and can happen in person or online. Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or taking part in the production of pornographic materials, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. It is important to note that sometimes the child or young person being abused may not be aware that what is happening to them is deemed to be abuse. The term sexual abuse includes the abuse of children through sexual exploitation.

There are two types of sexual abuse, contact abuse and non-contact abuse.

Contact abuse is where a child or young person is forced or manipulated into taking part in a physical sex act. It can include touching, kissing and oral sex. Sexual abuse is not just penetrative.

Examples of contact abuse:

- Sexual touching of any part of a child’s body, whether they are clothed or not.
- Using a body part or object to rape or penetrate a child.
- Forcing a child to take part in sexual activities.

- Making a child undress or touch someone else.

Non- contact abuse is where a child is abused sexually without being physically touched by the abuser. This can be done online or in person.

Examples of non-contact abuse:

- Exposing or flashing genital areas.
- Showing a child pornography.
- Exposing a child to sexual acts.
- Making a child masturbate.
- Forcing a child to make, view or share child abuse images or videos.
- Making, viewing, or distributing child abuse images or videos.
- Forcing a child to take part in sexual activities or conversations online or through a smartphone.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It is sometimes referred to as psychological abuse. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare, isolate, humiliate, or ignore a child. This sort of abuse affects the emotional development of a child and can lead to the child having poor mental health and no self-worth. Emotional abuse is the most common type of abuse as it often occurs at the same time as other types of ill-treatment, for example children who experience sexual or physical abuse will often experience emotional abuse too.

Emotional abuse can involve:

- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capacity, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.
- Serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger - e.g. witnessing domestic violence.
- Exploitation or corruption of children.

Neglect

Neglect involves a 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 and development. This may involve failure to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failure to protect them from physical harm or danger or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations and relationships where a young person or group of children or young people are given something (e.g., food, accommodation, money, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, or gifts) in return for taking part in sexual activities. Violence, coercion, and intimidation are common in cases of CSE, and many perpetrators target vulnerable young people. This vulnerability is often due to economic or personal circumstances that leave young people with few choices. Children and young people are exploited in many ways:

- Through inappropriate relationships in which the perpetrator has more power or control than the victim (e.g. They are stronger, older, or wealthier.)
- Through the older adult exploitation, often referred to as the 'boyfriend' model. This involves the offender befriending and grooming the victim, tricking them into believing that their relationship is a positive and loving one.
- Trafficking – this is where the child/young person is passed through criminal networks between towns and cities and forced or coerced into sexual activity with multiple people. (Young people are often used to recruit other children/young people)
- Through their peers, this is often referred to as sexual bullying. This form of CSE can happen very quickly without a grooming process. Incidents may be filmed on mobile phones and circulated. Perpetrators will use the sensitive material to bribe and coerce young people into exploitative situations.
- Through gang exploitation, this means that children or young people may be sexually exploited as part of a gang initiation or as a punishment.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)

HSB is developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour that is displayed by children and young people. It is often referred to as 'sexualised behaviour.' Abuse can be carried out by children and young people on their peers; this sort of abuse should be taken seriously. Often children who abuse other children have been/or are currently being abused themselves. The behaviour should not be dismissed as "normal." A referral to Social Services should always be made.

Organised Abuse

This is a form of sexual abuse where there is more than a single abuser and the adults concerned act collectively to abuse children. Another example is where an adult uses an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for sexual abuse.

Abuse of Trust

All employees, members of staff, and volunteers at NCO have a relationship of trust with the children who attend its events and courses. It is an abuse of that trust and could be a criminal offence to engage in any sexual activity with a child aged under 18, or a vulnerable young person under the age of 25, irrespective of the age of consent and even if the relationship is consensual.

Appendix B:

Recognising the signs of abuse

Recognising abuse is a complex and complicated procedure and it is not the responsibility of NCO employees or staff members to decide whether a child or young person has been abused or is at risk. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns and report them to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, who, in turn, will report to Social Services or the NSPCC. The following information is designed as a guide to help raise awareness of the different signs of abuse.

Physical Abuse indicators

Most children collect accidental injuries and bruises from time to time, and bruises caused in this way are likely to be on the external bony parts of the body such as the knees, shins, elbows, and forehead. Most children who have developed language skills will be able to describe how an injury was caused. Any injury should be considered in the context of the child's history and developmental stage, and any explanation given. The following circumstances are possible indicators of physical abuse and should trigger concerns for staff:

- Delay in the presentation of the injury.
- An injury that is not consistent with the explanation given.
- Changing or differing accounts of how the injury occurred.
- An unexplained injury.
- Child is unwilling to offer an explanation for their injury/injuries.

