Cornerstone Library
Churchtown
A place for everyone

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Policy Owner (Designated Safeguarding Lead)	Kim Ardon	
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Contents

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures 1
1. Policy 3
1.1. Policy Overview 3
1.2. What is Safeguarding? 3
2. Aim 3
3. Scope 4
4. Responsibilities 4
4.1. Additional Specific Responsibilities: Trustees 4
4.2. Additional Specific Responsibilities: Designated Safeguarding Lead 5
4.3. Additional Specific Responsibilities: Volunteers 5
5. Monitoring & Review 5
6. Procedure for Raising and Reporting Safeguarding Concerns 5
7. Communications, Training and Support for Trustees & Volunteers 6
7.1. Induction 7
7.2. Training 7
7.3. Support for those at risk 7
7.4. Support for Volunteers 7
8. Professional Boundaries 7
9. Allegations Management 8
10. Information Sharing, Consent and Recording 9
11. Safeguarding Monitoring 10
Appendix I: Definitions 11
Appendix II: Safeguarding Concern Form 14
Appendix III: Useful References 18
Appendix IV: Sefton's Safeguarding Concern Flowchart 19

1. Policy

1.1. Policy Overview

This policy seeks to ensure that North Meols Library Association (NMLA) undertakes its responsibilities with regard to the protection of children and vulnerable adults and will respond to concerns appropriately. This is a priority for the organisation and we are all responsible for reporting concerns. All volunteers, trustees and associates are expected to understand their obligations and duty to implement each aspect of this policy and the associated procedures when required. This policy and other relevant library policies are available in the NMLA Policy & Procedures files.

The policy should be read alongside all other policies and procedures and is in line with the procedures of the Sefton Community Learning Services (SCLS) Safeguarding Policy SCLS Safeguarding Policy 2025-2026 , and UK statutory guidance published by Department for Education Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

1.2. What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding means protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that their wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action.

This must recognise that they sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances. NMLA is committed to providing a safe environment based upon positive well-being, personal safety and security of all volunteers and service users. The service will not tolerate the abuse of service users and volunteers by other service users or volunteers. This policy sets out NMLA's commitment in relation to its duty to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of all our volunteers and service users.

2. Aim

Through this policy, we aim to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults with whom the NMLA engages across its operational activities. The aims of this policy are set out in accordance with the commitments made within the NMLA Equity Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

The objective of this policy is to ensure a clear, transparent, and robust approach to NMLA's statutory and moral duty in relation to its volunteers and service users.

3. Scope

The policy establishes a framework to support volunteers in their practice and clarifies the organisation's expectations, including the obligation of volunteers to take immediate action where any concern regarding the safety, protection and wellbeing of children or adults is noted It is intended to:

1. Ensure the service takes appropriate action, in a timely manner, to safeguard and promote the welfare of volunteers and service users
2. Raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding volunteers and service users
3. Raise awareness regarding issues vulnerable adults and children may be faced with
4. Ensure responsibilities and procedures are fully understood and that everyone can recognise signs and indicators of abuse or neglect and respond to them appropriately.
5. Ensure the service practice meets local and national guidance and that all statutory requirements are in place.

4. Responsibilities

This policy identifies the overall responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Volunteers for ensuring the safeguarding and protection of children and vulnerable adults with whom NMLA engages.

All volunteers and trustees have a responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies, and to pass on any welfare concerns using the required procedures.

We expect all volunteers to promote good practice by being an excellent role model, contribute to discussions about safeguarding, and to positively involve people in developing safe practices.

4.1. Additional Specific Responsibilities: Trustees

Trustees have primary responsibility for safeguarding in their charity. This means:

- Acting in the best interests of children and vulnerable adults
- Taking all reasonable steps to prevent any harm to them
- Assessing and managing risk
- Putting safeguarding policies and procedures in place
- Undertaking ongoing monitoring and review to ensure that safeguards are being implemented and are effective
- Responding appropriately to allegations of abuse
- Liaison with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and monitoring their work

Trustees may delegate authority to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure effective operational implementation of the policy.

