

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for Support Services for Education

(Including Practice Guidance)

August 2021

"Safeguarding children is everybody's business" (Lord Laming)

Policy Review Date: August 2021

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1 Foreword

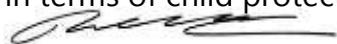
At SSE we are committed to safeguarding children and young people and we expect everyone who works in SSE to share this commitment.

SSE recognises that the safety and welfare of children is paramount and that it has a responsibility to protect them in all the work it is involved in. It will take all reasonable steps to ensure, through appropriate procedures and training, that all children, irrespective of sex, age, disability, race, religion or belief, sexual identity or social status, are protected from abuse.

SSE will seek to:

- Create a safe and welcoming environment where children can develop their skills and confidence.
- Support and encourage other groups and organisations to implement similar policies.
- Recognise that safeguarding children is the responsibility of everyone, not just those who work with children.
- Ensure that any training or events are managed to the highest possible safety standards.
- Review ways of working to incorporate best practice, including this policy being regularly reviewed and updated to reflect current best practice and Government expectations.
- Treat all children with respect regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity.
- Carefully recruit and select all employees, contractors and volunteers.
- Respond swiftly and appropriately to all complaints and concerns about poor practice or suspected or actual child abuse.
- Share information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.

This Safeguarding Policy relates to all SSE employees or staff working within the service and is in addition to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2021 and the Working Together 2018 guidance. This policy document is produced in order to inform and assist our staff and contractual partners in meeting their responsibilities in terms of child protection, whether working directly or indirectly for SSE.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Rowswell', is written over a horizontal line.

Ian Rowswell
Head of Support Services for Education

2 Introduction

Support Services for Education (SSE) accept safeguarding children and young people is a key element within our work. SSE staff are all familiar with the requirements of "Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Interagency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children" (2018) and KCSIE (2021) as all staff undertake safeguarding training as part of their induction into SSE. All staff also have a standard statement in every staff assignment which places a responsibility on staff to safeguard children and young people.

The Director of Children's Services within the Local Authority has the overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in the area. They have a number of statutory functions under the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 which make this clear. This policy is to add detail to SSE expectations of staff to expect specific duties to happen in relation to children in need and children suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, regardless of where they are or who takes any further action.

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. (Working together to Safeguard Children 2018)

"Children are best protected when professionals are clear about what is required of them individually, and how they need to work together." (Working together to Safeguard Children 2018)

This SSE policy fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection. Though the risk of child abuse cannot be eliminated, all SSE staff strive to reduce the risk as far as is reasonably possible. This policy is designed to help achieve these aims and keep our children safe, happy and free from harm while discharging statutory duties in promoting the welfare of children and young people.

3 The Policy and Guidance

- 3.1 SSE recognise there are three main elements to Child Protection.
- 3.2 **Prevention** - through support and guidance offered by SSE staff involved directly with children and young people.

Protection - by following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are appropriately recruited, trained and supported to respond sensitively and swiftly to Child Protection concerns.

Support - to children and young people who may have been abused or neglected, directly or through those who work directly with, or care for them.

4 Reporting Concerns (Procedures)

- 4.1 Where it is believed that a child or young person is suffering from, or is at risk of, significant harm, SSE staff follow the procedures set out in the South West Child Protection Procedures (<http://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/>) and the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership documents, which can be found at <http://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/>. If staff have **any concerns** about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately. Staff should not assume a colleague, or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe.
- 4.1b For concerns relating to the nature of online safety staff should follow the pathways set out in [SSE eLIM Online Incident Flowchart](#) including:
www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre
www.iwf.org.uk/
- 4.2 These procedures clearly confirm that the welfare of the child is of paramount importance and takes precedence over sensitivities about relations with partners, parents, or the likely reaction of others in the community, and any wish a child might have for complete confidentiality (which cannot be guaranteed).
- 4.3 Members of staff not following procedures could put themselves at risk of disciplinary action and the child concerned at risk. It is a contractual obligation that procedures are adhered to at all times.
- 4.4 Section 7 of this document explains the types of abuse SSE staff may come in contact with; though the list is not exhaustive. However, all SSE staff will be

aware of this through their safeguarding training.

- 4.5 If, via the SSE employee's professional judgement or discussion with their manager or a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), they believe a child or young person is suffering or likely to suffer, then a referral should be made to Somerset Direct on **0300 123 2224**.
- 4.6 In many cases the concerns do not reach the threshold for a Child Protection Referral but that of an earlier intervention.
- 4.7 This is the function of the Early Help Assessment. This will identify a lead professional who will bring appropriate professionals together to empower the family to address concerns raised. Details of this process are available at: <http://professionalchoices.org.uk/eha/>
- 4.8 There is a Child Protection Procedure Checklist for SSE Staff set as Appendix D that will help make your assessment.

