

Information for Parents and Carers

What Settings will do if there are Child Protection Concerns about a Child

Where the child protection duties and responsibilities come from

There is a Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage, produced by the Department for Education. This framework is periodically updated, and the current Framework is **mandatory** for all early years providers in England from 1 September 2021, including all providers on the Early Years Register and all providers registered with an early years childminder agency (CMA).

Section 3 of the Framework sets out the statutory safeguarding and welfare requirements:

Some key statements are quoted below:

- “Providers must take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well.”
- Providers must “safeguard children; ensure the suitability of adults who have contact with children; promote good health; manage behaviour; and maintain records, policies and procedures.”
- “Providers must be alert to any issues of concern in the child’s life at home or elsewhere.”
- “Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children. These should be in line with the guidance and procedures of the relevant local safeguarding partners (LSP).” In Sheffield the Local Safeguarding Partnership is called ‘Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership’ (often referred to as ‘SCSP’).
- “The safeguarding policy and procedures must include an explanation of the action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns about a child”
- “A practitioner must be designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children in every setting. Childminders must take the lead responsibility themselves.” The practitioner with this role is referred to as the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- “Providers must train all staff to understand their safeguarding policy and procedures and ensure that all staff have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues. Training made available by the provider must enable staff to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity, and to respond in a timely and appropriate way.”

Types of Child Abuse

Physical Abuse

Emotional Abuse

Sexual Abuse

Neglect

- More than one form of abuse can take place at the same time.
- Emotional abuse is involved in all forms of abuse, or it may occur alone.
- All staff should be aware that child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE) are forms of child abuse.

Some Key Signs of Child Abuse

- Significant changes in children's behaviour
- Deterioration in children’s general well-being
- Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect
- Children’s comments which give cause for concern
- Any reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, for example in the child’s home or that a girl may have been subjected to (or is at risk of) female genital mutilation
- Inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children, for example: inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images
- Useful document for reference and further information:
[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#)

Our Responsibilities in regard to Safeguarding Children Procedures

- Staff working with children should maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the best interests of the child.
- If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately. They should follow the setting's child protection policy and speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or their deputy). In the absence of the designated safeguarding lead or deputy staff should speak to a member of the senior leadership team.
- The designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) will generally lead on next steps, including who else, if anyone, in the setting should be informed and whether to pass a concern to children's social care and/or the police.
- At the point of referral to children's social care, settings will generally inform parents or carers, unless there are compelling reasons not to (if informing a parent or carer is going to put the child at additional risk). Any such decision should be made with the support of children's social care.
- Child protection concerns about a child are kept confidential and only shared with the people who need to know this information.
- It is best practice to follow the 'Seven Golden Rules to Sharing Information' from the Information Sharing guidance [Information sharing: advice for practitioners \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/362822/information-sharing-advice-for-practitioners.pdf), paying particular attention to Rule 6, ensuring any sharing of information is "Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure".

Safeguarding and Child Protection Actions a Setting will Take

If there is a safeguarding concern:

- Safeguarding children procedures will be activated without delay
- The concern will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or their Deputy if they are unavailable)
- The DSL will seek advice from the appropriate professionals when assessing the risk of the child suffering or like to suffer significant harm, e.g., Sheffield Safeguarding Hub
- If providers have concerns about children's safety or welfare, they must notify agencies with statutory responsibilities without delay. In Sheffield this mean contacting the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub, or in emergencies, the police.
- The concern will be written down by the person who noticed the concern as soon as possible, in a factual manner, and this will be given to the DSL securely, and stored securely.
- There is more detail on the process in the Safeguarding Concerns flowchart.

Settings do not have an investigatory role in this process and should not attempt to investigate the situation

Consent:

Although consent is not needed from parents or carers to make a referral to Social Care settings will usually inform parents or carers of the action being taken unless doing so will put the child at risk of further harm. Advice on informing parents and carers of a referral being made will be taken from the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub.

Responsibilities of the Setting if a Child Discloses that they or another Child may have been Abused

- If a child might be telling us that they or another child has been abused the adult will;
- Listen to them and take their allegation/account seriously.
- Not be interrupt when they are recalling significant events and the child will not be asked to repeat their account or ask leading questions. The professionals understand that it is a disclosure, not an interview.
- Reassure the child that actions will be taken to keep them safe in a way that is appropriate to the age and understanding of the child
- Maintain confidentiality, but there should not be a promise that no one else will be told, as this may need to happen in order to protect the child.
- Write down what has been said factually, using the exact words where possible. There is no place for opinions or subjectivity.
- Make a note of the date, time, place and people who were present
- Report concerns immediately the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub or the police, as appropriate.

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers as Service Users

- Parents and carers must notify the setting of any concerns they have about their child and any accidents, incidents or injuries affecting the child.
- A record of this information will be kept securely.

Concerns and Complaints

- Parents and carers must let the setting know immediately if they have any concerns about poor childcare practice.
- In the first instance they should complain using the complaints procedure at the setting.
- Parents and Carers can also raise their concerns with Ofsted via email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or telephone 0300 123 4666.
- All providers must investigate written complaints relating to their fulfilment of the EYFS requirements and notify complainants of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint.
- The record of complaints must be made available to Ofsted or the relevant childminder agency on request.
- **If a parent or carer is concerned about harm to a child taking place in a setting, they should contact Sheffield Safeguarding Hub.**
- **If a child is in immediate danger the parent/carer should contact the police.**

How Allegations Against Adults (incl. Paid and Unpaid Staff and Volunteers) are Dealt with

- If an allegation is made that a member of staff or volunteer has harmed a child, or may be an unsuitable person to look after children it must be reported to Ofsted and to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), who will ensure that a proper investigation is carried out.
- The notifications must be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made. Failure to notify, without a reasonable excuse, is an offence.
- Settings have a statutory duty to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where a member of staff or volunteer is dismissed (or would have been, had the person not left the setting first) because they have harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm.

Recording Child Protection Information, including Disclosures

In all instances recording will include:

- the child's full name, date of birth and address
- the date and time of the record, including where the disclosure was taken
- factual details of the concern, for example bruising, what the child said, who was present
- details of any previous concerns
- details of any explanations from parents or carers

- any action taken such as speaking to parents or carers, contact with the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub to gain advice, to make a referral, calling the police, etc.