

Hall Green and North Solihull Child Contact Centres

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Basic principles

1. Hall Green and North Solihull Child Contact Centres ('the Centres') believe that children and young people need safe environments in which they can grow and develop in confidence.
2. The Centres recognise that organisations working with and supporting children and young people have a duty to keep them safe.
3. The Centres place Safeguarding children and young people and Child Protection at the centre of its activities.
4. The Centres are committed to and working towards the objectives as defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023* (as updated in May 2025) ('the guidance') *(See Appendix 3 below for relevant extracts of the guidance and explanatory notes)*
5. The Centres believe that children and young people should not be exposed to negligence or avoidable risks.
6. The Centres recognise that Safeguarding and Child Protection are emotive issues that need to be handled both sensitively and carefully.
7. The Centres are committed to creating and implementing policies and procedures that will ensure where risks need to be taken regarding children and young people they are both calculated and carefully managed.
8. The Centres recognise the difference between Child Protection and Safeguarding namely:
 - Child Protection is the process of protecting individual children identified as either suffering or likely to suffer significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect. It involves recognising signs and symptoms of physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect and acting upon them.
 - Safeguarding involves keeping children and young people safe from a much wider range of potential dangers and/or harm. It looks at preventative action rather than just reactive action.
9. The Centres are committed to ensuring that all its staff, trustees and unpaid support workers are aware of, kept up to date with and operate in accordance with good practice in relation with Safeguarding and Child Protection. This will mean that they will have the ability to recognise, respond to, report, record and refer issues of Safeguarding and Child Protection

Accountability

10. The Coordinators will be responsible and accountable for all aspects of the Centres' work in relation to Safeguarding and Child Protection. The Centres are committed to ensuring that all their volunteers, staff and trustees know about and operate Safeguarding and deal with Child Protection issues, if they arise.

Intentions

11 (a) Managing Safeguarding and Child Protection within the Centres

The Coordinators will manage all aspects of the Centres' work in relation to Safeguarding and Child Protection. In addition he/she will be responsible for ensuring the Centres are aware of and operating in accordance with their Local Safeguarding Partnerships' policies and procedures in relation to Safeguarding and Child Protection.

11 (b) Recruitment

The Centres will have a clearly defined recruitment process for their staff, volunteers and trustees. This will include application forms, checking ID, interviews, checking references, induction procedures and probationary periods. The Coordinators will be responsible for ensuring these processes are followed.

11 (c) Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

All volunteers, staff and trustees will be checked to an enhanced level when they first join the organisation and every three years thereafter.

All volunteers, staff and trustees, will be aware of and kept up to date with good practice and procedural changes in relation to DBS checks.

11 (d) Education and Training

It is a condition of being accepted that a volunteer undertakes initial induction training and agrees to participate in the various subsequent training courses notified to them by personal attendance or workbooks. Annual Safeguarding and Child Protection Training is mandatory for Coordinators, volunteers, staff and trustees. It also forms part of the induction training for new volunteers.

11 (e) Attending Sessions

All new volunteers will be subject to a probationary period of four contact sessions. Thereafter volunteers at Hall Green agree to attend at least one session every six weeks and volunteers at North Solihull once every four weeks, holidays and illness excepted. They may attend more often if they wish or if they offer to fill a shortage.

11 (f) Providing Advice, Support and Supervision

The Centres will ensure that their volunteers and staff receive the advice, supervision and support they require, when they are working with Safeguarding and Child Protection incidents or concerns. Volunteers and Staff are in particular referred to the current NACCC Safeguarding and Child Protection Booklet, which includes the Step by Step Guide, The Reporting Form and Information to guide decisions when using the step by step guide. *(See Appendix 1 below for the Step by Step Guide and information to guide decisions, when using it and Appendix 2 for responding and reacting to a child making an allegation of abuse)*

11 (g) **Sharing information**

- (i) The Centres have a statutory obligation to pass information to relevant partner organisations when a Safeguarding or Child Protection issue has arisen within the Centres or elsewhere.
- (ii) The Centres have a recognised procedures for volunteers, staff and trustees to follow when such a Safeguarding or Child Protection issue has arisen within the centre or elsewhere.
- (iii) The Centres will make user families and referrers aware of the Centres' statutory obligation to record and report any incidents relating to Safeguarding and Child Protection.

