

Parent and Carer Alliance



Care Action Protect Empower

PARENT AND CARER ALLIANCE C.I.C

Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults Policy and Policy Statement

March 2024

Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership - <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gscp/>

Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adult Board - <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gsab/safeguarding-adults-board/>

Disclosure and Barring Service - <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

[Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101444/working-together-to-safeguard-children-2023-statutory-guidance.pdf)

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Safeguarding Policy Statement

The purpose and scope of this policy statement

The overall aim of the Parent and Carer Alliance is to support families whose children have additional needs so they can live better lives. We work to ensure families are given a real opportunity to have a voice in the decision-making processes which affect their lives and to feel more confident in championing getting the needs of their families met. We do this by:

- Running events and hosting webinars to enable increased understanding of legislation and rights.
- Providing an advice service that gives practical advice and on how to ensure rights to support are met.
- Contributing valuable lived experience when working on local and national projects to improve services.
- Providing safe spaces for families to meet virtually, and face to face, to share their experiences with others experiencing the same challenges, who truly understand, to alleviate loneliness and have fun.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who receive the Parent and Carer Alliance's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.
- To provide staff and volunteers, as well as children, young people, vulnerable adults, and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection. This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of the Parent and Carer Alliance, including directors, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, students, and work experience staff.

Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from [Child protection system for England | NSPCC Learning](#)

We follow the child and adult protection guidelines and procedures developed by the [Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board](#) and [Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership \(GSCP\)](#) and Government guidance and procedures in [Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) [Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Supporting Documents

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance, and other related documents:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Code of conduct for children, young people, and adults
- Photography and sharing images policy
- Social media policy
- Complaints Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Induction, training, supervision, and support policy

We believe that:

- Children, young people, and vulnerable adults should never experience harm of any kind
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers, and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have 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
- Extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse

We will seek to keep children, young people, and vulnerable adults safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them
- Appointing a designated safeguarding lead and deputy for children, young people, and vulnerable adults
- Adopting child, young person and vulnerable adult protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures, and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures
- Developing and implementing an effective photography and sharing of images policy and related procedures
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training, and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures, and behaviour codes confidently and competently

- Recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Recording, storing, and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance [more information about this is available from the Information Commissioner's Office: [For organisations | ICO](#)]
- Making sure that children, young people, vulnerable adults, and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- Using our safeguarding and child, young person, and vulnerable adult protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, vulnerable adults, parents, families, and carers appropriately
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, vulnerable adults, parents, carers, families, staff, and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- Building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people, vulnerable adults, and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns

Safeguarding Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually; however, it may be amendments may be added throughout the year. The DSL/DDSL will ensure staff and volunteers are informed of any amendments

Dealing with disclosures and concerns about the welfare of a child, young person, or vulnerable adult

Recognising Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child, young person or vulnerable adult and can be caused through either inflicting harm, witnessing harm to others, or failing to prevent harm. Types of abuse include:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Domestic abuse
- Online abuse
- Grooming
- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Criminal Exploitation and Gangs
- Child Trafficking
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Non-recent abuse
- Child on Child abuse

Other safeguarding concerns to be aware of include:

- Mental Health
- Homelessness
- Children missing education
- Radicalisation and extremism
- Private Fostering

We are aware that:

- Abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label, in most cases; multiple issues will overlap with one another.
- Child, young person, or vulnerable adult welfare concerns may arise in many different contexts and can vary greatly in terms of their nature and seriousness.
- Abuse and neglect can happen over a period of time or be a one-off event. This can have major long-term impacts on all aspects of a child, young person or vulnerable adults' health, development, and well-being.
- The warning signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect can vary from child to child.
- Disclosure or evidence for concern may occur in a number of ways including a comment made by a child or adult, physical evidence such as bruising, a change in behaviour, or inappropriate behaviour or knowledge.
- Parental behaviours may also indicate child abuse or neglect, so staff will be alert to parent-child interactions or concerning parental behaviours; this could include parents who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol or if there is a sudden change in their mental health.
- It is important to respond to problems as early as possible and provide the right support and services for the child and their family and recognise that a warning sign does not automatically mean a child is being abused.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- We acknowledge that children with SEND can face additional safeguarding challenges as they may have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse and also that speech, language, and communication needs may make it difficult to tell others what is happening to them.
- We are aware that children with SEND can be disproportionately impacted by safeguarding concerns such as bullying.
- We are alert to indicators of abuse such as behaviour/mood change, or injuries and we are aware that children with SEND may not always outwardly display indicators of abuse.