5 Framework

- 5.1 SSE recognise we do not operate in isolation. The welfare of children and young people is not just the responsibility of the Local Authority but a partnership with other public agencies, the voluntary sector and service users and carers.
- 5.2 Child Protection is the responsibility of all adults, especially those working with children and young people. The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice are the responsibilities of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership.

6 The Role of SSE and its Managers

- 6.1 SSE managers recognise their responsibilities with regard to Child Protection and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.
- 6.2 SSE has a number of DSL's placed across the services and also a Safeguarding Champion on the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Staff should take all daily case concerns to their line manager as first point of contact.
- 6.3 SSE Managers will:
 - Recognise how to identify signs of abuse and know which outside child protection agency to contact in the event of a child protection matter coming to his/her attention.

- Ensure all SSE staff have appropriate safeguarding training
- Act as a source of advice to ensure SSE staff are up to date with relevant policies and local practices or changes in legislation. This will be in the form of a monthly update in the SSE staffing bulletin.
- Ensure staff have appropriate and refresher training as required. The DSL will monitor this process to ensure managers are monitoring training. (Such monitoring ensures SSE complies with section 11 of The Children Act (2004) which places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure that their functions – and any services that they contract out to others – are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children).
- Ensure that staff member has all the appropriate information that they need to make a confidential referral
- Liaise with Somerset Direct, Children’s Social Care and other support agencies, as appropriate.
- Act as a source of guidance and signposting to the appropriate DSL
- Ensure that a proper record is kept of any referral and action taken, and that this is kept safely and in confidence.
- Manage and deliver staff child protection training and review the operation of the Child Protection Policy annually to ensure the procedures are working and that it complies with current best practice. The DSL will report to SSE Leadership Team quarterly on any issues with regard to the implementation of this policy.

6.4 The SSE Head of Service is Ian Rowswell. Across SSE there are Designated Safeguarding Leads, details can be found in Appendix C.

The Designated Safeguarding Champion is Jo O’Callaghan, Strategic Manager.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads within SSE will act as support to managers when required in Safeguarding discussions and will be the principal link to the SSCP when considering working together. There are clear job descriptions in place

6.5 This policy applies to all staff working in SSE.

Key elements to our policy:

- Establishing positive, supportive, secure working practices that put children first.
- Ensuring we practise safer recruitment in checking the suitability of all staff who work for us in schools or other establishments.
- Keeping child protection issues at the forefront of our work and know who in the school or other establishment is the DSL.

- Ensuring that SSE implements procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse and regularly reviews them.
- Supporting children and young people in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.
- We will follow the procedures set out by the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership and take account of all guidance issued by the DfE, OfSTED and other significant bodies.
- Ensure we have DSLs who have received appropriate training and support for their role (training in child protection and inter-agency working must be carried out every two years for SSE staff at the appropriate level). In addition to this we will ensure SSE has DSLs and staff are reminded who these people are.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences, if appropriate.
- Keep written, dated and signed records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately. This includes the use of any decision-making tool that aids identification of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Radicalisation, County Lines, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), online abuse or other such issues and that such record is securely placed.
- Follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of SSE staff and that such procedures are robust to deal with any allegation and that clear records of investigations and outcomes of allegations are held on staff files. This will include contacting Somerset Direct and possibly discussion with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Risk-assess any off-site activity with children and young people, led by SSE.
- SSE staff will escalate any safeguarding concerns via the appropriate process and address any of its own deficiencies or weaknesses to ensure the child's safety is paramount.

7 Child Abuse

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 All SSE staff are alert to the possible signs of abuse of a child or young person due to their regular safeguarding training. Forms of abuse are:

7.2 Abuse

7.2.1 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the

purposes of this policy as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- 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; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

7.3 Physical Abuse

7.3.1 Physical abuse 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.

7.3.2 Where your concern is about physical abuse, make sure you note where on the body the injury is and describe shape and size. Be careful to record the factual evidence – i.e. what you can actually see, not your opinion of how the injury may have been sustained.

7.4 Emotional Abuse

7.4.1 Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

7.4.2 It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child 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 children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child 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 frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

7.4.3 Emotional abuse is hard to evidence so detail a number of events that have led to your concerns.

7.5 Sexual Abuse

- 7.5.1 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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
- 7.5.2 If the child or young person discloses to you any such incident, record in as much detail as possible what was said, who was there and the child or young person's emotional state throughout the disclosure. Make sure your notes are clear, concise and chronological and kept securely.

