

Keeping Children Safe in School

Safeguarding our children: Early Help through to Child Protection

Policy and Guidance for Durham Schools



Safeguarding Policy

September 2023

Key Details

Designated Safeguarding Lead (s): Miss J. Jones

Named Governor with lead responsibility: Mrs C. Scott

Date written: September 2023

Date agreed and ratified by Governing Body: October 2023

Date of next review: September 2024

This policy will be reviewed at least annually. It will also be revised following any concerns and/or updates to national and local guidance or procedure.

Executive Headteacher: Miss J. Jones

Chair of Governing Body: Mrs C. Scott

It is recommended that this policy is accessed electronically so that embedded links take the user to the most up to date documentation.

This policy operates in conjunction with a range of other policies and documents, including the ones listed below:

Attendance Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Behaviour Management Policy

CLA/PCLA Policy

Child on Child Abuse Policy

Confidential Reporting Code (Durham County Council's)

Domestic Abuse Policy

Equalities Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Intimate Care Policy

Job descriptions/role of the designated safeguarding leads

Medications in Schools/First Aid Policies

Online Safety Policy

PHSCE policy

Policy relating to safeguarding response to children who go missing from education

Policy on de-escalation and physical restraint of children/pupils

PREVENT documentation (see Appendix 2)

Remote Education Policy

Recruitment and selection policy

RHSCE Policy

School Visits Policy

Staff Code of Conduct

Vetting Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Training Summary

Our school complies with the advice laid down in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018 and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2023 to undertake regular training.

A record of those trained may be found in the Safeguarding file and certificates are kept to verify the attendance of individuals. Child protection and safeguarding training form a key part of our induction processes. All staff will receive regular updates regarding child protection and safeguarding, including online safety, as necessary and at least annually.

Training for the designated safeguarding lead and other designated teachers in school is also undertaken regularly, and updated at least every two years.

We recognise that, as a minimum, schools also should ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead undertakes Prevent awareness training and is thus able to provide advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation (The Prevent duty DFE June 2015).

	Name	Training	Date
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Miss J. Jones	DSL Training level 3 Prevent, CSE FGM Child Criminal Exploitation (Incl County Lines) E-Safety The Role of the Appropriate Adult Serious Violence and Knife Crime	26.09.2022 25.04.2022 15.03.2022 27.09.2022 08.03.2023 25.04.2022 08.03.2023 08.03.2023
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Mrs C. Taylor	DSL Training Prevent, CSE, FGM, Child Criminal Exploitation (Incl County Lines) E-Safety	19.10.2021 20.10.2021 19.10.2021 20.10.2021 19.10.2021 19.10.2021
Nominated Governor for Child Protection and Safeguarding	Mrs C. Scott	DSL Training Prevent CSE FGM Child Criminal Exploitation (Incl County Lines) E-Safety Safer Recruitment Safeguarding Refresher	12.11.2021 DEC 2020 05.02.2023 05.02.2023 05.02.2023 31.01.2023 20.03.2023
Governor(s) and Staff with Safer Recruitment Training	Miss J. Jones Mrs C. Taylor Mr W. McCafferty Mr D. Dunleavy	Safer Recruitment	27.09.2022 21.10.2021 10.10.2022 10.07.2023
Whole Staff	See separate list	Level 1 Safeguarding Training Prevent, CSE, FGM, Child Criminal Exploitation (Incl County Lines)	



OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Teaching staff

Tables below show some of the safeguarding courses completed by staff at OLSotS – for a full list of courses completed by staff - contact the school office.

<i>Course</i>	<i>BR</i>	<i>HH</i>	<i>CT</i>	<i>JC</i>
<i>Child Protection – staff in regulated activities</i>	04.10.2022	02.10.2022	18.10.2021	03.10.2022
<i>Child Sexual Exploitation</i>	03.10.2022	25.09.2022	19.10.2021	03.10.2022
<i>FGM</i>	04.10.2022	25.09.2022	20.10.2021	04.10.2022
<i>PREVENT</i>	04.10.2022	02.10.2022	20.10.2021	06.10.2022
<i>County Lines</i>	03.10.2022	25.09.2022	19.10.2021	04.10.2022
<i>E-Safety</i>	04.10.2022	02.10.2022	19.10.2021	03.10.2022

Non-Teaching staff

<i>Course</i>	<i>TF</i>	<i>LH</i>	<i>KM</i>	<i>TS</i>	<i>CB</i>	<i>MC</i>	<i>MG</i>	<i>EJ</i>
<i>Child Protection - part 1 and 2</i>	03.10.2022	03.10.2022	03.10.2022	03.10.2022	02.11.2021	04.10.2022	28.02.2023	12.09.2023
<i>Child Sexual Exploitation</i>	05.10.2022	03.10.2022	03.10.2022	05.10.2022	03.10.2022	05.10.2022		09.10.2023
<i>FGM</i>	27.04.2023	05.10.2022	04.10.2022	04.10.2022	12.10.2021	05.10.2022	28.02.2023	30.06.2021
<i>PREVENT</i>	05.10.2022	03.10.2022	04.10.2022	04.10.2022	05.10.2022	04.10.2022	28.02.2023	10.10.2023
<i>County Lines</i>	05.10.2022	03.10.2022	04.10.2022	04.10.2022	03.10.2022	04.10.2022	28.02.2023	10.10.2023
<i>E-Safety</i>	24.04.2023	06.10.2022	05.10.2022	06.10.2022	03.10.2022	27.04.2023		09.10.2023

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Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):
Sharon Lewis / Louise Brookes 03000 268835
CYPSSLADOsecure@durham.gov.uk

First Contact Service: 03000 26 79 79

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A. PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY

Children maximise their potential in an environment which is safe, secure and supportive of all their needs, including any needs they have for protection from abuse.

Our school is committed to promoting the welfare of all children by working in partnership with parents and carers, the Local Authority (LA) and multi-agency partners in early help and child protection, in accordance with locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements procedures and practices.

Our policy applies to members of the school community in its widest sense. Thus, this includes children and young people, their parents/carers, school staff, governors, visitors, specialist staff, and the local and wider community where they interface with the school. Within its framework, the policy outlines entitlements and responsibilities in securing the protection of children who attend the school.

Our policy is underpinned and shaped by legislation and guidance contained in a variety of documents including: -

- The Children Act 1989; Children Act 2004
[Children Act 1989 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#); [Children Act 2004 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- The Education Act 2002; Education and Inspections Act 2006
[Education Act 2002 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#); [Education and Inspections Act 2006 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018
[Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Local Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements and Procedures
[www.durham-scp.org.uk](#)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – DfE 2015
[Stat guidance template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education. Statutory guidance for schools and colleges. September 2023
[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Use of reasonable force. Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies. DfE. July 2013
[Use of reasonable force in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Information Sharing Agreement: County Durham Safeguarding Adults Inter-Agency Partnership
[Good practice guidance for professionals - Durham Safeguarding Adults \(safeguardingdurhamadults.info\)](#)
- Procedures for locating missing pupils and the removal of pupils from roll. *June 2017* See DfE document “Children Missing Education” Sept 2016
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

- **Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales: HM Government 2021**
[Revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/462222/Prevent_duty_guidance_for_England_and_Wales_2021.pdf)
- The Prevent Duty Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers
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To emphasise the caring ethos of our school, the staff and governors are committed to the following principles: -

- The welfare and well-being of each child is of paramount importance.
- We recognise our policy works on the premise that abuse takes place in all communities and that school staff are particularly well-placed to identify and refer concerns and to act to prevent children and young people from being abused.
- We respect and value each child as an individual.
- We are a listening school, and encourage an environment where children feel free to talk, knowing that they will be listened to.
- The protection of children from abuse is a whole-school issue, and the responsibility therefore of the entire school community.
- We recognise our policy should be accessible in terms of understanding and availability. Regular training will ensure all adults in school are aware of indicators of concern or abuse and colleagues that act as designated safeguarding leads that such information should be promptly passed on to.
- Our policy will be developed and kept up to date with information from our relevant partners in early help and child protection as well as national documentation issued by HM Government and The Department for Education.
- We will use the school curriculum to resource our children to protect themselves from abuse, both as victims and as potential perpetrators.
- The school runs in an open, transparent way.
- We ensure that school leaders, including governors, exercise strategic oversight of all aspects of safeguarding through training, working with the link governor, information provided in Headteacher's Reports to Governors, clerk's reports (briefing notes), sharing safeguarding audit outcomes.