11 (h) **Distribution of the Centres' Policy for Safeguarding and Child Protection**

A current copy of this policy will be available to volunteers, staff and trustees. It supersedes the Centres' previous Policy for Safeguarding and Child Protection (A Working Document and Volunteer Agreement that incorporates Best Practice). New volunteers undergoing Induction Training and Safeguarding and Child Protection Training for the first time will sign this Policy and Agreement to signify their agreement to the same.

Copies of the policy will also be available to referrers, families using the Centres and other organisations upon request.

11 (i) **Review of the Centres' Policy for Safeguarding and Child Protection**

This Policy will be reviewed at twelve monthly intervals by the Management Committee of the Centres.

Volunteer Policy

12 This separate policy in its current form will be provided to new volunteers and will continue to be available to all volunteers. Volunteers should familiarise themselves with its contents. Attention is drawn particularly to the last section on **Resolving problems** and the procedures that will be followed in the event of problems arising between the volunteer and the Centre which he/she attends.

Addendum to Policy for Safeguarding and Child Protection E-Security and E-Safety

1. Hall Green & North Solihull Child Contact Centres are committed to prevention of online abuse within their Centres.
2. Many users of the Centres (Non-resident and Resident Parents, other adult members of the extended family such as Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles, Carers and the children themselves) bring to the Centre mobile or smartphones tablets and laptops of varying types and other electronic devices (collectively 'the devices') which have online facilities, including email facilities and the ability to connect to the internet. These devices will also carry apps and other facilities to access a variety of different functions e.g. computer games.
3. It is the responsibility of the non-resident parent having contact to his/her child or children and/or other family members having contact to these children to supervise and monitor the child or children's use of these devices and ensure that all their usage is entirely age appropriate and that they do not view any inappropriate material. This applies to all forms of material, including printed and written text, photographs, videos, films, cartoons, apps, other images and computer games. Particular care should be exercised if emails and Social Media are accessed. Non-resident parents and other family members should check the content of these items themselves before allowing children to view them.
4. Guidance and advice about Online Abuse and Safety and Online Porn is available on the NSPCCC's website www.nspccc.org.uk

Monitoring

5. Volunteers at both Centres (as directed by any of the Coordinators) will discreetly monitor online and other mobile phone and computer use by children present. This will be at periodic intervals during contact sessions. It is the responsibility of parents and other family members to cooperate with this monitoring process.

Taking of Photographs at the Centres

6. Non-resident parents or other family members having contact at the Centres may take photographs of their family's children attending the contact sessions but shall not post them on social media. Other centre users and volunteers working at the Centres are not to be included in the photographs.

Sanctions

7. Any parent or family member who breaches the terms of this addendum Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy may at the discretion of the Chair of Directors and Trustees

or the Coordinators have their family's place at either Hall Green or North Solihull Contact Centre withdrawn and future allocated sessions cancelled.

8. Depending upon the circumstances of the breach, a Safeguarding Report may be made to the relevant local authority's Children's Department or Trust and to the National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC).

Statement of Commitment to Hall Green Churches Child Contact Centre (a Company limited by Guarantee which operates Hall Green & North Solihull Child Contact Centres) in relation to the Centres' Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Volunteer Policy

This form is to be completed by all of Hall Green & Smith's Wood Child Contact Centres' Volunteers and staff.

- a) I confirm I agree to the terms within this document/agreement relating to Attending Sessions and Training and have read and agree to be bound by the provisions of the Volunteer Policy.
- b) I have read and understood the standards and guidelines contained within Hall Green & North Solihull Child Contact Centres' Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- c) I agree with the principles contained therein and accept the importance of implementing them in my capacity as an employee or volunteer of Hall Green & North Solihull Child Contact Centres.
- d) I agree to notify the Coordinator of Hall Green and North Solihull Child Contact Centres, should I be, or should I become the subject of a criminal conviction, a caution, reprimand or warning in respect of a criminal offence or a listing on the barring register of DBS.

_____ Signature

_____ Date

Appendix 1

NACCC Step by Step Guide as to Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a preventative measure

If you think a child may be in danger, discuss the perceived problem with your co-ordinator/team leader. If your co-ordinator is not available and you are still concerned, call the Out of Hours number and/or the police.

STEP BY STEP GUIDE

What to do when you have concerns about Safeguarding...