7.6 Neglect

- 7.6.1 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, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
 - protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
 - ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
 - ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- 7.6.2 It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.
- 7.6.3 If you are to refer a child or young person because of possible neglect, always check back to see if there have been any previous concerns. The Children Act 1989 talks about how the persistent neglect of very basic needs is likely to cause an impairment in the child or young person's development.

7.7 Online Safety

7.7.1 Use of digital services and devices online has become an integrated part of the lives we all lead.

7.7.2 SSE staff will have awareness of the extent of the possible threats from engaging in activity through the Internet, such as security threats, protecting and managing personal data, online reputation management, and avoiding harmful or illegal content.

KCSIE 2021 outlines the possible scope as:

- **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
- **conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- **commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>)

7.7.3 SCC and SSE apply appropriate cybersecurity measures, such as filtering and monitoring in order to protect devices and networks from harm from third party platforms

7.7.4 While we are accustomed to using technology, it is vital that we ensure the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and young people online by ensuring they are able to access the internet and use devices and communication platforms appropriately and safely.

Keeping children safe in Education 2021 states 'The designated safeguarding lead should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety).'

And that 'In addition, all staff should receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, including online safety (for example, via email, e-bulletins,

staff meetings) as required, and at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.'

Therefore, SSE Staff will:

- Participate in any training and awareness raising sessions
- Read, understand, sign and act in accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy
- Report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Model the safe, positive and purposeful use of technology
- Monitor the use of technology in lessons, extracurricular and extended learning activities, including Online/Remote Learning
- Be mindful of the additional safeguarding considerations required if delivering Online/Remote Learning
- Demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct especially in relation to use of social networks.

7.7.5 For further information and advice staff are able to access the SWGfL [Online Safety Policy](#), which, while is a template policy for Schools, is also largely applicable and contains information relevant to SSE activities.

7.7.6 For information and guidance on how to report concerns, staff should follow the pathways set out in SSE eLIM Online [Incident Flowchart](#).

7.8 Radicalisation

7.8.1 Radicalisation is defined by the UK Government within this context as "*the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.*"

7.8.2 There is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media or the internet) and settings (such as within the home).

7.8.3 However, it is possible to protect vulnerable people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being radicalised. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the DSL making a Prevent referral.

7.8.4 If you become concerned that this may raise a professional concern about a

young person you work with or know, then Appendix C will help you raise this with appropriate persons.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance/revise-prevent-duty-guidance-for-england-and-wales>

7.9 Domestic Abuse

7.9.1 Domestic abuse may take many forms. Witnessing the physical and emotional suffering of a parent may cause considerable distress to children and both the physical assaults and psychological abuse suffered by adult victims who experience domestic abuse can have a negative impact on their ability to look after their children. Children can still suffer the effects of domestic abuse, even if they do not witness the incidents directly. However, in up to 90% of incidents involving domestic violence where children reside in the home, the children are in the same or the next room. Children's exposure to parental conflict, even where violence is not present, can lead to serious anxiety and distress among children. Children can see school as a safe retreat from problems at home or alternatively not attend school through a perceived need to be at home to protect abused parents or siblings.

7.9.2 Domestic abuse can therefore have a damaging effect on a child's health, educational attainment and emotional well-being and development. The potential scale of the impact on children is not always easy to assess but may manifest itself as behavioural, emotional or social difficulties, including poor self-esteem, withdrawal, absenteeism, adult-child conflict. Children sometimes disclose what is happening or may be reluctant to do so hoping that someone will realise something is wrong.

7.10 **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

7.10.1 CCE is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

7.10.2 The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. It does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. For example, young people may be forced to work in cannabis factories, coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

7.10.3 Indicators of CCE can include a child:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or education
- Not taking part in education

If a member of staff suspects CCE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

7.11 **Child Sexual Exploitation**

7.11.1 Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. It may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

7.11.2 The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

- 7.11.3 The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. Children or young people who are being sexually exploited may not understand that they are being abused. They often trust their abuser and may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship.
- 7.11.4 CSE can include both physical contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity. It can also happen online. For example, young people may be persuaded or forced to share sexually explicit images of themselves, have sexual conversations by text, or take part in sexual activities using a webcam. CSE may also occur without the victim's immediate knowledge, for example through others copying videos or images.
- 7.11.5 In addition to the CCE indicators above, indicators of CSE can include a child:
- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
 - Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant

If a member of staff suspects CSE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

7.12 County Lines

- 7.12.1 County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line".
- 7.12.2 Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move (and store) drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.
- 7.12.3 Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.
- 7.12.4 Operation Encompass: SSE recognises the partnership between the Police, Schools and other agencies under Operation Encompass. These agencies are working together to support children who have been present at a domestic incident attended by the police. All SSE Staff will co-operate and take appropriate action as advised where contact is received after such an event.

7.13 So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA)

7.13.1 So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), sext, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.

7.13.2 Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of HBA, they must contact the DSL as a matter of urgency.

7.14 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

7.14.1 Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM comprises "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs".

FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as 'female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'.

Possible indicators that a pupil has already been subjected to FGM, and factors that suggest a pupil may be at risk, are set out in appendix 4 of this policy.

7.14.2 Any teacher who either:

- Is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- Observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth

Must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a mandatory statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it.

Unless they have been specifically told not to disclose, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve children's social care as appropriate.

7.14.3 Any other member of staff who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a pupil under 18 must speak to the DSL and follow local safeguarding procedures.

The duty for teachers mentioned above does not apply in cases where a pupil is at risk of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine pupils.

7.14.4 Any member of staff who suspects a pupil is at risk of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out discovers that a student aged 18 or over appears to have been a victim of FG] must speak to the DSL and follow local safeguarding procedures.

7.14.5 The NSPCC operates a free national FGM helpline, which offers guidance to thousands of people, including professionals. The FGM helpline is staffed by specialised practitioners, who are all trained to identify the risk of FGM. The helpline can offer advice and support: if you are worried about a child who is at risk of FGM, if somebody has already undergone an FGM procedure or if you have any questions regarding FGM.

The helpline is available seven days a week between the following hours: Monday to Friday 8am to 10pm and Saturday and Sunday 9pm to 6pm. You can call and choose to remain anonymous on **0800 028 3550** or email fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

7.15 Forced Marriage

7.15.1 Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats, or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological.

7.15.2 If a member of staff suspects that a pupil is being forced into marriage, they will speak to the pupil about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Speak to the pupil about the concerns in a secure and private place
- Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority's designated officer
- Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or fmf@fco.gov.uk
- Refer the pupil to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate

7.16 Peer-On-Peer Abuse

7.16.1 Staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer-on-peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- gender-based violence
- consensual and non-consensual distribution of personal images using digital media (sexting) (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation-type violence and rituals

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”, as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for pupils.

We also recognise the gendered nature of peer-on-peer abuse. However, all peer-on-peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

7.16.2 Where children abuse their peers online, this can take the form of, for example, abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages; the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups; and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who don't want to receive such content.

7.16.3 Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex, from primary through to secondary stage and into colleges. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

The initial response to a report from a child is incredibly important. How an individual responds to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment to report or come forward. Not recognising, acknowledging or understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and/or downplaying of some behaviours can actually lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported

and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

SSE Staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'. If staff are in any doubt as to what to do they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy)

If SSE staff have a concern about a child or a child makes a report to them, they should follow the referral process as set out from paragraph 55 in Part one of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

SSE Staff can access additional advice and guidance. Paragraph 52 and Annex A in the DfE [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) provides detailed information and links to resources.

7.17 Upskirting

- 7.17.1 Upskirting is a form of sexual harassment that normally involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks. It often occurs in a public crowded place, making it hard for the victim to know that a photograph is being taken, victims are often distressed and feel humiliated. 'Upskirting' is a criminal offence.

7.18 Private Fostering

- 7.18.1 A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.
- 7.18.2 Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start; not to do so is a criminal offence.
- 7.18.3 Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported and looked after, they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the child has come from another country. In some cases, privately fostered children are affected by abuse and neglect, or be involved in trafficking, child sexual exploitation or modern-day slavery.

7.19 Serious Violence

7.19.1 Indicators which may signal that a child is at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime may include:

- Increased absence from school
- Change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- Significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing
- Signs of assault or unexplained injuries
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions (this could indicate that the child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation (see above))

7.19.2 Risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence include:

- Being male
- Having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school
- Having experienced child maltreatment
- Having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery

7.19.3 Staff will be aware of these indicators and risk factors. If a member of staff has a concern about a pupil being involved in, or at risk of, serious violence, they will report this to the DSL.

8 Confidentiality

8.1 Confidentiality needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. No adult must ever guarantee confidentiality to any child or young person. Staff should make children and young people aware that if they disclose information that may be harmful to themselves or others, then certain actions will need to be taken.

8.2 Where possible, personal information will only be disclosed to third parties (including other agencies) with the explicit and freely given consent of the subject of that information. Under the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018, staff may share information without consent if they judge there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. Staff will only share information that is necessary for the purpose for which they are sharing, with only those individuals who need to have it, in a timely way, ensuring that it is accurate and up to date and shared securely. Staff will always record their reasons for sharing information; what information has been shared; and with whom. Where possible, staff will be transparent with

the individual, informing them that information has been shared, as long as doing so does not create or increase the risk of harm to the individual.

9 Records and Monitoring

- 9.1 Well-kept records are *essential* to good child protection practice. SSE are clear about the need to record any concerns held about children or young people, the status of such records and when these records should be passed over to other agencies.
- 9.2 In our work with children, young people and families, and with schools and others in an advisory and support role, we will promote all institutions to:
- Keep clear detailed written records of concerns about children and young people.
 - Records should be kept electronically on SharePoint in the designated location, all paper records if required are kept secure and in a locked location.
 - Ensure records are passed on to the receiving institution if a child or young person transfers.
- 9.3 SSE written notes/records of any child protection issues regarding individual children and young people will be kept securely and separately electronically. Where necessary we ensure that child protection information has been passed on to Somerset Direct appropriately.

10 Attendance at Child Protection Conferences, Pupils with a Social Worker, Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

- 10.1 If a child or young person becomes the subject in a Child Protection Conference you may be asked to share information about the child or young person and his/her family. Usually this will be in the form of a written report, the contents of which will be shared with parents/carers prior to the meeting.
- 10.2 Occasionally, there may be information which is confidential, and which will be shared in a closed meeting prior to the conference. If this is necessary, the chair of the conference will discuss the matter with parents/carers beforehand.

- 10.3 When any child or young person becomes the subject of a conference, local procedures require all other children in the family are considered. It may well be that staff will be required to provide information on children with whom there appear to be no direct concerns.
- 10.4 Staff may contribute to the process of risk assessment and the decision about the child being in receipt of a child protection plan.
- 10.5 **Pupils may need a social worker** due to safeguarding or welfare needs. We recognise that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm as well as potentially creating barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.
- 10.6 The DSL and all members of staff will work with and support social workers to help protect vulnerable children.
- 10.7 Where we are aware that a pupil has a social worker, the DSL will always consider this fact to ensure any decisions are made in the best interests of the pupil's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. For example, it will inform decisions about:
- Responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks
 - The provision of pastoral and/or academic support
- 10.8 We will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep **looked-after children and previously looked-after children safe**. In particular, we will ensure that:
- Appropriate staff have relevant information about children's looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements
 - The DSL has details of children's social workers and relevant virtual school heads
 - Where appropriate DSL's will follow Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children statutory guidance found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>

11 Safer Recruitment

- 11.1 ****Currently Being Updated****

12 Standards of Conduct

- 12.1 SSE's reputation and the trust and confidence in its integrity is of vital importance. It must discharge its day-to-day responsibilities with openness and honesty. This philosophy is captured in the Standards of Conduct document available [here](#).
- 12.2 All SSE staff should familiarise themselves with the Standards of Conduct for SCC available on SharePoint:
<https://somesetcc.sharepoint.com/sites/HROD/SitePages/Standards.aspx>
- 12.3 Within SSE Services there will be additional standards or codes of conduct which staff are expected to adhere to. These will be shared on induction or through line management processes as appropriate.

13 Training

- All SSE Staff must have basic awareness training in Safeguarding and Child Protection or Introduction to Child Protection Training available from Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership and The Learning Centre.
- Ensure DSLs have received appropriate training and support for their role (training in child protection and inter-agency working must be carried out every two years for SSE staff at the appropriate level).
- For those who are trained at "Working Together", this will need to be refreshed every two years, by attending Working Together update training.
- Online Safety – eLIM Online Sessions as set out in 7.7 and 7.7.4

Staff	Training required
All Staff	Safeguarding and Child Protection for non-children's service workers E-learning module. The module should be completed every 2 years.
Staff dealing with Children and Young people face to face	Face to face safeguarding training – refreshed on an annual basis
DSL's	DSL training – refreshed on a bi-annual basis as per the DSL requirements

- Safer Recruitment training is available to all relevant staff who are involved in the recruitment process.

14 Useful information

14.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with other related policies such as:

1. [Recruitment and Selection](#)
2. [Standards of Conduct](#)
3. [Management of Allegations Against Staff](#)
4. [Anti-Bullying](#)
5. [Health and Safety](#)
6. [Safeguarding and ICT](#)
7. [Use of Photography and Videos](#)
8. [Alcohol and Substance Misuse](#)
9. [Equal Opportunities](#)
10. [Racial Equality](#)
11. [Dignity at Work Code of Practice](#)
12. [South West Grid for Learning Online Safety Template](#)

14.2 Useful websites

<https://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/>
<http://professionalchoices.org.uk>
<http://professionalchoices.org.uk/eha>
<https://www.saferrecruitmentconsortium.org/>
[Female genital mutilation: resource pack](#)

14.3 Somerset Direct

0300 123 2224

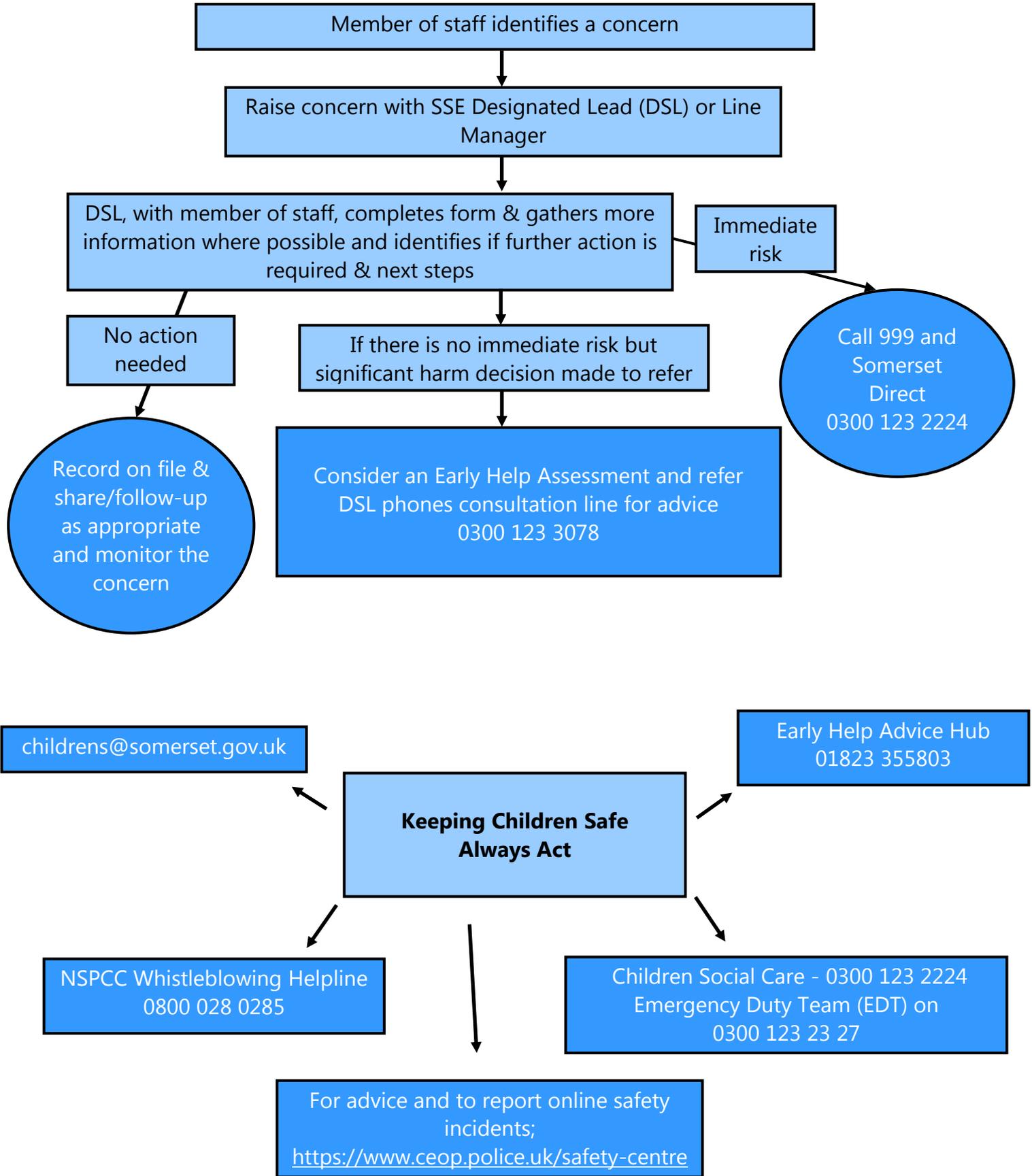
DSL Help Line

0300 123 3078

Early Help Assessment Coordinator

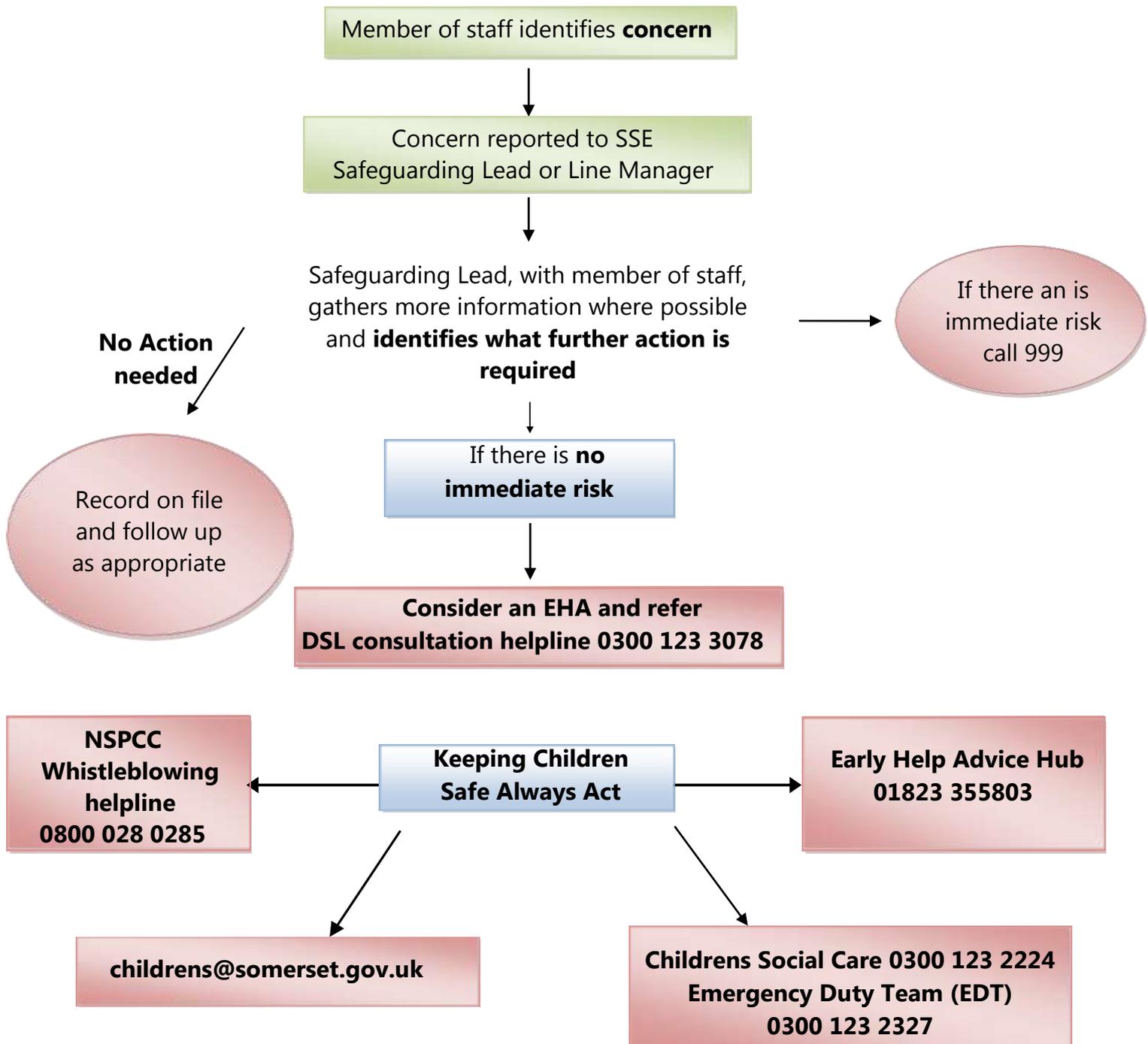
01823 355803

APPENDIX A: Process map for SSE staff reporting a concern of a vulnerable individual



Appendix B: Prevent and Channel

It is important for you as a member of staff to know where to go if you have a concern that someone may be on the route to radicalisation. Below is a flow chart which aims to show the process as to which you can follow:



APPENDIX C: SSE Safeguarding Leads

Designated Safeguarding Leads across SSE

Glyn Bowen – Based in Somerset Music — 07977 412093

Kirsty Darlington – Based in SSE Outdoors - 01278 741270

Ellie Dalwood – eLIM - 07976 691932

Keith Ford – Based in SCIL at Dillington House – 01823 359165

Carly Kew - Based in SSE Outdoors - 01278 741270

Jo O’Callaghan (SSE Safeguarding Champion) - 07976 695689

Emma Ricketts – Commercial Development Team - 0300 1237365

APPENDIX D: Child Protection procedure checklist for SSE Staff

If:

- A child or young person discloses abuse, or you suspect a child may have been abused, or
- You witness an abusive situation involving another professional.