B. THE FIVE MAIN ELEMENTS TO THE POLICY

(1) Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop

KCSIE September 2023 (para 341) states that 'Good safeguarding requires continuing commitment from governing bodies, proprietors, and all staff to ensure the safety and welfare of children is embedded in all of the organisation's processes and procedures, and consequentially enshrined in its ethos'.

Establishing a safe environment links to the school's overall safeguarding arrangements and duty of care to all students.

The following policies are relevant:

[Durham Schools Portal - HR and Employee Services - HR Advice and Support - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

- *Health and Safety Policy*
- Building Lockdown Procedures/Policy
- Business Continuity Plan

Policies reviewed Sept. '23 (Next review Sept. '24) and presented to the Governing Body Autumn 2023.

Use of our school for non-school activities:

The school does not at present allow its premises to be used by outside agencies for non-school activities, other than it being occasionally used as a Polling Station.

However, if we were to hire or rent out our school facilities/premises to organisations or individuals we will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2023 (paras 166 & 167):

- We will seek assurance that the provider has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place;
- We will ensure that arrangements are in place for the provider to liaise with us on these matters where appropriate, whether the children who attend are on our school roll or not;
- As a condition of use, these safeguarding requirements will be included in any transfer of control agreement and failure to comply will lead to termination of the agreement.
- We will expect providers to have the safeguarding arrangements set out in the following guidance in place: [Keeping children safe in out-of-school settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Pupils Arriving and Leaving School on Local Authority Arranged Transport

We will inspect a sample of the badges of the drivers and PAs operating transport arranged by Integrated Passenger Transport Group periodically, to check the necessary badges are held and displayed. Any concerns or discrepancies will be reported as soon as possible to IPTG Monitoring team

(IPTMonitoring@durham.gov.uk). We will retain a record of the inspection and outcome to demonstrate these actions.

(2) Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children

Staff and governors who have received Safer Recruitment training are listed on the front page of this document.

- Our school will comply with the requirements outlined in local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements 'Key Safeguarding Employment Standards' and in the DSCP Child Protection procedures as well as national documentation in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2023, Part 3.
- Our school will refer to its responsibilities regarding safeguarding and child protection in all adverts, job descriptions, and/or to its profile in the school, in the general information distributed with application forms. Annex C in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2023 has specific details of the role of the designated safeguarding lead.
- Our school will adhere to The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (amended 2020) and the Exceptions Order 1975 taking account of any declarations at the point of interview and not during shortlisting from application.
- Our school will undertake appropriate pre-employment checks, including online searches, on all staff working in school, including criminal record checks (DBS checks), barred list checks and prohibition checks together with references and interview information, as detailed in Part Three: Safer Recruitment in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', September 2023. We will also ensure that relevant staff are made aware of their responsibilities to disclose anything relating to "Disqualification Under the Childcare Act 2006" [Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006)
- We will follow good practice advice and inform shortlisted candidates that online searches will be carried out.

As outlined in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', September 2023 paras 238-248) the level of DBS certificate required, and whether a check for any prohibition, direction, sanction, or restriction is required, will depend on the role that is being offered and duties involved. As most staff will be engaging in regulated activity, an enhanced DBS certificate which includes barred list information, will be required for most appointments. Risk assessments will be undertaken to determine the level of checks needed for any volunteers within our school (KCSIE 2023 paras 304-307).

In our school:

- Volunteers will not be left unsupervised with groups of children, nor will they be in areas where they cannot be fully seen by the supervising teacher.

- In accepting the offer of help from volunteers, especially those unknown, staff are aware that schools in general are attractive places for 'unsafe' volunteers.
- Schools may be places where those with unhealthy interests in children seek to find employment (paid or otherwise). We will be vigilant about all inappropriate behaviour with children that gives cause for concern. The Head Teacher and governors are aware of the Durham County Council Confidential Reporting Code arrangements.
- We ensure that appropriate DBS checks are carried out before employing supply staff, especially those not available via the Durham Supply Partnership. We will obtain written notification that the appropriate checks have been completed. We will also check that the member of supply staff is the same person for whom these checks have been made.
- Our Governing Body will be aware of their responsibilities in connection with staff appointments and similarly aware of their liabilities especially if they fail to follow LA guidance.
- Members of our governing body will have an enhanced DBS check. They will also be subject to a Section 128 check.
- Volunteers and helpers will not be given tasks beyond their capabilities and therefore where they might feel under pressure.
- Volunteers and helpers should feel able to discuss difficulties with the teacher, who will respond with advice and additional guidance and supervision.
- Volunteers and helpers will not have the opportunity to feel that they are in charge and thus in a position of power, which may then be abused.
- Volunteers, helpers and staff new to the school are given documentation that covers behaviour guidelines for staff and volunteers.

Alternative Provision (KCSIE September 2023 Para 326):

Where we place a pupil with an alternative provision provider (AP Provider), we will understand that we continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil & will ensure that we are satisfied that the provider can meet the needs of the pupil by:

- Obtaining written confirmation from the AP Provider that appropriate checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment.

(3) Training and supporting staff to equip them to appropriately recognise, respond to and support children who are vulnerable and may need safeguarding

To ensure that we train and support our staff to be equipped to recognise, respond to and support children who are vulnerable and may need safeguarding, we will include:

- Creating the right culture and environment so that staff feel comfortable to discuss matters both within and outside (including online) the workplace.
- The child protection policy which should amongst other things also include the policy and procedures to deal with child on child abuse.

- The behaviour policy (which should include measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying, including LGBT+). This policy takes the 'Behaviour in Schools Guidance September 2022' into account. [Behaviour in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/behaviour-in-schools)
- The staff code of conduct policy (sometimes called a staff behaviour policy).
- The safeguarding response to children who go missing from education.
- The role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).

Copies of policies and a copy of Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023, will be provided to staff and volunteers at induction. All staff, volunteers and supply staff are **required to read** this.

All staff, volunteers and supply staff will be made aware of:

- Our local 'early help' process and their role in it.
- The process for making referrals to Children's Social Care and sections 17 and 47 that may follow a referral, along with the role they may be expected to play in such assessments.
- What to do if a child tells them he or she is being abused or neglected, along with maintaining an appropriate level of confidentiality, involving only those who need to be involved, and never promising a child that they will not tell anyone about their abuse.
- The practical government guidance document 'Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings', Safer Recruitment Consortium, Feb 2022.
[Home\(saferrecruitmentconsortium.org\)](https://www.saferrecruitmentconsortium.org/)

All adults working in school will receive annual safeguarding and child protection training which is regularly updated. The DSL is responsible for ensuring that the training reflects new priorities and concerns within the County and other multi-agency local priorities. Adults will also receive updated training and guidance throughout the year as necessary.

The date and the names of delegates at these sessions are recorded and held securely to ensure all staff are appropriately trained.

Staff responsible for safeguarding

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies will be given sufficient time and training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their roles. This will be updated every two years and record of this training will be kept. In addition to this formal training, their knowledge and skills will continually be updated through a range of means (for example via e-bulletins, attendance at safeguarding networks or through reading), at regular intervals, and at least annually, to keep up with any developments.



(4) Raising awareness of other safeguarding issues, boosting resilience and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe

We raise other related issues with children, young people and their parents/carers in the following ways:

Children and Young People

We are mindful that children are kept safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in schools. All schools in the County have Smoothwall filtering and monitoring systems in place for this and other potentially risky content. Our named member of SLT (Mrs Taylor) who is a Designated/Deputy Safeguarding Lead will review these records regularly to see whether it links up with other safeguarding concerns about particular individuals. Online safety is continually emphasised in line with of Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023 and DfE 'Teaching Online Safety in Schools', January 2023. [Teaching online safety in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Other themes are addressed through our school curriculum, policies, PSHE and RHSE programmes, assemblies, outside visitors and trainers. These may be part of our typical, planned curriculum or in response to issues arising in school, the community or nationally.