Volunteer has concerns

Discuss with Coordinator/
Team Leader

Maybe occasions when
immediate action is required

**CALL OUT OF HOURS
SERVICE or 999**

You may wish to inform
parents of concerns/actions

Record details on NACCC
form. Remember - time,
date and sign

May call NACCC helpline
week days or emergency
helpline Saturdays
* See below

IF
Self Referral
LA Referral
OTHER –
CALL OUT OF HOURS SERVICE

IF
CAFCASS Referral –
**CALL CAFCASS or
OUT OF HOURS SERVICE**

Send copy of form duly
filled in to:

 1. Out of Hours and/or
Police and/or CAFCASS

 2. NACCC Head Office

WITHIN 24 HOURS

TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

NACCC Helpline **0845 4500 280**

NACCC Saturday Helpline **07540 703577**

Police - 999 or local number

CAFCASS Office

(Liaison Officer)

Social Services

Out of Hours

LSCB

Centre Name

Named Safeguarding Person

Contact No 1

Contact No 2

Before a session starts, all volunteers should know **who they must contact, who is the named safeguarding person** and have the relevant telephone numbers to hand

Be familiar with: • 'child abuse – signs and symptoms' • 'Responding and reacting to a child making an allegation (www.naccc.org.uk/members/safeguarding)' • NACCC Publications © 2012. • Registered Charity No. 10786

Your centre should have completed the relevant telephone numbers in the box provided

B. This poster should be displayed clearly at each contact session

Information to guide your decisions when using the Step by Step guide

Child abuse: signs and symptoms

To help readers, each category incorporates physical and behavioural signs:

Physical Abuse

Physical indicators

Unexplained bruises, welts, lacerations, abrasions, cuts

- on face, lips, mouth, ears
- on torso, back, buttocks, thighs
- in various stages of healing
- clustering forming regular patterns
- reflecting shape of article used e.g. belt, buckle, electrical flex;
- on several different surface areas
- regularly appear after absence, weekend, or holiday;
- bite marks or fingernail marks

Unexplained burns

- cigar, cigarettes, especially on soles, buttocks, palms, back
- immersion burns, forcibly immersed in hot water
- patterned such as an iron,
- rope burns on arms, legs, neck, torso

Unexplained fractures

This list is by no means exhaustive. Unexplained injuries also means injuries which are denied, poorly explained or where the explanation is not consistent with the injury.

The behavioural signs for physical abuse include:

- Flinching when approached or touched
- Afraid to go home
- Wary of adult contacts, frightened of parents / carers
- Difficult to comfort
- Becomes apprehensive when other children cry
- Extremes of behaviour: aggressive, compliant, impulsive, withdrawn
- Poor peer relationships
- Panics as a response to pain
- Inappropriate clothing (long sleeves in hot weather) covering injury

Again this list is by no means exhaustive. If you are worried SHARE your concerns with your coordinator or helpline.

Neglect

Please note that neglect is not easy to recognise.

Physical indicators

The following may give cause for concern

- Consistent hunger
- Poor hygiene
- Inappropriate dress

- Unattended physical problems and/or medical needs
- Always tired

The behavioural indicators are:

- Begging
- Stealing food
- Care givers always late to bring or collect child
- Constant fatigue or listlessness
- Attention seeking
- Not achieving milestones
- Isolates themselves

Please remember that there are many more signs and that sometimes a child will have a combination of signs or no signs at all.

Sexual Abuse

Please note that the signs are very varied and can often be linked to other forms of abuse. The following is a guide to the most common physical and behavioural signs only.

Physical indicators:

- Difficulty in walking, sitting down
- Stained or bloody underclothing
- Pain/itching in genital area
- Bruising, bleeding, injuries to external genitalia/vaginal areas
- STD
- Excessive crying
- Sickness
- Wetting / soiling

Behavioural indicators:

- Bizarre, sophisticated or age inappropriate sexual behaviour / knowledge
- Promiscuity
- Sudden changes in behaviour
- Wary of adults
- Feeling different from other children
- Over compliance
- Eating / sleep disorders
- Overtly seductive
- Excessive masturbation
- Inability to focus/concentrate
- Regressive behaviour

There are many more signs of sexual abuse and some signs could be misleading. Always share your concerns with colleagues or your team leader Remember that a sexually abused child is emotionally abused too and probably has been physically abused in the process.