Responding to a Disclosure

We are aware that children, young people, or vulnerable adults may not be ready or know how to disclose abuse and that they may also be afraid to tell. It is important that we build relationships and display professional curiosity. If a child, young person, or vulnerable adult discloses abuse, we will respond appropriately by:

- Listening and avoiding interrupting, except to clarify and allowing the child, young person, or vulnerable adult to make the disclosure at their own pace and in their own way.
- Not interrogating the child, young person or vulnerable adult but asking open-ended questions to clarify the situation.
- Not making any promises to the child about not passing on information. Information may need to be shared to get help in place.
- Recording information accurately, including the timing, setting and those present, as well as what was said.
- Informing the DSL or DDSL as soon as possible (within the same working day).
- Providing appropriate support for the child, young person, or vulnerable adult.

Sharing information

We are committed to working in close partnership with parents and carers, keeping them fully informed and helping them understand our responsibility for the safety and welfare of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

- Parents/carers can access the Parent and Carer Alliance Safeguarding children, young people, and vulnerable adults policy online.
- Parents and carers will be made aware of the policy as part of their terms and conditions when commencing work with the Parent and Carer Alliance and will be asked to sign to say they accept the terms and conditions.
- Staff and volunteers must disclose any information, however confidential, to the DSL/DDS that raises concerns about the safety and welfare of a child, young person, or vulnerable adult.
- In all other circumstances the confidentiality of those using the services provided by Parent and Carer Alliance CIC will be respected and their consent obtained before sharing information.
- Child/young person protection or welfare concerns will be openly discussed, with parents/carers. Where a referral to Children's Social Care is needed, the agreement of parents/carers will be sought before making the referral. The only time concerns will not be discussed with parents is if staff believe that sharing concerns may place the child at increased risk of harm, then advice would be sought first.
- Vulnerable adult protection or welfare concerns will be openly discussed with the adult or their carer (if appropriate). Where a referral to the Adult Social Care Helpdesk is required, the agreement of the adult will be sought prior to making the referral. The only time concerns will not be discussed is if staff believe that sharing concerns may place the vulnerable adult at increased risk of harm, then advice would be sought first.
- A lack of agreement from a parent/carer/vulnerable adult would not stop a referral to statutory services from going ahead. When deciding whether to share information without consent, we will carefully consider each case individually and:
 - Decide if the need to share information is in the public interest and whether it outweighs the need to maintain confidentiality.
 - Consider all the implications of sharing the information, for example if you are sharing sensitive details about a person's life.

We understand our responsibility to refer a child to Children's Social Care if we believe or suspect:

- The child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm (Section 47, Child Protection)
 - This also includes children where there are significant welfare concerns whose development would be likely to be impaired without provision of services (Section 17, Child in Need).
- Contact details for a child referral/young person during office hours are through the Children and Families Front Door Service: 01452 426565
 - Contact details for a child/young person referral, if the concern cannot wait until the next working day, are through the Emergency Duty Team: 01452 614758
 - Contact details for a vulnerable adult referral during office hours are through the Adult Social care Helpdesk: 01452 426868

- Contact details for a vulnerable adult referral, if the concern cannot wait until the next working day, are through the Emergency Duty Team: 01452 614194
- Parent and Carer Alliance will continue to offer our services to the parent/carer/vulnerable adult, following the safeguarding concern, if that is their wish.

Recording concerns and retention and storage of records

Anyone receiving a disclosure of abuse, noticing possible abuse or with a concern about a child, young person, or vulnerable adult, will make an accurate record as soon as possible, noting what was said or seen, putting the event into context, and giving the date, time, and location. All records will be dated, signed, and discussed with the DSL or DDSL on the same day, or as soon as possible afterwards.