Names (and photographs) of staff and adults will be on display in school that children can speak to if they have concerns (school, family or community issues).

Parents/Carers

Our school brochure, web site and other means of communication with parents will re-enforce the message that our school is committed to the welfare and protection of all children in its care. School staff and governors take this duty of care very seriously.

Newsletters, letters to parents about specific issues, our school web site and parents' evenings / consultations are used to disseminate and re-enforce key safeguarding and child protection information.

In addition, we also offer events/briefings and workshops that they may attend on particular issues.

Parents are told that it is essential that school records are kept up to date. Parents are asked to keep school informed of any changes. School will accordingly update records held to reflect:

- current address and telephone contacts. We are aware that, as a school, it is good practice to hold more than one emergency contact number for each child and this is particularly important for children who are a safeguarding or welfare concern
- which adults have parental responsibility
- court orders which may be in force
- children on the Child Protection list
- the child's name at birth and any subsequent names (taking care over unusual spellings)
- any other changes to home circumstances

Parents have been consulted on our RSHE policy.

(5) Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse

The culture of our school is that 'it could happen here'. Staff are trained to identify indicators of abuse and are aware of circumstances that could potentially make children and young people more vulnerable to abuse.

Listening to Children and Receiving Disclosures

We embrace our role as a listening school where children can discuss concerns with any member of staff or adult who works with them. Staff (teaching and support) will make time and be available should children approach them with a situation they are worried about.

Concerns must be taken seriously and at face-value. It is easy to make speedy judgements based on previous knowledge of the child or young person.

Staff receiving a disclosure are unable to promise 'keeping a secret' or confidentiality. They will need to explain that depending on what the child says they might need to share the information with someone who deals with these concerns in school.

If the child does not wish to continue and say anything further the adult should pass on the concern to the designated safeguarding lead that might wish to keep an eye on that student and may well be aware of other issues of concern.

'Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child. All staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual

harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.'
Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023, Part 1 (paras 17-18).

When the member of staff next comes across the child concerned, it would be appropriate to ask how they are and remind them that they are able to come and talk when they wish.

Staff should never speak to another sibling in the family to make enquiries; to investigate concerns is not the role of the school and parents/carers would be rightly aggrieved.

Recording concerns

ALL concerns and disclosures passed to the designated safeguarding lead must be added to the school's electronic monitoring system – CPOMs with the DSL copied into the report. All concerns recorded should be factual; staff should avoid using emotive language & recording their opinions.

Staff should write the exact words used by the child. Any original notes/jottings/reminders made by the adult must be stapled to the form as first-hand information that could be important if a case went to court or scanned into the electronic monitoring system.

The more relevant details staff document, the better (eg: approximate size, colour of injury, which arm, if burn is scabbing over etc.) Staff can express concern about an injury (open ended questions) but should not ask direct questions. They should never do so in front of other children.

Please remember:

- (i) The child should be allowed to make the disclosure at his/her own pace and in his/her own way.
- (ii) The member of staff should avoid interrupting except to clarify what the child is saying but
- (iii) Should not probe for any information that the child does not volunteer.

Concerns about staff members or other adults in school

If there is concern about another member of staff or adult working in school, the matter must be passed straight to the Head Teacher. The member of staff concerned must not be spoken to. If the concern regards the Head Teacher, this should be passed onto the Chair of Governors. Further information is included in Section G of this policy and KCSIE 2023, Part 4.

Recording and Response of the designated lead professional

All information received is stored in the child's 'concern' file. Where this is in electronic form, we provide appropriate levels of access to information. Records are kept securely in locked storage and away from the child's individual school records. (The child's individual file is marked to show the existence of the additional 'concern')

file). Our designated safeguarding leads can access these documents in an emergency or in the event of an enquiry for information by the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) Team, for example.

We keep a simple central 'chronology of significant events' for all children in school, in the event that the MASH make contact about issues beyond school and inform any other concerns in school.

We ensure that records include:

- a clear and detailed summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- notes of any actions taken, decisions reached and the outcome

Discussing concerns with the First Contact Service - 03000 26 79 79

We use the local authority Referral Form for notifying First Contact of concerns.

Early help referrals are completed online using the following link:

https://doitonline.durham.gov.uk/service/Early_Help_Referral via DCC CRM system.

Procedures and guidance detailing local multi-agency arrangements, including detailed information about the management of individual cases, may be found at www.durham-scp.org.uk

If a concern is taken up as a **referral** under section 47: Child Protection, actual or likelihood of significant harm, parents or carers will be informed of this **unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm.**

If the child requires immediate medical attention staff will accompany the child to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department. First Contact will be informed immediately if the injuries are linked to a child protection matter, so an appropriate paediatrician sees the child. The Director of Children and Young People's Services will be informed, and parents will be notified of the action taken.

If the situation is an emergency and staff are unable to speak to First Contact, we will phone the Police on 101 and ask to speak to a colleague in the Vulnerability Unit concerning a child (see link below on guidance about when to contact the police). [2491596 C&YP schools guides.indd \(npcc.police.uk\)](#)

Police Switchboard: 0345 6060365 or 101
Ask for the nearest local Vulnerability Unit to school

Discussions with First Contact will be followed up in writing

Discussions of concern and requests for support will be followed up in writing, using the referral form. Early help referrals are completed online using the following link: https://doitonline.durham.gov.uk/service/Early_Help_Referral via DCC CRM system. A copy is kept on the child's concern file.

If a member of staff feels that the designated safeguarding lead and/or Head Teacher are not taking concerns seriously enough, then it is appropriate for them to tell that person that they are going to consult with First Contact themselves.

Any staff member who has a concern about a child's welfare should follow the referral processes set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, Part 1.

First Contact Service

firstcontact@durham.gov.uk

Telephone: 03000 26 79 79

Attendance at Strategy meetings if assessed to be child protection concern

Strategy meetings are one of four multi-agency meetings as part of Child Protection processes. Local multi-agency procedures have detailed guidance about these meetings www.durham-scp.org.uk

The threshold document is available on the DSCP website.

School staff may be invited to a strategy meeting. These multi-agency meetings are called to decide whether the threshold for an s47 enquiry should commence to investigate the concerns that have been raised.

These meetings may be called at short notice and appropriate staff from school will attend wherever possible. If the school is the referring agency, they should be invited to attend these meetings. School is able to offer a venue providing a suitable room where confidentiality can be assured.

Staff will make available any handwritten notes, dated and signed, as well as other records from the concern file including the single agency chronology of concerns. Any further written evidence from the child: stories, drawings etc. will be brought to the meeting.

In school, staff will monitor the child discreetly for any further concerns or signs that are worrying, maintain appropriate records and give support and reassurance to the child.

All information should be treated with discretion and confidentiality and shared in accordance with the National Guidance on information sharing and the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

If concerns are not substantiated following the section 47 enquiries, our school will work with other agencies to determine what further support the family and child require. The school will continue to monitor and support the child.

C. OVERVIEW: SAFEGUARDING

(1) Definition of ‘safeguarding’

‘Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023’ defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as:

‘protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. ‘Children’ includes everyone under the age of 18.’ (paras 4-5)

(2) Safeguarding within this school

Everyone who encounters children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. School staff are particularly important as they are able to identify concerns early and provide help for children, to prevent concerns from escalating. Schools and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children by working with our 3 safeguarding partners in Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership – Durham County Council, Durham Constabulary and the Clinical Commissioning Groups to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding children permeates all aspects of our work as a school, with a preventative role to inform and boost the resilience of all students by enhancing protective factors in their lives.

Accordingly, this policy links with many other related policies in school listed on page one of this policy.

This policy is also linked to local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Current, up to date documentation can be found at <https://www.durham-scp.org.uk/professionals/> and include:

- Managing Allegations against Staff (Durham online local partnership safeguarding arrangements and policies)
- County Durham Practice Framework: Single Assessment Procedure & Practice Guidance.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education. September 2023

(3) Safeguarding throughout school life

Caring ethos

We aim to create and maintain **a caring ethos** where all children and adults feel safe, secure and valued. If children feel happy and enjoy school this will encourage good attendance and then create conditions in which they can do their best in every area of school life. Our school operates as a listening school where children can approach adults with concerns. These will be taken seriously and relevant local multi-agency safeguarding procedures followed without delay if there is a risk/likelihood of, or actual **significant harm**.