Emotional Abuse

These are probably the most difficult signs to link to actual abuse as there may be other factors affecting the child's development or behaviour. The following is a list of what are commonly regarded as the main indicators:

Physical indicators:

- Failure to thrive
- Delays in physical, mental or emotional development or progress

Behavioural Indicators:

Behaviour disturbances such as:

- Sucking, rocking, biting
- Anti-social / destructive
- Sleep disorders, inhibition of play
- Either compliant and/or passive and/or aggressive and/or demanding
- Inappropriately adult or infant
- Rapid swings of behaviour.

Other types of harm that children might be subjected to and should be protected from could also include, but is not limited to:

- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Grooming and exploitation
- Trafficking and modern slavery
- Exposure to or infliction of domestic abuse
- Bullying or cyber bullying
- Exposure to other inappropriate content or behaviour, such as violence or criminal behaviour
- Self-harm
- Physical harm when engaging with activities without adequate supervision

Appendix 2

Responding and reacting to a child making an allegation of abuse

Children may ask for advice, talk to you personally or express themselves spontaneously in a group when you are present; the following points are there to help you in such cases:

- Stay calm
- Remain neutral and non-judgemental
- Listen carefully to what is being said
- Do not promise to keep secrets
- Let the child talk at his/her own pace
- Do not ask direct questions that may suggest an answer
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in sharing this information with you
- Tell them what you will do and explain that you have to share this information to make them safe

- Use the child's own words and language they can understand
- Do not ask them to repeat what they have said to anyone
- Record in writing what the child has said, who you have talked to, names that were mentioned and ensure your records are dated, timed and signed.
- Talk to your designated person and / or seek professional advice/help.

This is fairly standard advice which in one form or another can be found in most Local Safeguarding Partnerships' Guidelines, Specialised training manuals and Statutory Agencies' advice.

Appendix 3

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

Introduction

Nothing is more important than children's welfare. Every child deserves to grow up in a safe, stable, and loving home. Children who need help and protection deserve high quality and effective support. This requires individuals, agencies, and organisations to be clear about their own and each other's roles and responsibilities, and how they work together.

In this guidance, a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means 'children and young people' throughout. The term practitioner is used in the guidance to refer to individuals who work with children and their families in any capacity, including a range of professionals, such as qualified social workers and those who work for the statutory safeguarding partners or in education settings.

Whilst it is parents and carers who have primary care for their children, local authorities, working with partner organisations and agencies, have specific duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area. The Children Act 1989:

1. sets out specific duties to provide services to children in their area if they are in need and to undertake enquiries if they believe a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm. The Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children's Services in local authorities are the key points of professional and political accountability, with responsibility for the effective delivery of these functions. The Children Act 2004

2 placed a duty on the local authority to promote co-operation with partners and other agencies in order to improve the wellbeing of children in their area. It also placed duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure they too give sufficient regard to children in need of help and safeguarding.

Amendments made by the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to the Children Act 2004 strengthened this already important relationship by placing new duties on the police, integrated care boards (ICBs) and the local authority, as statutory safeguarding partners. Safeguarding partners are under a duty to make arrangements to work together, and with other partners

locally including education providers and childcare settings, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing 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
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework.

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined for the purpose of this guidance as activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

Effective safeguarding means practitioners should understand and be sensitive to factors, including economic and social circumstances and ethnicity, which can impact children and families' lives.

Chapter 4 Organisational Responsibilities (extract from Individual Organisational Responsibilities)

Voluntary, charity, social enterprise, faith-based organisations, and private sectors (pages 128 & 129)

310. Voluntary, charity, social enterprise (VCSE) and private sector organisations and agencies play an important role in safeguarding children through the services they deliver. Some of these will work with particular communities, with different races and faith communities, and deliver via health, adult social care, housing, and Prison and Probation Services. They may, as part of their work, provide a wide range of activities for children and have an important role in safeguarding children and supporting families and communities.

311. Like other organisations and agencies who work with children, they should have appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard and protect children from harm. Many of these organisations and agencies as well as many schools, children's centres, early years, and childcare organisations, will be subject to charity law and regulated either by the Charity Commission and/or other "principal" regulators. Charity trustees are responsible for ensuring

that those benefiting from, or working with, their charity, are not harmed in any way through contact with it. The Charity Commission for England and Wales provides guidance on charity compliance which should be followed¹⁸⁷.