- All hand-written records will be retained, even if they are subsequently typed up in a more formal report.
- Written records of concerns will be kept in individual files and summarised on a Safeguarding log, maintained by the DSL/DDSL, detailing action taking to look into the matter, whether further action such as a referral is required and if not, the reasons why.
- Parents/carers will be notified of all recorded concerns.
- Injuries will be marked on a body map; photographs will never be taken.
- All records relating to child/young person/vulnerable adult protection concerns will be kept securely and will remain confidential. Computer files will be password protected
- The DSL and DDSL will regularly monitor the quality of the records.
- Records will be retained and disposed of in line with Government guidance.

Managing concerns about or allegations made against staff and volunteers

We recognise that it is possible for staff and volunteers to behave in a way that might cause harm to children, and we take seriously any allegation received.

An allegation may indicate that a member of staff or volunteer has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
 - Possibly committed a criminal offence against a child; or
 - Behaved towards a child that indicates he/she would pose a risk of harm to children.
-
- The concern will be dealt with in line with the Safeguarding Policy,
 - If an allegation is received the DSL/DDSL will be notified the same day. If they are not available a Director will be notified.
 - If the allegation is about the DSL/DDSL a Director will be notified.
 - The member of staff or volunteer will cease all contact with children, young people, and vulnerable adults immediately, until the investigation is concluded.

- The member of staff will have no involvement in the investigation, including access to paperwork or files related to the investigation.
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted the same working day by completion of the Allegations Management form which will be emailed to amadmin@gloucestershire.gov.uk
- In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to protect the child, by contacting the police, before contacting the LADO.
- The allegation will not be discussed with the alleged perpetrator or other members of staff unless advised to do so by the LADO.
- The DSL will follow current guidance from the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership or Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adult Board.
- The Parent and Carer Alliance will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service if at the end of the allegation process a member of staff or volunteer is removed from their position or if they leave while under investigation.
- The Parent and Carer will consider whether there is a requirement to share the concern with any other organisations the individual may be involved with.

We recognise that staff may display low-level concerns such as displaying behaviours which are inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work.

These concerns do not meet the threshold of harm and are not serious enough to be referred to the LADO, but they are always reported, recorded, and dealt with appropriately.

Managing concerns about or allegations made against a child or young person

When a child abuses another child, it is sometimes called 'peer-on-peer' or 'child-on-child' abuse. Peer-on-peer abuse refers to abuse that takes place between children of a similar age, whereas child-on-child refers to abuse between children of any age. Sometimes children might also display abusive behaviour towards adults.

We are aware that a child or adult may tell us they are uncomfortable with a child or young person's behaviour but not realise that the behaviour is abusive.

There are different ways that a child or young person may be abusive towards others, and they might not realise they are doing so:

- Bullying or cyberbullying
- Emotional abuse
- Online abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexting
- Sexual abuse

An allegation becomes a child protection concern when:

- the behaviour involves sexual assault or physical assault
- the child who has experienced the abusive behaviour has suffered significant harm

- the behaviour forms part of a pattern of concerning behaviour by the child or young person who is being abusive
- the child carrying out the abuse is displaying sexualised behaviour
- you are concerned that the child carrying out the abuse may be doing so because they have experienced abuse themselves.

It is also a child protection concern when there is a significant difference of power between the child who is displaying abusive behaviour and the person being abused, for example when:

- there is an age difference of more than two years
- there is a significant difference in terms of size or level of ability
- the child displaying abusive behaviour holds a position of power (such as being a helper, volunteer, or informal leader)
- the child being abused is significantly more vulnerable than the other child or young person.

Sometimes a child might tell us that they have behaved in a way that has harmed others. If this occurs, we will:

- Talk to them calmly and remember that they need support.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling you about it.
- Listen carefully to the child and let them tell their whole story. Do not try to investigate or quiz the child, but make sure you understand what they are saying.
- Use non-judgmental language.
- Tell them that you now have to do what you can to keep them, and the other children involved safe.
- Never promise to keep what a child tells you a secret. Explain that you will need to speak to other people who can help.
- Reassure the child that they can get help to change their behaviour and move forward with their life
- Suggest the child contacts Childline on 0800 1111 for support.

If an allegation is made or an incident witnessed, we will:

- Refer to our Code of Conduct Policy for Children, Young People, and adults.
- Follow this Safeguarding Policy for recording, sharing, and reporting concerns.
- The DSL/DDSL will decide what action to take in consultation with: the staff member/volunteer supervising the child, any agencies we are aware are working with the child and Children's Social Care if necessary.

Managing concerns or allegations about an educational setting or provision

Educational settings or provision can include, but is not limited to:

- Childminders
- Nurseries
- Pre-Schools
- Schools

- Colleges
- Alternative Provisions

If a child, young person, vulnerable adult, parent, carer, or any other person raises a concern or makes an allegation about an educational setting or provision we will:

- Manage the concern or allegation in line with this Safeguarding policy.
- Support them through the settings complaint procedure
- Support them with referral to the LADO if the complaint procedure does not resolve the situation satisfactorily
- Support them with a complaint to Ofsted (if applicable)
- Support them with a complaint to any other registered body (if applicable)
- Support them with a referral to Social Care if required.

If a child, young person, vulnerable adult, parent or carer or any other person raises a concern or makes an allegation about an education setting or provision but does not wish to take the action detailed above we will:

- Consider referring to the relevant agencies on behalf of the child, young person, or vulnerable adult.
- Follow the 'sharing information' section of this Safeguarding policy and when deciding whether to share information without consent.
- If we do share information with outside agencies, we will inform the parent/carer/relevant party that we have done so, the rationale why and what to expect next.

Safe recruitment of staff and volunteers

We endeavour to create a culture of safer recruitment and as part of this, we adopt recruitment procedures that help to deter, reject, and identify people who might abuse children.

We adhere to our statutory responsibilities to check staff who work with children, this includes enhanced DBS checks on all staff and on any other person who is likely to have regular contact with children (including those living or working on the premises).

When recruiting new staff, we will:

- Include a safeguarding statement in all job advertisements and job descriptions.
- Investigate any gaps in employment history or unaccounted for periods.
- Request two references, of which one must be from a previous employment related to children, young people, or vulnerable adults (if applicable)
- Online searches will be conducted for all short-listed candidates and anything that causes concern will be followed up at interview.
- We will record information about staff qualifications, identity checks, disqualification, and vetting processes (including the Disclosure and Barring Service reference number, the date a disclosure was obtained and details of who obtained it) on a central register.
- Copies of identification documents will be kept securely in personnel files.

- We will not allow people, whose suitability has not been checked to have unsupervised contact with children.
- A risk assessment will be undertaken for volunteers to determine whether an enhanced DBS check should be applied for. This will depend on the level of activity the volunteer is engaged in and whether they are ever left unsupervised with children.
- Staff and volunteers are informed during their induction, that under the Childcare Act 2006, they are expected to provide up to date information in relation to any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings that may affect their suitability to work with children, whether received before or during their employment at the setting.
- There is also an expectation that the setting will be informed, if staff or volunteer relationships and associations, both within and outside the workplace (including online), may have implications for the safety of children in the setting.

Safeguarding training for staff and volunteers

Everyone who works or volunteers with children and young people should understand the role they have in keeping children safe. This includes being able to recognise the signs and indicators of abuse and knowing how to follow their organisation's safeguarding and child protection procedures

Staff Induction

- All new starters receive induction training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Safeguarding induction will include sharing the Parent and Carer Alliance Safeguarding Policy and relevant associated policies, which staff will sign to say they have understood.
- All new starters will complete the relevant Safeguarding training for their role within a maximum of three months from start date.
- The DSL will keep a record of the Safeguarding induction process for all new starters.