- *Carol Gash (Counsellor) has been employed to work one morning a week to support children's emotional well-being.*
- *Mrs Huntington has taken on the role of Emotional Wellbeing Lead for the children.*
- *Mrs Taylor is the Designated Mental Health Lead.*
- *Fr Neylan (Parish Priest) provides pastoral guidance for the school community.*

Curriculum

Children have access to an appropriate curriculum, including the teaching of Relationships, Health & Sex education, differentiated to meet their needs. This enables them to learn to develop the necessary skills to build self-esteem, respect others, defend those in need, and resolve conflict without resorting to violence. Children learn skills to question and challenge to enable them to make informed choices now and later in life. A protective factor for children is personal resilience including strong social and emotional skills. All work with children which boosts confidence and self-esteem is valuable to protect them from peer pressure and outside influences detrimental to their physical and mental well-being.

Children are encouraged to express and discuss their ideas, thoughts and feelings through a variety of activities and have access to a range of cultural opportunities which promote respect and empathy for others. As part of our Prevent duty under s.26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, we are aware of the importance of building pupils' resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and enabling them to challenge extremist views. Schools can build pupils' resilience to radicalisation by providing a safe environment for debating controversial issues and helping children and young people understand how they can influence and participate in decision-making.

Many areas of the curriculum include age-appropriate opportunities for children and young people to discuss and debate important issues including lifestyles, health, safety and well-being (physical and emotional), family life, child-care and parenting, forced marriage, domestic abuse, religious beliefs and practices as well as human rights issues. Through these, we support children and young people to recognise and manage risk, make safer choices and recognise when pressure from others threatens their personal safety and wellbeing. They can develop effective ways of resisting pressure, including knowing when, where and how to get help.

Universal services and specialist support staff

The following professionals are also available to support individual children in school:

Agency/Role	Name of contact	Location	Contact Number
Peterlee Family First Team		Peterlee	03000263139
First Contact Service		East Durham	03000 267979.
School Nurse	Wendy Goodrum	Peterlee	03000261700
Attendance and Inclusion Officers	Mrs Kelly Mrs Fullard	OLSotS	0191 5863895
School Counsellor	Carol Gash	OLSotS (Wednesday mornings)	0191 5863895
Educational Psychologist		Spennymoor	0191 586 3895
CAHMS		Winchester House - Peterlee	0191 288 8400

The following **visitors** also contribute to our work to safeguard and promote the welfare of our students:

- Parish priest,
- Community police, Jet and Ben stranger danger,
- Childline in schools
- Fire Brigade/Safety Carousels,
- Occupational Therapist
- Movement Difficulties Team
- Speech and Language Therapists

Childcare Arrangements Before and After School (including extra-curricular activities)

- Breakfast Club – this is run during term time only and starts at 8:00am
- After-school activities on and off site – these vary from term to term and are run for specific Year groups – normally for 1hr at the end of the school day

These all provide further opportunities for students to develop positive and caring relationships with adults, who themselves will be trained to be aware of signs and behaviours that could suggest concerns. Supportive relationships outside the home, such as those with adults in school and other children, are additional protective factors that boost children's resilience. Staff will always work with children in a professional way and are reminded to respond to disclosures sensitively and appropriately. All adults in school know the names of the designated safeguarding leads and are made aware of their responsibility to pass on any issues of concern without delay and make a written record.

Working with parents and carers

Our school believes in effective communication with parents and carers. We welcome parent/carer views and concerns about the welfare of their children and use this feedback to regularly review our practices. Parental views are obtained in the following ways:

- Questionnaires
- Teams
- E-mails
- Parent's Evenings

We keep parents informed about important and topical issues, including child protection elements of safeguarding, in the following ways:

- Newsletters
- FaceBook
- letters home
- OurSchoolsApp
- school website
- e-Safety advice
- training/information sessions e.g. e-safety, Gem Power,

We aim to have good working relationships with parents and carers and to work in partnership with them through transparency and honesty. However, we do not forget that their child's needs and welfare are our paramount concern, thus obtaining consent to take matters further is **not** always appropriate. This obligation is set out in our school prospectus/brochure.

D. CHILD PROTECTION WITHIN SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR ALL CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCHOOL

There are a series of layers of care and intervention ranging from safeguarding for all/universal services (single-agency activities) through to multi-agency work under the Children Acts 1989 and its amendments:

- Safeguarding arrangements in school
- Early Help within universal services
- More complex cases requiring Early Help

- Child in Need consent required as for Levels 2 and 3
- Child Protection
- Durham Safeguarding Children's Partnership guidance and procedures (see <https://www.durham-scp.org.uk/>)

The Growing Up in County Durham Strategy

The Growing Up in County Durham Strategy was prepared jointly by all public services, voluntary and community services, including the Council, local health services and the police who work together to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families through the Children and Families Partnership. It can be accessed here: <https://countydurhampartnership.co.uk/health-wellbeing-board/growing-up-in-county-durham-strategy/>

(1) Life at Home

The Framework for Assessment triangle, reproduced below, summarises every aspect of a child's life under three headings and is mirrored in the Referral form for First Contact Service.

- Child's developmental needs (How I grow and develop)
- Parenting capacity (What I need from people that look after me)
- Family and environmental factors (My wider world)

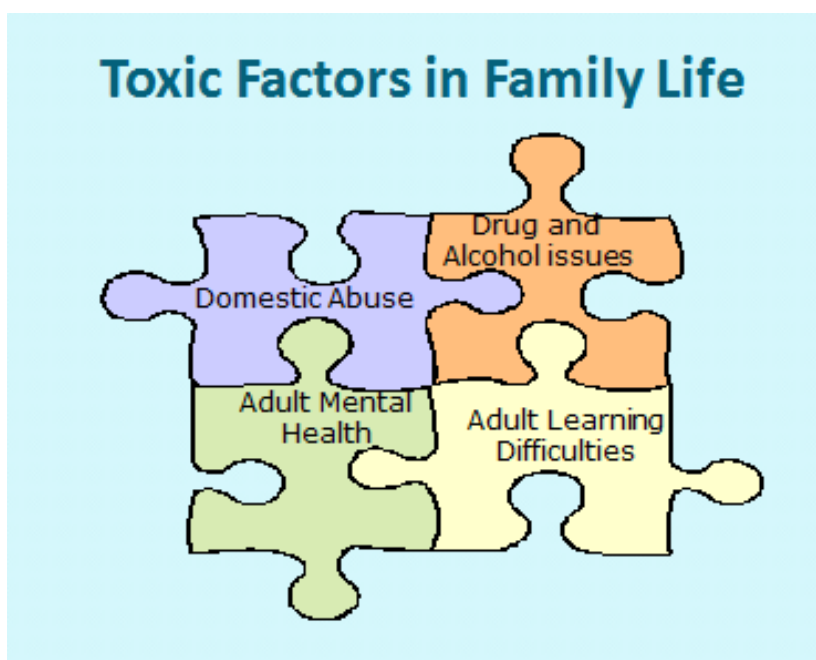


Aspects from all three domains combine in home life and staff and adults in school should be mindful of these connections as they work with children and their parents/carers in school.

This school believes that it is essential to work with parents and carers in the best interests of their children. However, good relationships with parents and carers should not detract from our primary concern which is the welfare of children in this school.

Staff are made aware in training of the ‘toxic quad.’ issues in home life that could have an impact on the way children are parented (Munroe, 2010). The Government research into Serious Case Reviews reveals that the presence of one or more of the following issues could have a detrimental impact on parenting of children in that household:

- Domestic abuse (violence)
- Substance misuse (alcohol and or drugs)
- Adult mental health
- Learning Disabilities



Neglect is the largest category for children being on the Child Protection list (nationally and in Durham). Durham DSCP have produced new Neglect Practice Guidance (Revised 2017) linked to the Tackling Neglect Multi-Agency Strategy 2017. It can be found here: [Early Help Strategy for children, young people and Families \(durham-scp.org.uk\)](https://www.durham-scp.org.uk)

(2) Signs and behaviours of concern

‘All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect. Knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect (see paragraphs 26-30), child-on-child abuse (see paras 32 – 35) and specific safeguarding issues such as child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation (see paras 36-42) so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection’ Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023, Part One (para 21).

All of our staff are familiar with KCSIE September 2023 and their responsibilities highlighted within this (paras 20 to 50).

Paragraph 20 of the document emphasises that staff should be particularly alert to the need for early help for the following groups of children:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs.

- has special educational needs (whether they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan or not).
- has a mental health need.
- is a young carer.
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines.
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home.
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation.
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited.
- has a family member in prison or is affected by parental offending.
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse.
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves.
- has returned home to their family from care.
- is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage.
- is a privately fostered child, and
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.

'All staff should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction. The training should be regularly updated. In addition, all staff should receive safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, and staff meetings), as required, and at least annually, to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.' Keeping children safe in education, September 2023, Part One (para 14).

In our school we do these regular updates through:

- staff meetings
- Notice boards
- SSSCPD online training

Our school understands that it is best practice to discuss concerns with parents/carers before contacting First Contact Service (providing this does not present a delay), unless by doing so the child would be put at further risk of harm. First Contact Service: 03000 267979.

Anyone can make a referral. When referrals are not made by the designated safeguarding lead, the designated safeguarding lead should be informed, as soon as possible, that a referral has been made.

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to children's social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately.

(3) Early Help Assessment Procedure & Practice Guidance

'All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help' KCSIE 2023 (para 8). This relates to work with other universal agencies and following DSCP procedures and guidance.

The Early Help Assessment and Child and Family Plan has replaced what was the 'Single Assessment' and are much more streamlined, family friendly and signs of safety/wellbeing focussed. These can be accessed through the [Children's Services Portal](#).

Our school is aware that *'no single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances'*. Also, that *'if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, **everyone** who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action'*. KCSIE 2023 (para 3).

See dates of training within this document.

Training for staff and governors at Our Lady Star of the Sea RCVA Primary is provided by Durham County LA and SSSCPD online Training.

This school believes that information sharing is a key element when delivering coordinated services for children and young people. It is essential to enable early help and support and for promoting child protection and welfare. Our staff understand when, why and how they should share information so that they can do so confidently and appropriately as part of their day-to-day practice.

This school works with the consent of parents and carers to jointly undertake assessments where an unmet need has been identified. However, we are aware that it may be necessary to meet with other services and agencies even if this consent for a 'Team around the Family' meeting is not forthcoming. These professionals' meetings are important to share concerns, suggest ways forward along with further work to encourage participation by parents/carers in early help processes One Point colleagues and Early Help Advisers are also a useful source of advice in these circumstances.

Guidance on Early Help in County Durham can be found here: <https://durham-scp.org.uk/professionals/early-help/> This includes information on how to make a request for additional early help and provides details of Locality Early Help Conversations.

Professionals can make a request for (additional) early help by completing an on-line Early Help Request Form on the [Childrens Service Portal](#) or by telephoning the

Early Help Triage Team on 03000 267 979, Option 1, Option 2, Option 4, (Mon – Thurs 08.30 – 17.00, Fri 08.30 – 16.30)

Team around the Family (TAF) is an early means of intervention to provide appropriate advice and support for the parents/carers and young person by working with appropriate local agencies through Team around the Family arrangements.

Our local one-point hub, Families First Team and Early Help Adviser contacts are:

Agency/Role	Location	Contact Number
Peterlee One Point Hub	The Leisure Centre, St Cuthbert's Way, Peterlee, County Durham. SR8 1AF	03000 263 538
Peterlee Family First Team	Peterlee	03000263139
First Contact Service	East Durham	03000 267979.

Durham Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Where concerns are identified as amber or red on the [MASH Process Pathway](#), our school will cooperate promptly and fully, with relevant information, to inform further assessments undertaken by the MASH team.

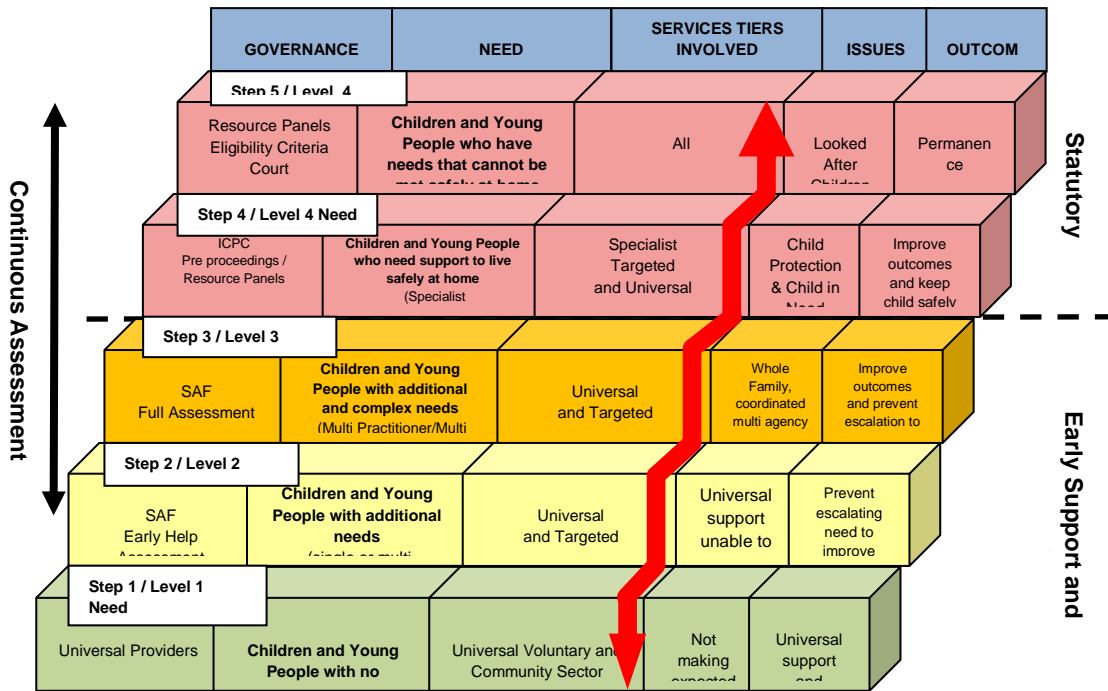
(4) Child in Need

Section 17 of the 1989 Children Act
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

“A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989” KCSIE 2023 (para 62).

This school recognises the importance of early support and intervention work in more complex cases, undertaken with the consent of parents and carers, and follows the thresholds guidance document which sets out local criteria for action and includes links to additional information which may assist professional judgement in understanding and subsequently meeting a child and families needs <https://durham-scp.org.uk/professionals/> <https://durham-scp.org.uk/download/thresholds-document/>

The Durham Staircase & Continuum of Need



Level 1 - Universal Provision Children with no additional needs.

Children and young people who are achieving expected outcomes and have their needs met through universal service provision. Typically, these children/young people are likely to live in a resilient and protective environment. Families will make use of community resources. Universal services remain in place regardless of which level of need a child is experiencing.

Level 2 - Early Help – Targeted Provision Children with Additional Needs which can be met by a single practitioner/single agency or where a coordinated multi-agency response is needed.

These are children and young people identified as having an additional need which may affect their health, educational or social development and they would be at risk of not reaching their full potential. The single assessment process Early Help Assessment is the tool to use to identify need and plan help for the family.

Level 3 - Early Help – Targeted Provision for Children with multiple issues or complex needs where a co-ordinated multi-agency response is required.

These are children and families whose needs are not being met due to the range, depth and significance of their needs which makes them very vulnerable and at risk of poor outcomes. A multi-agency response is required using either the single assessment framework whole family assessment tools as in most instances there will be issues for parents which are impacting on the children achieving positive outcomes. These families need a holistic and coordinated approach and more intensive intervention and help. Lead Professionals could come from a range of agencies as the key issue will be the quality of the relationship that exists between practitioner and family to assist them to make change and reduce the likelihood of moving into Level 4 services.

Level 4 - Services to keep the child safely at home – where a statutory response is required.

These are children whose needs and care is significantly compromised and they may be at risk of harm or at risk of becoming accommodated by the Local Authority. These families require intensive support on a statutory basis. This will include support provided by Children's Services under a Child Protection Plan and may require the use of legal orders. The assessment and multi-agency response will be coordinated by a social worker, will be holistic and consider the needs of all family members.

Level 4 (step 5) - Need that cannot be managed safely at home.

Children and young people who require intensive help and support from a range of specialist

In general, children and young people with disabilities will have their needs met through early help and targeted services at levels 1, 2 and 3. However, some children with a high level of need related to severe disabilities may require specialist services at levels 4.

Child Protection and Significant Harm

Section 47 of the 1989 Children Act
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

'Local authorities, with the help of other organisations as appropriate, have a duty to make enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Such enquiries enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare and must be initiated where there are concerns about maltreatment. This includes all forms of abuse and neglect.' KCSIE 2023 (para 63)

Significant harm is where some children are in need because they are **suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm**. This is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children.

(6) Prepare for the unexpected

Our staff are aware from their training that some children might display worrying signs/symptoms or disclose information suggesting abuse, when they have never previously given rise to concern. Staff must contact the designated safeguarding lead for child protection **without delay** so concerns can be discussed with First Contact Service as soon as possible. In all cases, it should be borne in mind that other siblings might be at risk in the household as well as the one presenting concerns in school.

*'Staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of **'it could happen here'** where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the **best** interests of the child'. KCSIE 2023 (para 51).*

(7) Low Level Concerns

Please see: KCSIE 2023 (paras 424-445).

As part of our safeguarding culture where ALL concerns regarding adults are shared responsibly in line with our school's safeguarding reporting systems and will be recorded in writing and held securely on our CPOMs system. Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and appropriate actions taken.

We have also set out our Low Levels Concerns Policy within our Staff Code of Conduct.

We will ensure that:

- staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others;
- staff know how to share any low-level safeguarding concerns and are empowered to do so;
- unprofessional behaviour is addressed and the individual is supported to correct it at an early stage;
- we will provide a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised;
- we will use concerns to help identify any weakness in the school safeguarding system.

We will instil a culture where staff feel safe to report any concerns using our safeguarding reporting system identified in this policy. We would also encourage the staff member themselves to report any behaviour that could be classed as a low level concern. Where the report has been made by a third party, as much evidence as possible will be gathered by the head teacher/principal from the person reporting the concern, the individual named and any witnesses. All of this will be recorded to determine whether any further action needs to be taken alongside a recorded rationale as to the decisions taken.

In the case of reports about supply staff and contractors, we will report any concerns to their line managers so that any concerning, problematic or inappropriate patterns of behaviour can be identified.

We will retain information regarding low level concerns in line with our school's Low Level Concerns Policy. KCSIE 2023, paragraph 440 recommends at least until person leaves school's employment.

'Low-level concerns should not be included in references unless they relate to issues which would normally be included in a reference, for example, misconduct or poor performance. It follows that a low-level concern which relates exclusively to safeguarding (and not to misconduct or poor performance) should not be referred to in a reference. However, where a low-level concern (or group of concerns) meets the harm threshold for referral to the LADO and found to be substantiated, it should be referred to in a reference.' KCSIE 2023, para 440.

Please refer to our Low Level Concerns Policy and reporting form.

E. MULTI-AGENCY WORK IN CHILD PROTECTION

See Appendix 1: Summary of multi-agency meetings

For up to date school responsibilities and LA arrangements and procedures please see the local partnership website - <https://www.durham-scp.org.uk/professionals/>

(1) Initial Child Protection Conference: school responsibilities

See local partnership procedures for more details, <https://www.durham-scp.org.uk/professionals/>.

Following the final strategy meeting (some complex cases like forced marriage, fabricated and induced illness and organisational abuse may require several strategy meetings) a decision might be made to hold an Initial Child Protection Conference. This work continues within Family First teams within the County.

A conference will be called if there is thought to be an on-going risk or likelihood of significant harm to the child(ren). The date will be within **15 working days** after the last strategy meeting.

Attendance at Conference

It is understood that appropriate school staff should make every effort to attend (unless the date coincides with school holidays).

Preparation of a report

Schools would be expected to prepare a report and may wish to amplify and develop information provided on the referral form <https://www.durham-scp.org.uk/professionals/> as the basis of their report.

Chronology of significant events

A single-agency chronology should also be produced for this meeting using the template available on the DSCP website: <https://www.durham-scp.org.uk/professionals/>. The detailed 'in house' school chronology should be streamlined to include key relevant incidents noted by school.

Sharing of the report

The report should be shared with parents/carers of the child at least **two working days** before the conference. Part of the report may also be shared with the young person, where age-appropriate. This will give the family a chance to question or clarify any issues raised within the report prior to the conference.

The report will be passed to the Conference Clerk via the e-mail system ready for dissemination to other professionals attending the conference.

(2) Membership of a Core Group

(See partnership safeguarding arrangements and procedures - <https://www.durham-scp.org.uk/professionals/>) This school recognises that membership of a core group is a responsibility that necessitates time and commitment to attend regular meetings and complete the work detailed in the Child Protection Plan.

The merged multi-agency chronology will be regularly updated as part of this on-going work.

(3) Review Child Protection Conference

The school will complete the relevant report for the first review conference, after 10 weeks and for any subsequent reviews at intervals of 5 months. The report will detail work undertaken by the school with parents/carers and the child to complete the tasks assigned in the Child Protection Plan. This report should be shared **7 days** before the conference takes place. This report will detail the progress made towards the tasks outlines on the Child Protection Plan.

F. INFORMATION-SHARING

Staff at our school are aware of the need to share information appropriately. KCSIE 2023 (Para 115-123)

If there are concerns that sharing of information with individuals could result in significant harm to any individual, legal advice should be sought before the information is shared.

Our school takes care to ensure that information about a child is only given to the appropriate external people or agencies. Staff will take names and ring back via a main switchboard if unsure. All staff within school will be aware of the confidential nature of personal information about a child and the need for maintaining confidentiality. They will seek advice about parental responsibility issues if unsure.

Parents/Carers

Staff and Head Teacher must **not** automatically contact parents if there is a disclosure by the child or there are other concerns that the child may be at risk of significant harm. Rather schools should discuss concerns with the First Contact Service. Information should not be shared with parents if there was a likelihood that by doing so it might place the child at further risk of harm.

Parents must be aware that once matters have been referred to the First Contact Service the school can only explain the procedure and is not able to give 'progress reports' on the case.

School staff

There is a delicate balance to be struck between alerting members of staff to the concern about the child and the need to protect the child from too many people knowing. Information should only be divulged on a 'need to know' basis. Other members of staff need to know sufficient detail to prepare them to act with sensitivity to a distressed pupil. They do not need to know details.

Children transferring to another school

When a child on the Child Protection List moves to another school the designated lead professional will inform the new school immediately and arrange the handover of confidential information securely and separately from other records.

If a child for whom there are other existing serious concerns transfers to another school, the new receiving school will be informed immediately, and written records will follow. Both schools should maintain evidence of the secure transfer and receipt

of information. Schools that both use CPOMS should transfer this information electronically.

Data that is not being transferred to another school should be kept in line with the school's Data Retention Policy, e.g. electively home educated pupils or moving to full time employment.

County Guidance and protocols

Please see the following guidance:

- ['Information sharing'](#) on the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership website
- [HM Government, Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers.](#)
- [Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures Manual](#)
- [The Data Protection Act 2018](#)

Further advice about legal issues is available from Corporate Legal Services
LegalservicesSLA@durham.gov.uk 03000 266 196

G. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

See Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2023, paras 352-445.

[The Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures Manual](#) provides information about dealing with allegations against staff and volunteers (including supply staff) who have contact with children and young people in their work or activities.