The Trustees have a joint responsibility to ensure:

- The policy is accessible

- The policy is implemented
- Sufficient resources (time and money) are allocated to ensure that the policy can be effectively implemented

4.2. Additional Specific Responsibilities: Designated Safeguarding Lead

In accordance with best practice, NMLA have nominated a Trustee as the **Designated Safeguarding Lead**. The Designated Safeguarding Lead's responsibilities include:

- Ensuring the policy is monitored and reviewed
- Promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults
- Ensuring volunteers have access to appropriate training and information
- Receiving volunteers concerns about safeguarding and responding to all seriously, swiftly and appropriately
- Keeping up to date with local arrangements for safeguarding and DBS requirements
- Developing and maintaining effective links with relevant agencies, including Local Safeguarding Children's Board and Designated Officer for the Local Authority (LADO)
- Taking forward concerns about responses.

4.3. Additional Specific Responsibilities: Volunteers

All **Volunteers** have responsibility to ensure that they:

- Are familiar with, and adhere to, the policies and procedures of the organisation
- Know how to report concerns as quickly as possible.
- Undertake NMLA mandatory induction safeguarding training and access appropriate additional learning opportunities. All safeguarding training should be refreshed every 3 years as a minimum, dependent on volunteer's role, and completion of training should be recorded on volunteer training files.

5. Monitoring & Review

The policy and practices of the organisation will be formally reviewed to ensure that they remain current and compliant with the law and best practice. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will report to the NMLA Board of Trustee's on matters of significance relating to this safeguarding policy, as appropriate or at the request of the Board.

6. Procedure for Raising and Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

This procedure outlines the stages involved in raising and reporting a safeguarding concern. All information relating to the following areas should be recorded on the ***Safeguarding Concern*** form:

- Welfare concerns that do not meet a safeguarding referral threshold but which volunteers have had a formal discussion about with their line manager or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

- When information has been shared with another agency in relation to welfare matters, including where actions have been agreed
- Where information has been shared to support a safeguarding referral which a partner agency is leading on.
- Where it is deemed the concern meets a safeguarding referral threshold and a formal referral to social services is required

Using this recording process enables us to govern the sharing of information and also monitor concerns which may progress to safeguarding concerns. The decision to refer will be taken by the Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with the Sefton Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) Level of Need Guidance.

If the person reporting the concern feels that the issue should be managed differently, they have the right to refer directly to Social Services or if appropriate escalate the concern to Sefton SSCP in line with the Board's escalation procedures. In either of these instances, the referrer should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead of their intended action.

It is not the role of volunteers within the library to investigate concerns or disclosures of abuse. Doing so could adversely affect future investigations.

Sefton Council has a page which links to referral forms and process: Sefton Council Report a Concern. This link can also be accessed through the https://www.sefton.gov.uk/childrens-services/report-a-concern/ (search reporting a concern in Seton). If a referral needs to be made, the NMLA Designated Safeguarding Lead will follow these processes.

The general enquiries line is 0345 140 0845 for between 8am and 6pm. If you need to have a consultation with a social worker prior to making a referral through to Children's Social Care call the MASH (Multiagency Safeguarding Hub) Team on 0151 934 4388. If, after referring to this example, you still require further assistance you can speak to a MASH Contact Lead on the following numbers 0151 934 3801/2533/4200/3596.

If you think a child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, or it is an emergency, call 999

This information regarding referrals is relevant when raising a concern about a child living in Sefton. If the child lives in another borough, that Authority's procedure must be followed. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will assist with this.

7. Communications, Training and Support for Trustees & Volunteers

NMLA will provide resources for the induction and training of volunteers and volunteers, effective communications, and support mechanisms in relation to safeguarding.

7.1. Induction

The induction of new trustees and volunteers will include meeting the Designated Safeguarding Lead, reading appropriate policies and procedures and undertaking mandatory training.

7.2. Training

All volunteers are required to undertake basic training in safeguarding children (regardless of their role/position). This must be completed within six weeks of their appointment with the organisation.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will attend additional appropriate training. Volunteers will be required to complete training regularly in line with Sefton SSCP guidelines.

7.3. Support for those at risk

We recognise that involvement in situations where there is risk or actual harm can be stressful. All those making a complaint or allegation, or expressing concern, whether they are volunteers, service users, carers or members of the general public should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously
- Their comments will be treated confidentially but their concerns may be shared if they or others are at significant risk
- We will endeavour to keep people safe from risk of reprisals or intimidation

7.4. Support for Volunteers

Volunteers will be given support by their line manager and the Designated Safeguarding Lead and afforded protection if necessary. The Board of Trustees and Senior Management team are responsible for ensuring that external support is provided, if necessary and appropriate.

8. Professional Boundaries

NMLA expects all trustees and volunteers to protect their own professional integrity and that of the organisation.