You **RECORD AND REPORT**:

- **Respond** without showing any signs of disquiet, anxiety or shock.
- **Enquire** casually about how an injury was sustained or why a child appears upset.
- **Confidentiality must not be promised** to children, young people, or adults in this situation.
- **Observe** carefully the demeanour or behaviour of the child or young person.
- **Record** in detail what has been seen and heard.
- **Do not interrogate or enter into detailed investigations:** rather, encourage the child or young person to say what they want until enough information is gained to decide whether or not a referral is appropriate.

Asking questions is fine to help understand what the issue is. Ensure the questions are open and give the child the ability to clarify.

It is important NOT to ask leading questions.

It is important to know when to stop asking questions and listen. It is important not to interrogate.

Types of Questions you can ask:

- Tell me (tell me what happened)
- Explain (explain what you meant by)
- Describe (where did this happen/where were you/when did this happen)

Remember you are only clarifying with the young person if something concerning did happen or could have happened from the information they give you.

Then **REPORT** to your DSL or Line Manager who will determine the next action.

SSE staff **MUST NOT**

- Investigate suspected/alleged abuse themselves;
- Evaluate the grounds for concern;
- Seek or wait for proof;

- Discuss the matter with anyone other than their DSL, line manager, Somerset Direct, and, as appropriate e.g. the Headteacher.

Children's Social Care & the Police are the only agencies that can investigate allegations of abuse.

Escalation Process - Resolution of professional disagreements in work relating to the safety of children.

Occasionally, there may be some professional disagreement as to whether child protection concerns meet thresholds etc. There is an Resolving Professional Differences Policy is available on the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership website – **see Appendix G.**

APPENDIX E: Prompt sheet for Child Protection concerns

Your DSL or Line Manager may ask you for further information. This prompt sheet will help you bring together all necessary information.

Child's details

- Name, including any middle names and, if the child is known by more than one name; list all names known.
- Date of birth.
- Address and telephone number.
- Health issues that may be relevant.
- Any known disabilities that may affect communication.

Family details

- Names of parents and/or carers.
- Names and ages of any other children in family.
- Ethnicity and cultural background and where appropriate information about the need for interpreters.
- Any legal or custody documents known to exist.
- Name of the family's GP.

School/provision history

- How long has the child attended this provision?
- Attendance record – check if there has been a problem with attendance, look out for any patterns that emerge from attendance records, i.e. some children have been reported to miss every Monday because there have been problems at the weekend.
- Behaviour – how does the child present? Check for any repeated patterns of behaviour, or sudden changes of behaviour. Do these relate to a change in circumstances at home?
- Relationships with parents, school, other agencies: good, non-existent, volatile?

Child protection history

- Have you had previous concerns and have you made previous referrals? It is important to revisit previous concerns to get a wider picture. Child protection services are reliant on other agencies to help them build up a clearer picture of what has been happening. The relationship between each event may be more significant than each individual event.
- If you have referred in the past, what was the outcome? Never let the fact that no action was taken last time affect your way of managing new concerns. If you have a concern, always pass it on.

Informing the parent

In most cases it is agreed that it is better to tell the parent that you intend to refer to Children's Social Care or the Police but think it through. If you think telling may put the child or young person at more risk, take advice first from your Designated Safeguarding Lead. If in doubt, ring Somerset Direct (0845 3459122) and discuss with the Duty Social Worker.

Making the referral by the DSL

Once there is all the necessary information available a child protection referral can be made by the DSL with confidence, following the South West Child Protection Procedures (<http://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/>)

Record all your actions and responses from other agencies.

APPENDIX F: Procedures if an allegation is made against a member of SSE staff

Never let allegations by a child or young person go unrecorded or unreported, including any made against you. In all instances the DSL must be informed. If the allegation concerns the DSL, then the Designated Safeguarding Champion (Jo O'Callaghan) must be informed.

In all situations the County HR contact and the Local Authority Designated Officer for Allegations Management, (LADO) must be informed. They can be contacted via Somerset Direct.

If you receive a disclosure about an adult colleague, it is important to reassure the child that what he says will be taken very seriously and everything possible done to help. If you are in the room when a child or young person begins to disclose concerns to another person, you should stay unobtrusively in the background. You may be able to support/witness what has been said if required.

Remember: value your professional judgement.

APPENDIX G: SSCP Resolving Professional Differences Policy (formally known as Escalation Process)

The below link is for the Local Safeguarding Children Board's Resolving Professional Differences policy that provides resolution of professional disagreements in work relating to the safety of children.

<https://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/working-with-children/local-protocols-guidance/>

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