Allegations of abuse by adults and peers in schools must be investigated in accordance with the DSCP procedures, and when dealing with any allegation against adults and peers, it is vital to keep the welfare of the child as the central concern. However, as in all child protection issues, a balance needs to be struck between supporting and protecting the child and keeping the effects of possibly false allegations to a minimum. Thus, urgent consideration should be given to the substance of the allegations.

Receiving an allegation

On receiving an allegation, the Head Teacher will proceed in line with recognised procedures - consulting immediately with LA officers (LADO, Local Authority

Designated Officer, see contact details at front of policy) and/or informing the First Contact Service. If the LADO is unavailable there should be no delay in discussing with First Contact. **The Head Teacher must not start to investigate.**

If an allegation is made for a person not directly employed by the school recognised procedures should be followed. This includes supply staff, sports coaches and any individual or organisation using the school premises for the purposes of running activities for children (for example community groups, sports associations, or service providers that run extra-curricular activities). Under no circumstances should a school cease the use of a supply teacher, sports coach etc. due to safeguarding concerns without liaising with the LADO. (See KCSIE 2023, paras 373 - 376)

Allegations regarding the Head Teacher should be passed to the Chair of Governors. Should this lead to delay, the person receiving details of the allegation should follow the advice above and report the matter immediately to the LADO and First Contact Service. At this stage the Head Teacher should not be informed of the allegation (the same process as for any member of staff or adult in school). The Chair of Governors should be informed as soon as possible and asked to contact the LADO.

Where it is suspected that a crime has been committed, then the matter should be reported to the police with immediate effect.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Sharon Lewis / Louise Brookes 03000 268835

First Contact Service

03000 26 79 79

CYPSSLADOsecure@durham.gov.uk

Carrying out an investigation

Investigations will be carried out by the appropriate agencies.

In dealing with any allegation the Head Teacher and governors need to balance:

- The seriousness of the allegation.
- The risk of harm to pupils.
- Possible contamination of evidence.
- The welfare of the person concerned.

Suspension of the member of staff/adult in school will be considered:

- (a) if there are any grounds for doubt as to the suitability of the employee to continue to work
- (b) where suspension may assist in the completion of an investigation.

Suspension will be carried out in line with LA/Trust guidelines. Head Teachers should contact Human Resources for guidance. (HRSchools@durham.gov.uk)

Suspension should not be an automatic response. Wherever possible, redeployment should be considered as an alternative considering the seriousness of the allegation made. See KCSIE 2023 Part 4 para 379-386.

During the investigation, support will be offered to both the pupil making the allegation and the adult/peer concerned. A disciplinary investigation will be carried out only after Police and Intervention and Assessment Teams propose to take no further action. Detailed records will be kept by all parties involved.

Recommendations following an investigation

Where recommendations are made to school regarding the outcome of a Child Protection investigation, the school will advise Children and Young People's Services regarding their response to the recommendation. For example, if a person is suspended and returns to school, the date of that return should be communicated.

The following definitions are now used when determining the outcome of allegation investigations:

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation.
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive or cause harm to the person subject to the allegation.
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.
- **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

Where it is considered that an individual has engaged in conduct that has harmed (or is likely to harm) a child or if a person otherwise poses a risk to harm a child, the Head Teacher and/or governors will make a referral to the DBS in line with their legal requirement to do so.

H. SAFE TOUCH

Physical contact other than to control or restrain

Our school has a policy / guidelines on the use of touch, including an Intimate Care policy and this includes such points as:

- assisting in the washing of young children who have wet/soiled themselves
- intimate care risk assessments for certain children with medical needs or disabilities.
- using physical contact to demonstrate exercises or techniques, for example, in PE, sports coaching or other practical subjects.
- administering First Aid

- supporting younger children and children with special needs who may need physical prompts or help
- giving appropriate comfort to a child who is distressed
- recognising that physical contact is a sensitive issue for some cultural groups
- acknowledging that physical contact becomes increasingly open to question as children reach and go through adolescence
- ensuring a consistent approach where staff and pupils are of different genders
- acknowledging that innocent and well-intentioned physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued
- having a prescribed handling policy for children requiring complex or repeated physical handling, with specific training for staff who deal with them.

I. PHYSICAL CONTROL AND RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION: USE OF REASONABLE FORCE

Our school has a separate policy on the use of restrictive physical interventions covering the appropriate use of reasonable force that all staff are made aware of and follow.

Our school policy relates to the following: [DfE Guidance: Use of Reasonable Force in Schools](#)

Our school Policy on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions gives guidance on:

- when it is appropriate for staff to use physical control and restraint
- who is allowed to use physical control and restraint
- what forms of physical control and restraint may take place in particular circumstances
- what forms of physical control and restraint are not acceptable
- how the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND, mental health problems or medical conditions will be considered
- ensure our duties under the Equality Act 2010 are considered
- recording of incidents where physical handling has been used
- the Policy also makes it clear that corporal punishment is NOT allowed.

J. THE PREVENT DUTY

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a due on certain bodies, including schools, to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. The DfE has produced non-statutory advice for schools, "[The Prevent Duty: for schools and childcare providers](#)" June 2015.

This work is part of schools' broader safeguarding responsibilities and protecting children from other harms (drugs, gangs, neglect, and sexual exploitation). During the process of radicalisation, it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being radicalised. The advice summarises areas in which schools might be involved: risk assessment, working in partnership, staff training, IT policies and building children's resilience to radicalisation.

In our school:

- Staff can identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation. Information or concerns are shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the same way as other information that might be a safeguarding concern, who will then follow procedures in line with DSCP guidance.
- Policies and procedures are in line with those of DCC, Durham Constabulary and the DSCP.
- Throughout the life of the school as well as in specific lessons to build pupils' resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and enabling them to challenge extremist views.
- Robust online policies are mindful of guidance within Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023 and DfE guidance ['Teaching Online Safety in School'](#).

[Revised Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales](#), paragraph 64, notes 'Schools should be safe spaces in which children and young people can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, and learn how to challenge these ideas. The Prevent duty is not intended to limit discussion of these issues. Schools should, however, be mindful of their existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues'

We will follow the County Durham Prevent Referral Flowchart (September 2023, Appendix 2) when any concerns are identified. Through discussion with the specialist colleagues at Durham Constabulary it may be appropriate to make a referral to the Channel programme. This programme focuses on support at an early stage, tailor-made to the individual young person. Engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary. A school representative may be asked to be a member if a student from the school is to be discussed at the Channel panel.

FIMUNorth@CTPNE.police.uk

<https://www.durham.police.uk/Report-It/Terrorism/Prevent.aspx>

The DSCP website (<https://www.durham-scp.org.uk/professionals/multi-agency-safeguarding-arrangements/prevent-counter-terrorism/>) 'Professionals; Prevent-Counter Terrorism', has examples of policies produced by the Safe Durham Partnership as well as further information including e-learning opportunities.

K. CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

We ensure all of our staff are trained to be aware of young people who could be at risk of sexual exploitation. See Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023 (para 40-42).

Refer also to:

[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)
[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#)

CSE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in any sexual activity and can be experienced by both boys and girls: It is a form of child sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse may involve both physical and non-contact activities. It can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence. Our staff know that some children may not realise they are being exploited, for example, if they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship, and will handle these situations appropriately.

Durham DSCP has a section of their website devoted to resources, guidance, and a risk assessment matrix that assists schools: [Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Information Form \(durham-scp.org.uk\)](#).

The multi-agency ERASE team website is available as a source of help and information for children, parents and the wider community, <http://www.eraseabuse.org/Pages/Home.aspx>.

L. FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

If there are concerns that an act of FGM has been undertaken on a girl under the age of 18, this MUST be reported to the police immediately.

Whilst all staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific legal duty on teachers. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police. KCSIE, September 2023 (Para 44)

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. This is illegal in the UK (The FGM Act 2003), abusive and has varied long-lasting consequences for the young girl.