Professional boundaries must be adhered to.

Trustees and Volunteers **will:**

- Remember they are a role model and provide an example for those they work with to follow
- Bear in mind that some actions, no matter how well-intentioned, may be easily misinterpreted and so leave all parties vulnerable.
- Be alert to any potential harm to children or vulnerable adults.
- Respect the right to privacy.

- Provide opportunities for children and vulnerable adults to discuss any concerns they may have.
- Speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if concerned about the safety or welfare of an individual.
- Speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they suspect a child is developing or has developed an infatuation with them, or has inappropriate feelings towards any member of volunteers or volunteer.
- Refer to the NMLA Whistleblowing Policy if concerns arise about the suitability of a member of volunteers or volunteer in relation to working with children / vulnerable adults or if an allegation is raised by another member of the library team, library user or third party, such as an external organisation or community member.
- Follow guidance in relation to the use of electronic communication as set out in the NMLA Data Protection Policy and seek further guidance as required when considering the development and use of project-based social networking sites.

Trustees and Volunteers **will not:**

- Arrange to see or communicate with library users in circumstances unconnected with their work, including the use of texting and personal social media accounts such as Facebook and Twitter.
- Be left alone for any substantial periods of time with any child / vulnerable adult.
- Permit abusive behaviour by others or engage in it themselves.
- Show favouritism to, or become too closely associated with, an individual. Nor should they get drawn into inappropriate, attention-seeking behaviour (e.g. crushes).
- Allow or engage in suggestive remarks, gestures or touching of any kind which could be misunderstood.
- Do anything which might undermine a good reputation for providing a safe environment.

If a child or vulnerable adult shares worrying or sensitive information with you, **do not**:

- Promise to keep secrets.
- Hesitate to share concerns on any of these matters with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

9. Allegations Management

The NMLA recognises its duty to report concerns or allegations made against its volunteers and associates within the organisation, or by a professional from another organisation.
An allegation or concern could come from a trustee, volunteer or associate within the organisation. Any concerns or allegations must be immediately reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with NMLA Whistleblowing Policy.

Any allegations relating to children or vulnerable adults must be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for Sefton Local Authority **within one working day** of the allegation being made, in accordance with the procedures set out in Working Together

to Safeguard Children. The LADO will advise on any action that must be taken to keep service users and the organisation safe. The LADO will pursue the allegation and offer support, help and advice to the organisation throughout the investigation. See the following link for further information: Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership, Managing Allegations. (Search Sefton Council managing allegations)

The alleged individual has the right to seek representation and the NMLA will support any volunteer who is subject to such a complaint. However, irrespective of the outcome of any Police or Social Care investigations, the NMLA will suspend the volunteer from attending the library until the matter has been resolved.

If, following consideration and any consultation, the concern is clearly about bad practice rather than abuse, NMLA will take the necessary action to support, advise, manage or if necessary, remove the volunteer from the library registers.

Where a volunteer is removed from working in or for the library because they harmed a child / vulnerable adult, or might have harmed them, or if they resigned before being dismissed for one of these reasons, NMLA **must** inform the Disclosure and Barring Service via the online form. (Search making DBS barring referral)

10. Information Sharing, Consent and Recording

Where there are concerns about the wellbeing of a child/vulnerable adult, it is best practice to:

- gain consent to share information
- share concerns with families through the Designated Safeguarding Lead

However, if there are concerns relating to the parent/family, this may not be appropriate. If there are concerns that a child may be at risk of significant harm, then follow the relevant procedures without delay.

All information sharing or referrals of concerns need to be carefully recorded in full using the appropriate recording form as outlined in section 6 of this policy. When recording concerns, it is particularly important to:

- Be specific about the nature of concerns
- Provide accurate details
- Detail the time and date specific incidents were observed, if applicable

Records should be signed by the volunteer recording concerns and by the Designated Safeguarding Lead who has provided guidance on the course of action.

All records and witness statements relating to safeguarding concerns are confidential. Access will only be via the Board of Trustees and the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Information will only be shared with other agencies that have a need to know, in accordance with Sefton SSCP procedures and Government guidance on information sharing.

Records will be held and stored securely in a central place by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and in line with the NMLA Data Management Policy. If other volunteers or trustees hold records in relation to referrals discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead these guidelines should also be followed.