Physical signs	Emotional / behavioural signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bruising to soft tissue areas e.g. face, upper arms, buttocks, genitalia, and ears.• Fingertip bruising anywhere on body especially neck, shoulders, and thighs.• Burns/scalds, especially cigarette burns.• Human bite marks.• Multiple bruising in clusters or of a uniform shape.• Bruises that carry an imprint e.g. a hand, a foot, or a cord.• Damage to child's mouth.• Fractures.• Scalds where the child appears to have been "dipped" in too hot water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wary / frightened of adult contact / parents.• Sudden changes in behaviour.• Anxious, clingy, depressed, withdrawn, aggressive.• Refusal to discuss injuries/fear of medical help.• Wears cover up clothing or make up.• Reluctance to change clothes - e.g. in changing rooms.• Flinching when approached or touched.• Crying / difficult to comfort• Afraid to go home.• Poor peer relationships.• Panics in response to pain.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swelling and lack of normal use of limbs. • Serious injury with lack of / inconsistent explanation. • Untreated injuries. • Multiple burns on unusual areas of the body such as back, shoulders or buttocks. 	
---	--

Emotional abuse indicators

This form of abuse almost always accompanies other forms of abuse. It includes persistent criticism, denigration, rejection, and scapegoating. It has an important impact on a child’s mental health, behaviour, and self-esteem. The following are possible indicators of emotional abuse:

Indicators of emotional abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of parents/carers being contacted. • Reluctant to go home after a course or event. • Fear of new situations. • Finds it hard to make friends or maintain friendships. • Extremes of passivity or aggression. • Physical, mental, and emotional lags. • Low self-esteem and lack of confidence – describes themselves in very negative ways such as “I am stupid, naughty, hopeless or ugly.” • Timid / withdrawn or seen as a ‘loner.’ • Indications that the child is constantly criticised or put down. • Child living in environment of domestic abuse, alcohol, or substance misuse. • Abnormal attachment between a child and parent/carer, e.g. anxious, indiscriminate or no attachment. • Parent/carer shows a persistently negative attitude towards the child. • Child struggles to engage in normal social activity and conversation with their peers and adults. • A child who runs away from home. • A child living in an environment of domestic abuse, alcohol, or substance misuse. • Child may show evidence of mental health issues such as depression, self-harm or eating disorders, or may have behavioural or educational difficulties.

sexual abuse indicators

There are some indicators for sexual abuse, but in many cases, this form of abuse is well hidden. Often the only way to identify signs of sexual abuse is through noticing changes in a child's behaviour or the way they interact with others, the problem is that behavioural changes may be attributable to many things unrelated to sexual abuse. This makes sexual abuse very difficult to identify.

Knowing the signs of sexual abuse helps give a voice to children. Often the children will not understand that what is happening to them is wrong and they might be scared to speak out about it. Some of the signs to look out for include:

Physical signs	Emotional/ behavioural signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stained or bloody underclothing. • Bruising or bites to buttocks, breasts, abdomen, thighs, genital area, neck, upper arms, or hips. • Sexually transmitted infections. • Unexpected pregnancy especially in very young girls. • Unexplained recurrent urinary tract infections, discharges, or abdominal pain. • Injuries, pain or itching in genital area, anus, or mouth. • Self-harm marks/scars. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual knowledge or sexualised behaviour inappropriate for age. • Sexually explicit play, continual open masturbation, or aggressive sex play with peers (as distinct from normal sexual curiosity). • Extreme use of sexually explicit language and or detailed descriptions of sex acts. • Hinting at sexual activity. • Drawings of sexual activities. • Sudden changes in personality. • Avoiding being alone with or frightened of people they know. • Running away or regular absences from home or school (particularly in the case of organised abuse). • Lack of concentration, restlessness. • Socially withdrawn. • Poor trust in significant adults. • Regressive behaviour, onset of wetting - day or night. • Suicide attempts, self-harm/mutilation, self-disgust. • Eating disorders, hysteria attacks. • Substance Misuse.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) indicators

Sexual exploitation can be very difficult to identify. Warning signs can sometimes be mistaken for 'normal' teenage behaviour. Children and young people who are being sexually exploited may show some of the following signs.