312. Some of these organisations and agencies are large national charities whilst others will have a much smaller local reach. Some will be delivering statutory services and may be run by volunteers, such as library services. This important group of organisations includes youth services not delivered by local authorities or district councils.

313. All practitioners working in these organisations and agencies who are working with children and their families are subject to the same safeguarding responsibilities, whether paid or a volunteer.

314. Every VCSE, faith-based organisation and private sector organisation or agency should have policies in place to safeguard and protect children from harm. These should be followed, and systems should be in place to ensure compliance in this. Individual practitioners, whether paid or volunteer, should be aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and protecting children from harm, how they should respond to child protection concerns and how to make a referral to local authority children's social care or the police, if necessary.

315. Every VCSE, faith-based organisation and private sector organisation or agency should have in place the arrangements described in this chapter. They should be aware of how they need to work with the safeguarding partners in a local area. Charities (within the meaning of section 1 Charities Act 2011), religious organisations (regulation 34 and schedule 3 to School Admissions) and any person involved in the provision, supervision or oversight of sport or leisure are included within the Relevant Agency Regulations¹⁸⁸. This means if the safeguarding partners name them as a relevant partner they must cooperate. Other VCSE, faith-based and private sector organisations not on the list of relevant agencies can also be asked to co-operate as part of the local arrangements and should do so.

There is emphasis upon the need to identify children who would benefit from early help, particularly in the categories listed in the section below. Early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

Assessing need and providing help

The guidance highlights specifically that “practitioners should, in particular, be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
- is a young carer

- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- 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 a privately fostered child

A need for early help is more likely to be spotted by agencies where children in the above categories spend significant periods of time during a week at their premises or by whom they may already be supported for other problems e.g. schools, nurseries, playgroups, social workers, counsellors, therapists, doctors and other healthcare workers. However you will see from the section below that staff and volunteers at Child Contact Centres are subject to the same safeguarding responsibilities, whether paid or a volunteer – we are a charity working with children and their families.

We have a responsibility to be equally vigilant. There are some families where pre-school children are brought up entirely in their home environment and do not attend nurseries or playgroups. The children could also escape the attention of professionals, such as health visitors. Older children of school age may not attend school at all because they are being educated at home by one or both of their parents or other relatives. If such families attend our Contact Centres, we may be the only agency in a position to spot safeguarding concerns and/or the need for early help.

Organisational Responsibilities

Under this section there is reference to -

Voluntary, charity, social enterprise, faith-based organisations and private sectors:

This highlights that all practitioners working in these organisations and agencies who are working with children and their families are subject to the same safeguarding responsibilities, whether paid or a volunteer. The guidance also highlights that charity trustees are responsible for ensuring that those benefiting from, or working with, their charity, are not harmed in any way through contact with it.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 provided for Local Safeguarding Children's Boards to be phased out and replaced by local 'safeguarding children partnerships'. The transition was to be completed by 29th June 2019. Both Birmingham and Solihull have established safeguarding partnerships, details of which can be found on their respective websites.

Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership www.lscpbirmingham.org.uk

Solihull Safeguarding Children Partnership solihull.lscp.co.uk

In practice there is no change to the arrangements for reporting safeguarding incidents.

The telephone numbers to report incidents are:

Birmingham Children's Trust

During Office Hours 0121 303 1888 Out of Hours 0121 675 4806

Solihull Children's Department

During Office Hours 0121 788 4300 Out of Hours 0121 605 6060

In an Emergency always call 999

Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

Under the new legislation, three safeguarding partners (local authorities, chief officers of police, and clinical commissioning groups) have had to make arrangements to work together with relevant agencies (as they consider appropriate) to safeguard and protect the welfare of children in the area.

The geographical footprint for the new arrangements is based on local authority areas. Every local authority, clinical commissioning group and police force must be covered by a local safeguarding arrangement.

Safeguarding partners

- The 3 safeguarding partners have had to agree on ways to co-ordinate their safeguarding services; act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others; and implement local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents.
- To fulfil this role, the three safeguarding partners have had to set out how they will work together and with any relevant agencies.
- All 3 safeguarding partners have equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements.