

Policy Statement

WCDVS abides by the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and is committed to safeguarding practice that reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice requirements.

- We recognise the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation has an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

Purpose

WCDVS will:

- Protect children and young people who receive WCDVS's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.
- Provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of WCDVS, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students. Failure to comply with the policy and related procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

In safeguarding children, WCDVS is committed to the principles to the Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership. <https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/>

The Prevent Duty

Some organisations in England, Scotland and Wales have a duty, as a specified authority under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015, to identify vulnerable children and young people and prevent them from being drawn into terrorism. This is known as the Prevent duty. These organisations include:

- Schools
- Registered childcare providers
- Local authorities
- Police
- Prisons and probation services
- NHS trusts and foundations.
- Other organisations may also have Prevent duties if they perform delegated local authority functions.

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Children can be exposed to different views and receive information from various sources. Some of these views may be considered radical or extreme.

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

Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Training and Awareness

WCDVS will ensure an appropriate level of safeguarding training is available to its Trustees, Employees, Volunteers and any relevant persons linked to the organisation who requires it (e.g., contractors).

For all employees who are working or volunteering with children, this requires them as a minimum to have awareness training that enables them to:

- Understand what safeguarding is and their role in safeguarding children
- Recognise a child potentially in need of safeguarding and take action
- Understand how to report a safeguarding Alert
- Understand dignity and respect when working with children
- Have knowledge of the Safeguarding Children Policy

Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership provides free safeguarding training
<https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/training/starthere.asp>

Similarly, employees and volunteers may encounter concerns about the safety and wellbeing of an adult at risk of abuse. For more information about adults safeguarding, refer to WCDVS Adults Safeguarding Policy.

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm.

WCDVS has a duty to ensure that it makes arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, that reflect the needs of the children they deal with; and to protect them from abuse or the risk of abuse. This policy details the safeguarding arrangements that must be in place to ensure WCDVS fulfils its duties and responsibilities.

As adults and/or professionals or volunteers at WCDVS, we have a responsibility to safeguard children and promote their welfare. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children – and in particular protecting them from significant harm - depends upon effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise.

Individual children, especially some of the most vulnerable children and those at greatest risk of social exclusion, will need co-ordinated help from health, education, children's social care and, often, the voluntary sector and other agencies.

For those children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, joint working is essential, to safeguard and promote their welfare and – where necessary – to help bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against them.

WCDVS recognises the need to work alongside relevant organisations, partners and professionals and ensure that it will:

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- Be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect;
- Be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children;
- Share and help to analyse information so that an assessment can be made of the child's needs and circumstances;
- Contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the child's welfare;
- Take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the child against specific plans;
- Work co-operatively with parents unless this is inconsistent with ensuring the child's safety.

Definitions of abuse and neglect

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is when someone hurts or harms a child or young person on purpose. It includes hitting with hands or objects, slapping and punching, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning and scalding, biting and scratching, breaking bones, drowning.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g.: rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts.

They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Online and digital abuse

Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet, facilitated through technology like computers, tablets, mobile phones and other internet enabled devices (Department for Education 2018).

It can happen anywhere online that allows digital communications such as social networks, text and messaging apps, email and private messaging, online chats, comments and voice chat in games.

Children and young people can experience further abuse when abusive content is recorded, uploaded or shared by others online.

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Children and young people may experience several types of online abuse such as bullying/cyberbullying, emotional abuse (including emotional blackmail, e.g. pressuring them to comply with sexual requests via technology), sexting (pressure or coercion to create sexual images), sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

Online Grooming

Online grooming is where someone befriends a child online and builds up their trust with the intention of exploiting them and causing them harm.

Harm caused by grooming can be sexual abuse, both in person and online, and exploitation to obtain sexually explicit images and videos of the child.

Grooming techniques could also be used as part of the radicalisation process or to obtain financial information from the child or their family.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

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

Honour Based Abuse

Honour based abuse is a collection of practices used to control behaviour within families in order to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.

Procedures (What to do if you have concerns about a child)

You may have concerns about a child because of something you have seen or heard, or a child may choose to disclose something to you. If a child discloses information to you, you should:

- Do not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to share this information and refer to Children's Social Care Services.
- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is said.
- Reassure the child, but only as far as is honest, don't make promises you may not be able to keep e.g.: 'Everything will be alright now', 'You'll never have to see that person again'.
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the child refers to it. For example, you could say, 'You're not to blame'.
- Do not interrogate the child; it is not your responsibility to investigate.
- Do not ask leading questions (e.g.: Did he touch your private parts?), ask open questions such as 'Anything else to tell me?'
- Do not ask the child to repeat the information for another member of staff.
- Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.
- Make notes if possible or write up your conversation as soon as possible afterwards.

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- Record the date, time, place any non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child (do not paraphrase)
- Record statements and observable things rather than interpretations or assumptions.

Whatever the nature of your concerns, discuss them with WCDVS Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO). In the absence of the DSO you should contact WCDVS's Lead Trustee for Safeguarding. (In the absence of both refer directly to Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership or in an emergency, the Police)

If concerns remain after your discussion with the DSO, the DSO should refer to:

Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership

Tel: 0333 240 1727,

Email: safeguarding.hub@cumberland.gov.uk

Postal Address: Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership, 117 Botchergate, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 1RD

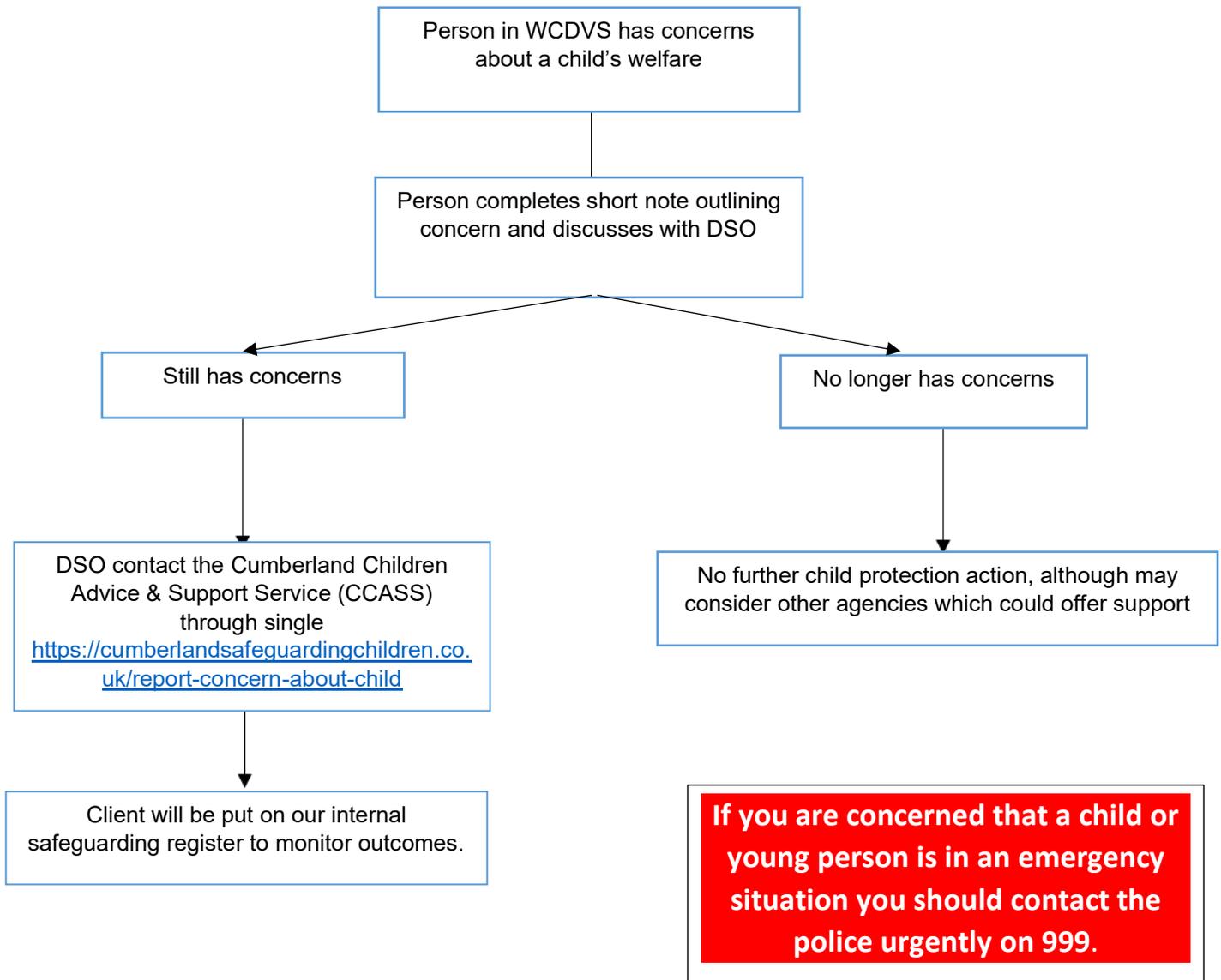
Child Exploitation and Online Protection

www.ceop.police.uk

The DSO will be asked to provide as much information as possible. Such as the child's full name, date of birth, address, school, GP, languages spoken, any disabilities the child may have, details of the parents. The DSO should follow up the verbal referral in writing, within 48hrs