Indicators for CSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are involved in abusive relationships and are intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations.• Hanging out with groups of older people, or antisocial groups, or with other vulnerable peers.• Suddenly have lots of new expensive things such as smart phones, trainers, clothes, make up or jewellery.• Get involved in gangs, gang fights, or gang membership.• Associate with other young people involved in sexual exploitation.• Have older boyfriends or girlfriends (often over 5 years+ older).• Spend time at places of concern, such as hotels or known brothels.• Do not know where they are, because they have been moved around the country (trafficked).• Go missing from home, care, or education.• Staying out late and not explaining where they have been/lying about where they have been.• Going out and not coming back for days or weeks at a time.• Get picked up in different cars outside school or their home.• Substance misuse.• Secretive behaviour, especially when talking on the phone or texting.• Losing touch with their closest friends.• Having big 'fallings out' with their parents/carers.

Neglect

Neglect is a pattern, not an event, so it is important to consider the standard of care the child receives over time rather than on one particular day. A pattern of neglect may be overlooked if each individual event is considered in isolation. The following may be indicators of neglect:

Indicators for Neglect
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exposure to danger, for example cold (inappropriate clothing for the weather) or starvation.• Failure to attend to the child's medical needs and refusal of appropriate treatment.

- Repeated failure to attend to the physical and developmental needs of the child, to provide warmth, appropriate clothing, food, and consistent care.
- The child is always dirty and/or hungry.
- The child is left at home alone or with inappropriate carers.
- The child is regularly not collected from activities they attend.
- The child has responsibility for activity that is not age appropriate such as cooking, ironing, acting as a full-time carer for siblings or their parents/carers.
- Frequent accidental bruising or injuries as a result of poor adult supervision.
- Eating disorders, including stealing and/or hoarding food.
- Failure to attend routine medical appointments.

Children with disabilities

NCO is wholly committed to upholding the rights of children and young people with disabilities who use its services and particularly their right to be free from violence, abuse or neglect by their parents/carers or any professional who looks after them. Research suggests that children and young people with disabilities are more vulnerable to neglect, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse than a non-disabled child. The level of risk may be raised by:

- A need for practical assistance in daily living, including intimate care from what may be a number of carers.
- Carers and staff lacking the ability to communicate adequately with the child.
- A lack of continuity in care leading to an increased risk that behavioural changes may go unnoticed.
- Communication or learning difficulties preventing disclosure.
- Physical dependency resulting in reduction in ability to be able to resist abuse.
- An increased likelihood that the child is socially isolated.
- Lack of access to “keep safe” strategies available to others.
- Parent’s/carer’s own needs and ways of coping conflicts with the needs of the child.

In addition to the indicators of abuse and neglect listed above, the following indicators must also be considered in relation to disabled children:

- Force feeding, or impatience in feeding leading to under feeding/under nourishment.
- Unjustified or excessive physical restraint.
- Rough handling.
- Extreme behaviour modification, including the deprivation of liquid, medication, food, clothing, or social contact.
- Misuse of medication, sedation, heavy tranquillisers.
- Invasive procedures against a child’s will.
- Deliberate failure to follow medically recommended regimes.

- Misapplication of care programmes or regimes.
- Ill-fitting equipment (e.g. callipers, sleep board causing injury or pain, inappropriate splinting).
- Undignified or culturally inappropriate intimate care practices.

It is also important to note that some sex offenders may target children and young people with disabilities in the belief they are less likely to be detected.

Institutional Abuse

Children and young people with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to this kind of abuse where practices and behaviours by staff in organisations have become institutionalised or commonly accepted practice. However, those behaviours may cause significant harm (as above) and may be an abuse of the child's rights. Examples of the latter could be:

- Where a child's communication board does not accompany the child everywhere.
- Staff who assume a child's wishes or communication and speak for them.
- Staff who do not facilitate a child's own communication because of the difficulty or time it takes.
- Attributing difficult or challenging behaviour to the child's condition rather than identifying it as communication.

All employees, staff members and volunteers within NCO must be alert to signs of institutional abuse, unprofessional practices and behaviour and raise their concerns as per the procedures outlined above.

Appendix C – Radicalisation and Extremism

There are a number of organisations around the world that are considered to hold extremist views and the inherent dangers of involvement with some of these groups requires specific vigilance in terms of child protection. Children and vulnerable people can be exposed to different views and receive information from various sources, some of these views may be considered radical and extreme and can put them at risk. Safeguarding children and vulnerable people from radicalisation and extremism is no different from safeguarding them from other forms of harm.