Staff Training

- All staff will complete safeguarding children, young people, and vulnerable adults CPD certified training applicable to their role annually.
- Training will enable staff to identify signs of possible abuse at the earliest opportunity, and to respond in a timely and appropriate way.
- At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid certificate will be always on the premises, at any event when children are present.
- At least one person who has a current first aid certificate will be always on the premises, at any event when young people or vulnerable adults are present.

Safer Working Practice

- We work within clear behavioural guidelines as outlined in the Parent and Carer Alliance Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers.

- Physical intervention will never be used by any staff member unless there is a significant risk to life/serious harm. Staff/volunteers will never be responsible for any child that is not their own at any time and will never be alone with a child. If physical intervention is identified as being necessary, the parent will be immediately located. The physical intervention will be reported to the DSL/DDSL the same day and a statement made in line with our recording incidents procedure documented above. Parents and carers are fully informed of their responsibility to be aware of their children's whereabouts and keep them safe when attending events.
- We are aware of the professional risks associated with the use of social media and electronic communication (email, mobile phones, texting, social network sites etc.) and we follow the guidance in the Parent and Carer Alliance Photography and Sharing images policy and Social media policy.
- We follow the Parent and Carer Whistleblowing procedure and are aware it is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk.

Role description for the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

An appropriately qualified and experienced DSL and deputy have been appointed to fulfil the role. Time and resources have been allocated in order that this role can be carried out effectively.

The DSL or DDSL will be available at all times when children, young people or vulnerable adults are present, for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns.

The DSL and DDSL will attend appropriate training to equip them to fulfil their role. They will refresh their training at least every two years.

The DSL and Directors have overall responsibility for the day-to-day safeguarding and child protection systems in the Parent and Carer Alliance. These responsibilities include:

- Liaising with other professionals in all agencies, including social services, police, and health colleagues.
- Keeping staff and themselves up to date with any changes to national and local policy or legislation.
- Being a source of support, advice, and guidance to staff, both paid and voluntary, on an ongoing basis and on any specific safeguarding issue as required.
- Co-ordinating child, young person or vulnerable adult protection action within the Parent and Carer Alliance, including making referrals, as necessary.
- Ensuring parents and/or carers are told of the concern and the actions to be taken by Parent and Carer Alliance, unless to do so were to put the child or vulnerable adult at further risk.
- Maintaining a confidential recording system for safeguarding and child, young people, or vulnerable adult protection concerns.
- Ensuring all staff, visitors and volunteers are aware of the Parent and Carer Alliance policies and procedures and their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

- Ensuring all staff, both paid and voluntary, have received appropriate and up to date safeguarding vulnerable adults and child protection training, including initial safeguarding induction.
- Representing the Parent and Carer Alliance at inter-agency meetings, in particular, strategy discussions, child protection conferences and core groups, if applicable.
- Sharing information with staff about the welfare, safeguarding and child/young person protection issues that families accessing the Parent and Carer Alliance have experienced, with a view to understanding how to best support these people.
- Reviewing and updating the Safeguarding Policy on an annual basis and making recommendations for improving safeguarding practice as required.

Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for Safeguarding in Parent and Carer Alliance CIC rests with the Directors and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

All staff, volunteers and other persons who undertake work for or on behalf of the Parent and Carer Alliance CIC must ensure they understand but also act in accordance with this policy.

Nonadherence to the Safeguarding policy will be seen as a breach of the Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers and Terms and Conditions of your role and may result in termination of your position with the Parent and Carer Alliance.

Contact Details

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Beth Edmonds

beth@parentandcareralliance.org.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

Deborah Ryding

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Lucy Fullard

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Director

Louise Arnold

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Director

Alice Gardner

Declaration

I confirm I have read and understood Parent and Carer Alliance CIC Safeguarding Policy and will act in accordance with it.

I confirm this in my role as:

- Director
- Advocate
- Family Support Worker
- Other Employee/Worker _____ (include your job title)
- Steering Committee Member
- Volunteer

Contractor

Signature:

Print name:

Date:

Please return this form to Beth Edmonds, Designated Safeguarding Lead,
beth@parentandcareralliance.or.uk