11. Safeguarding Monitoring

The organisation will monitor the following safeguarding aspects:

- Safe recruitment practices.
- DBS checks undertaken.
- References applied for new volunteers from current / most recent employer or relevant professional.
- Records made and kept of volunteer supervision and appraisal.
- Register / record of volunteers training on child / vulnerable adult protection.
- Whether safeguarding concerns are being reported and actioned.
- Checking that policies are up to date and relevant.
- Reviewing the current reporting procedure in place.
- Presence and actions of Designated Safeguarding Lead for Safeguarding

Appendix I: Definitions

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and to protect them from harm. Child and Vulnerable Adult protection are part of the safeguarding process; it focuses on protecting individuals identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child and / or vulnerable adult.

Definition of a Child

This guidance is based upon the Children Act 1989 which defines a child as anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday. This definition includes a child who has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education. This does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection.

Definition of a Vulnerable Adult

A vulnerable adult is defined as an individual age 18 or older who has the functional, mental, or physical inability to care for themselves. It can also refer to one who is unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Abuse

A form of maltreatment of a person. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

They may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others.

Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or by another child or children.

Vulnerable adults may be abused by an adult, adults or another vulnerable person. Abuse can take a number of forms, including but not restricted to the following:

Physical abuse

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Emotional abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve conveying to them that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meets the needs of another person.

It may include not giving the child or vulnerable adult opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on them. These may include interactions that are beyond their developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child or vulnerable adult participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children or vulnerable adults to feel frightened or in danger, or exploitation or corruption. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult.

Neglect or acts of omission

The persistent failure to meet a child or vulnerable adult’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

a. provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
b. protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
c. ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)

d. ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

Child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity

a. in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or

b. for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

For further information on signs and indicators of abuse refer to the following link: https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/signs-symptoms-effects/

Appendix II: Safeguarding Concern Form

Reporting Guidelines

This form is used for reporting both suspicions and disclosures of possible abuse or causes of concern; therefore, not all sections may be appropriate. Please complete with as much information as possible. This information will be treated in the strictest confidence, however, the information contained within this form may be shared with appropriate agencies. **Once completed pass to your Designated Safeguarding Lead or in their absence to another Trustee as soon as it is practically possible.**

Details of Person Reporting Concern
Name of person reporting concern:
Date:
Role:
Work address:
Email:
Contact number(s):

Description of Incident/Concern

This log of concern relates to (please tick)

Child ☐ Vulnerable adult ☐

Person's details

Name(s):
Name of parents/carers (if appropriate):
Telephone number: Mobile number:
First language (if known):

Address: Postcode:
Any special factors to be considered? (e.g. language difficulties, disability or anything else of relevance):

Details of Concerns
Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of somebody else?
Date and time of the incident/concern: Date: Time:
What has prompted the concerns? Include dates, times and details of any specific incidents, making a clear distinction between fact, opinion and hearsay
What (if any) physical, behavioural or indirect signs were present?
Have you spoken to the child, young person or vulnerable adult? Yes ☐ No ☐ Record what was said using their own words:
Have you spoken to the parents/carers? Yes ☐ No ☐ Record what was said using their own words:
Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? Yes ☐ No ☐ Details:

Have you consulted anyone else? Yes ☐ No ☐ Details:
Is there anyone else who might be involved in the incident? (e.g. anyone you think has seen or heard things relating to the incident?) Yes ☐ No ☐ Details:
Signature of person completing log:

Please ensure this form is immediately handed securely to a Designated Safeguarding Lead or e-mailed to them using Safeguarding@cornerstonelibrary.org.

Designated Safeguarding Lead Use Only
Date form received:
Name:
Contact number(s):
Action taken by DSO:
Any previous information on file? If yes, please give details:
Was this referred on? If so, please tick as appropriate: Local Authority Designated Lead ☐ Children s Social Care ☐ Adult s Social Care ☐ Police ☐ Date Referred ☐
Feedback of action taken (including follow-up calls, feedback from other professionals etc and details):
Date reviewed:
Date case closed:
Unique Reference Number

Appendix III: Useful References

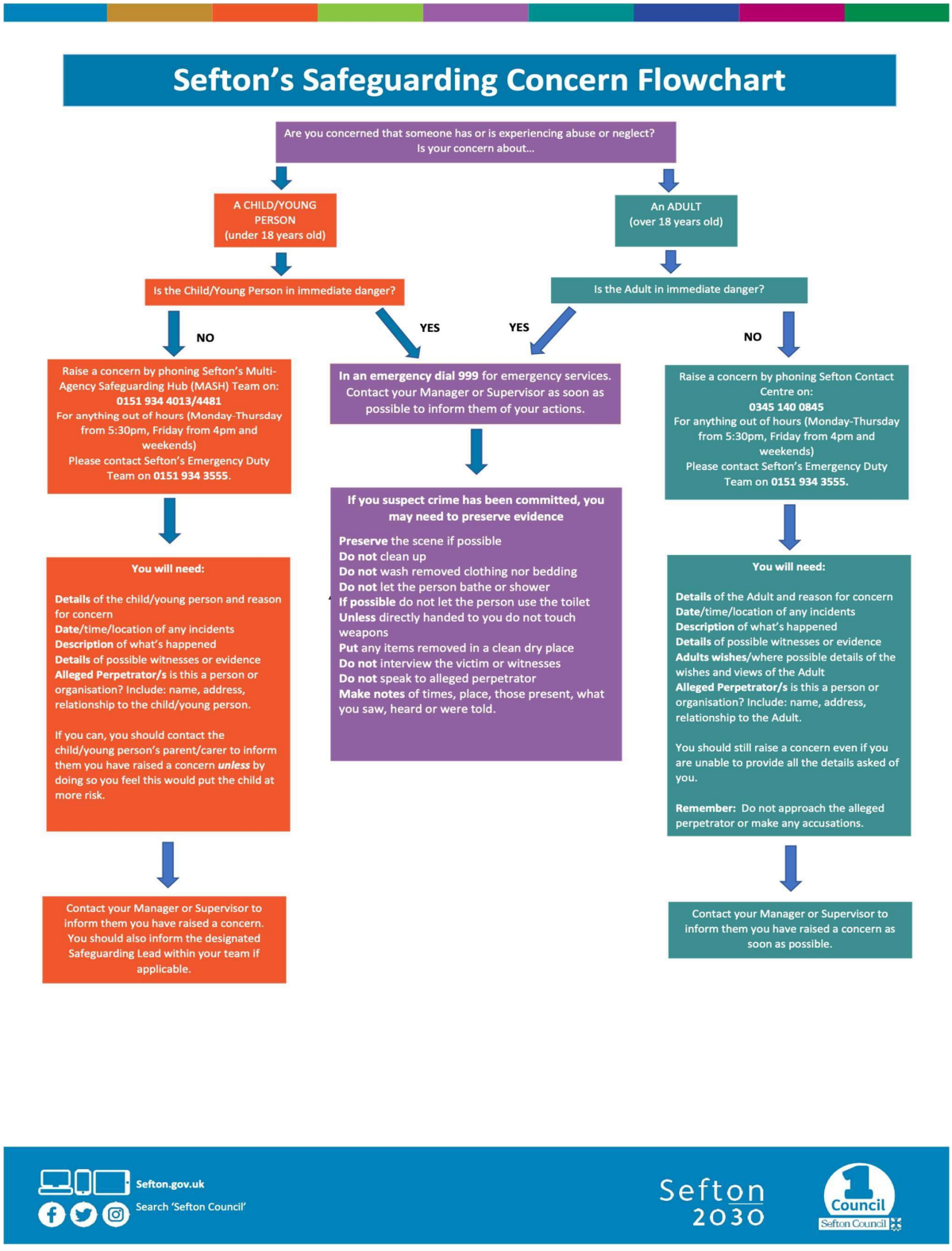
The Department for Education is responsible for child protection in England. It sets out policy, legislation and statutory guidance on how the child protection system should work.

At the local level, Local safeguarding children boards (SSCPs) co-ordinate, and ensure the effectiveness of, work to protect and promote the welfare of children. Each local board includes: local authorities, health bodies, the police and others, including the voluntary and independent sectors. The SSCPs are responsible for local child protection policy, procedure and guidance.

Legislation

1. Children Act 1989 and 2004
2. Children and Social Work Act 2017
3. Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
4. Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
5. Children and Families Act 2014
6. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
7. Digital Economy Act 2017
8. Adoption and Children Act 2002
9. Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
10. Children and Adoption Act 2006
11. Children and Young Persons Act 2008
12. Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009
13. Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009

Policy and guidance

1. Working together to safeguard children (2015)
2. Child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and radicalisation (HM Government, 2015)
3. Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation - Procedural information (Home Office, 2015)

Appendix IV: Sefton's Safeguarding Concern Flowchart