Radicalisation – ‘the process by which a person comes to support or be involved in terrorism or extremist ideologies. It can result in a person becoming drawn into terrorism and this is in itself a form of harm.

Extremism – vocal or active opposition to British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect tolerance of different faith and beliefs. It also includes calls for the death of members in the armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

‘Challenging and tackling terrorism in the UK needs to be a shared effort’ (HM Government, 2013). The government has given some organisations a duty to identify vulnerable children and young people and prevent them from being drawn into terrorism.

There is no single way of identifying a young person who is likely to be susceptible to terrorist ideologies. As part of wider safeguarding responsibilities employees and staff members will be alert to:

- Disclosures by young people of their exposure to the extremist actions, views, or materials of others, especially where the young person has not actively sought these out.
- Graffiti symbols, writing or artwork promoting extremist messages or images.
- Young people accessing extremist material online, including through social networking site.
- Distributing extremist literature and documentation.
- Young people voicing opinions drawn from extremist ideologies and narratives.
- Changes in behaviour that could indicate that they are in need of help or protection.
- Use of extremist or ‘hate’ terms to exclude others or incite violence.
- Intolerance of difference, whether secular or religious or views based on, but not exclusive to, gender, disability, homophobia, race, or culture.
- Attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others.
- Anti-Western or Anti-British views.
- Use of extremist language.

If an employee or member of staff has a concern that a child or young person is at risk of being radicalised this should be reported to the DSO in the same way as any other safeguarding concern. The DSO will make their assessment of the situation and report concerns to the NSPCC and/or the police anti-terrorism team.

To report suspicious activity online (in relation to radicalisation) go to

<https://act.campaign.gov.uk>

Appendix D

Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)

If a safeguarding concern arises or an allegation is made it should be reported to a LSCB by the organisations DSO. The LSCB that should be contacted is the one closest to the child's home address.

If NCO requires advice or guidance, they can contact their local LSCB or the NSPCC.

Bristol Safeguarding Children Board

Tel: 0117 903 6444

Out-of-hours number: 01454 615 165 (out of hours and weekends)

NSPCC

Tel: 0808 800 5000

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Web: www.nspcc.org.uk

Appendix E

What should I do?

Child Protection Incident Form

This form should be completed as fully as possible and as soon as possible after a concern is raised with you by a child. The information on this form should be passed to the DSL or DSO as soon as practicable.

Your name	
Your position	
Child's name	
Child's address	
Parents / Carers name and address	
Child's date of birth	
Date and time of incident	
Your observations	
Exactly what the child said and what you said (record actual details. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)	

Action taken so far:	
External agencies contacted (date and time)	
<p>Police</p> <p>Yes/No</p>	<p>If yes - which?</p> <p>Name and contact number:</p> <p>Details of advice received:</p>
<p>Social Services</p> <p>Yes/No</p>	<p>If yes - which?</p> <p>Name and contact number:</p> <p>Details of advice received:</p>
<p>Local authority</p>	<p>If yes - which?</p> <p>Name and contact number:</p> <p>Details of advice received:</p>
<p>Other e.g., NSPCC</p>	<p>If yes - which?</p> <p>Name and contact number:</p> <p>Details of advice received:</p>

<p>Signature</p> <p>Print name</p> <p>Date</p>	
--	--

Signed.....Name.....Date.....

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

<p>Action Taken:</p> <p>Outcome of Incident:</p>

Signed.....Date.....

[], Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), NCO

Appendix F

Useful contacts

Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)

Bristol Safeguarding Children Board

Tel: 0117 903 6444 Out-of-hours number: 01454 615 165 (out of hours and weekends)

NSPCC

Tel: 0808 800 5000

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Web: www.nspcc.org.uk

Childline Helpline

Tel: 0800 1111

Web: www.childline.org.uk

Prevent:

Email: community.safety@n-somerset.gov.uk

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/community-safety-crime/prevent/about-prevent/>

Police Anti-Terrorism team:

Tel: 0800 789 321

Useful web links:

'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

CSE information

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-is-child-sexual-exploitation>

Information on Prevent

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

Online Child Protection

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

Information about Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

https://plan-international.org/sexual-health/fgm-female-genital-mutilation?gclid=CjwKCAjwq832BRA5EiwACvCWse1bnBMVyU7IYSpNbzFqpUYZejsHu2rCogKf5DXqeE6BDDBljThcYBoCUVQQAvD_BwE