See the diagram on the next page for the process that should be followed

PROCESS CHART - WHERE THERE ARE CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD'S WELFARE



Allegations against staff/LADO

If you have concerns regarding someone who works with a child including foster carers and volunteers these should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). This applies to all paid, unpaid, volunteers, casual, agency employees or anyone working in a self-employed capacity. These individuals are considered working/volunteering in positions of trust.

What must be reported?

As outlined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' the LADO must be informed of all allegations against adults who work with children.

The LADO is located within Children and Families Services and should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates that they may not be suitable to work with children

What will happen next?

The LADO will record all concerns, including allegations or offences emanating from outside of work. They will provide advice and guidance and help determine that the allegation sits within the scope of the procedures.

The LADO is involved in the initial phase of the allegation through to the conclusion of the case and will provide advice and guidance to Senior Managers on the progress of cases to ensure they are resolved as quickly as possible. In addition, the LADO will help co-ordinate information sharing with the right people. They will also monitor and track any investigation with the expectation that it is resolved as quickly as possible.

<https://cumbriascp.trixonline.co.uk/>

Contact us

If you have concerns regarding an adult who works with a child then this should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day. To report a concern to LADO please use the notification form:

LADO Position of Trust Referral

Send completed forms to the Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership, using any of the following methods:

(please note: if sending by email we advise that the document should be password protected) [How to password protect a document](#)

- Tel: 03003 033892
- Email: LADO@cumberland.gov.uk
- Post: LADO, Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership, 117 Botchergate, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 1RD

Allegations Involving a Members of Staff / Volunteer

WCDVS is committed to having effective recruitment and human resources procedures, including checking all staff and volunteers to make sure they are safe to work with children and young people.

However, there may still be occasions when there is an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer.

Allegations against those who work with children, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, cover a wide range of circumstances.

All allegations of abuse of children by those who work with children or care for them must be taken seriously. All reports of allegations must be submitted within one working day to DSO or in the absence of the DSO to the Lead Trustee.

If the allegation relates to the DSO then the Lead Trustee should be contacted.

The following procedure should be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a person who works/volunteers with children for WCDVS has:

- Behaved in a way which has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way which indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children.

The allegations may relate to the persons behaviour at work, at home or in another setting. The DSO will discuss the matter to determine what steps should be taken and where necessary obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The discussion should also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded, whether a referral to the Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership is required and/or whether disciplinary action is appropriate.

Some allegations will be so serious as to require immediate referral to the Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Police, but common sense and judgement must be applied in reaching a decision about what action to take.

If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer Significant Harm, the DSO will immediately refer the matter to the Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Some allegations may be less serious and at first sight might not seem to warrant consideration of a police investigation or enquiries by the Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership. However, it is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are followed up and examined objectively by someone independent of the organisation. Consequently, the DSO should be informed of all allegations that come to the employer's attention and appear to come within the scope of this procedure so that he or she can consult Police and social care colleagues as appropriate.

Where such allegations are made, consideration must be given to the following three strands:

- 1) The police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
- 2) Enquiries and assessment by Children's Social Care Services as to whether the child is need of protection or in need of services;

3) Consideration by the employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

Related policies and procedures

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures, including:

- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers working with children and young people
- Vulnerable adults policy
- Code of Conduct for children and young people
- WCDVS Online Safety Policy Statement
- WCDVS Online Safety Agreement for young people
- WCDVS Disciplinary Procedure
- WCDVS Equality and Diversity Policy

Definitions

Children

In this policy, as in the Children Act 1989 and 2004, a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means children and young people throughout.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

Child protection

Part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Trustees

The ultimate responsibility for safeguarding lies with the Board of Trustees supported by senior staff. Any failure to have systems and processes in place to protect children and adults at risk would result in failure to meet statutory and non-statutory constitutional and governance requirements.

Staff and Volunteer Awareness

All staff and volunteers will be made aware of this policy as part of their initial induction process and there will be regular briefings and updates. Where necessary or possible, staff will attend appropriate training courses, such as Child Safeguarding training every 2 years provided by Cumbria Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CSCP)

Recruitment and Selection Procedures

WCDVS's procedures for recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers (set out in separate documents) include robust processes that support WCDV's duties around safeguarding including the use of DBS checks.