There is an FGM Helpline also on 0800 028 3550. There is also a useful website: fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

Guidance leaflets have been produced by the Home Office & the National FGM Centre:

<http://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/FGM-Schools-Guidance-National-FGM-Centre.pdf>

[Female genital mutilation: resource pack - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

The Home Office has also produced some free, informative, on-line training that designated leads might wish to access:

[FGM Awareness & Prevention Training | iHASCO](#)

M. ONLINE SAFETY

KCSIE – September 2023 (see paras 135 – 148)

Our school has a separate Online Safety Policy which links to KCSIE 2023 and take account [DfE 'Teaching Online Safety in Schools'](#) guidance.

There is a Professionals Online Safety Helpline 0844 381 4772

Schools are reminded that a criminal offence has been committed if a person aged 18 or over intentionally communicates with a child under 16, who the adult does not reasonably believe to be 16 or over, if the communication is sexual or if it is intended to encourage the child to make a communication which is sexual. The offence will be committed whether or not the child communicates with the adult. This is the offence of sexual communication with a child under section 67 of the Serious Crime Act 2015.

On the DSCP website in the multi-agency online Procedures Manual, Part 2, Safeguarding Practice Guidance there is further information under ['Online safety: Children Exposed to Abuse through the Digital Media'](#)



N. Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

Our school has a zero tolerance approach to child on child abuse including sexual violence and sexual harassment (KCSIE 2023: Part One, paras 32 – 35 and Part

Five). Our staff are aware that children are capable of abusing other children, and that this can happen both in and out of school, online and offline.

Refer also to:

[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)

LGFL '[Undressed](#)' provided schools advice about how to teach young children about being tricked into getting undressed online in a fun way without scaring them or explaining the motives of sex offenders

Education settings are an important part of the inter-agency framework not only in terms of evaluating and referring concerns to Children's Services and the Police, but also in the assessment and management of risk that the child or young person may pose to themselves and others in the education setting, and we ensure that we fully participate in this role.

All staff are supported to understand, that, even if there are no reports in our school, it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such, it is important if staff have any concerns regarding child on child abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

Our school will respond to all signs, reports and concerns of child-on-child abuse including sexual violence and harassment, including those that have happened outside of the school or college premises, and/or online. We have clear systems in place that all staff are aware of, and will work with our local authority partners in children's social care and police where a crime may have been committed. Where a report of sexual violence has occurred, our DSL or deputy DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment taking into account the 5 points identified in KCSIE, paragraph 479. The need for a risk assessment for sexual harassment will be considered on a case by case basis.

We ensure that all staff understand what constitutes child on child abuse or sexual violence and sexual harassment and that children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Our Designated Safeguarding Leads and deputies have a good understanding of Harmful Sexual Behaviour in order to support the development of our whole school approach.

In this school, all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, many of which are listed below, that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse, leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Abuse may take different forms:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).

- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’).
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse).
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence).
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nude images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery).
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

To support this agenda, the following steps are taken in school to minimise these risks. The school:

- will provide a developmentally appropriate Relationships, Sex and Health Education curriculum which develops students understanding of acceptable behaviour and keeping themselves safe and is in line with DfE guidance from September 2021.
- will ensure that all reports of alleged abuse or sexual harassment will be acted upon in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, Part Five.
- will reassure all victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault or causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent is made, the starting point is that this will be passed on to the police.
- will have robust risk assessments in place where appropriate and in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, Part Five.
- have relevant policies in place (e.g., behaviour policy, anti-bullying policy).

Victims, alleged perpetrators and any other child affected by child-on-child abuse and/or sexual harassment will be supported by a nominated, appropriate member of staff.

O. CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION (CCE) INCLUDING COUNTY LINES

(KCSIE Sept 2023 Paras 37-39 & Annex B pg 143)

We will ensure that all staff are aware of the indicators that may signal that children are at risk from or involved with CCE.

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in any criminal activity and can be experienced differently by both boys and girls:

- in exchange for something the victim needs or wants
- for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator
- through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. It can be linked to serious violence.
- specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines.

We will ensure that all staff are aware that children can become trapped by this type of exploitation and that, as they become involved, often commit crimes themselves. We will ensure that we recognise their vulnerability as victims even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education

Please see the home office guidance:

[Home Office and The Children's Society County Lines Toolkit for Professionals](#)

[Preventing youth violence and gang involvement - Practical advice for schools and colleges \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)



P. SERIOUS VIOLENCE

Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023 (para 48)

We will ensure that all staff are aware of the indicators that may signal that children are at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime.

Indicators may include:

- Unexplained gifts/new possessions - these can indicate children have been approached by/involved with individuals associated with criminal networks/gangs
- Increased absence from school
- Change in friendship/relationships with others/groups
- Significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm/significant change in wellbeing
- Signs of assault/unexplained injuries

Staff will also be made aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to manage them.

Please see the home office guidance:

[Preventing youth violence and gang involvement - Practical advice for schools and colleges \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Q. MENTAL HEALTH

See Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 (paras 45-47)

We will ensure that all staff are aware that mental health problems could be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action will be taken following this policy's procedures.

Staff will access training or information so that they are aware of how abuse, neglect and/or other traumatic childhood experiences can impact on children's mental health, behaviour and education.

We will ensure that we access professional advice to support us in identifying pupils suffering from mental health problems as well as following best practice mental health guidance in schools, including the following:

[Mental health and behaviour in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Mental wellbeing | Overview | PHE School Zone](#)



R. Domestic Abuse

See Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023 (para 43)

All of our staff are trained in understanding the detrimental impact on children of experiencing domestic abuse. We sign up to our local Operation Encompass programme to ensure we are made aware of incidents by our local partners so that we can secure the help that children need and, if required, refer in a timely way to those who have the expertise to help.

SAFEGUARDING POLICY: APPENDIX 1

Multi-Agency Meetings		
 <p>Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Referral taken up by First contact Service: 'reasonable cause to suspect child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm'. ●To agree whether to start s47 enquiries and to begin/complete a core assessment under Child Act 1989. ●Professionals meeting only ●Held at short notice (some professionals may be available by phone). Police Sergeant and investigating officer (VU); Assessment and Intervention Team manager and SW, Health, referrer (if professional) and other relevant colleagues. ●Usually held in A&I Team office, hospital. ●To PLAN how to look into the concern: share information, consider criminal investigation, medicals, interviews etc. 	
 <p>Initial Child Protection Conference</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●15 DAYS after last strategy meeting ●Accessible public building: A&I offices ●Parents/carers (supporter/legal adviser) and all relevant professionals who work with family members and children attend ● Conference is to decide whether the child(ren) are at continuing risk of significant harm and whether CP Plan needs to be put in place. ●Tasks: prepare a report for the conference on all children in family you work with ●Share report with parents and carers at least two working days before the conference (open/transparent procedure so parents can know and question all information in advance). ●Ensure that child's views are given ●Produce single-agency chronology. ●If children not put on list then consideration of services needed, now passes to relevant Child Protection Team. 	
 <p>Core Group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●10 DAYS later. Date for this meeting and first Review Conference is set at the Initial Conference ●This 'core' of essential professionals will work with the family and the young person to try and achieve change and improvement so that the child is not still at continuing risk of harm (these safety issues are dealt with before other 'welfare' matters) ● Key worker is the social worker ●The group complete the Child Protection Plan and complete work on the core assessment as part of this ●The chronologies are merged and continuously updated as working documents ●Initially meetings quite frequent but generally held about every 4-6 weeks 	
 <p>Review CP Conference</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●10 WEEKS (3 months) before first Review conference. ● Evaluate effectiveness of Core Group in effecting change and better care of the children ● '...to review the safety, health and development of the child against the planned outcomes set out in the child protection plan' ●to see whether CP plan should continue to be in place or should be changed ●Child's wishes and feelings must be sought and taken into account ●if the child is not still at risk of significant harm then they should not require a CP plan ●Tasks: report needed and shared with parents/carers 7 days prior to conference: evaluation what has changed, the impact on child's welfare against objectives set out in the plan 	



Prevent referral flow chart County Durham

Prevent referral flow chart for County Durham

The Channel Programme is a key part of the Prevent strategy. Section 36 of the Act requires local authorities and others to provide support for people who are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, before they commit an offence. This process, known as [Channel](#), operates in the pre-criminal space and aims to provide support to individuals at an early stage and help safeguard them from radicalisation.

