



<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Safeguarding Children</b>
<b>Author and Title</b>	Updated by Carolyn Best, Governance Team, and reviewed by the DCF Trustee Board, Rhian Wootten, Deputy Director of Operations and Nominated safeguarding officer and Grahame Best DCF Designated Safeguarding Officer.
<b>Ratified by</b>	<b>DCF Safeguarding Team</b> <b>DCF Trustees</b>
<b>Date Ratified</b>	
<b>Next Review Due</b>	<b>Annual review required (Government guidance 2017)</b>

<b>Related Policies</b>	Health and safety Disciplinary and grievance procedures Complaints Data protection
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<b>Amendments made</b>	May 22: Format of policy changed to clarify individual roles and responsibilities. County Lines definition removed as it is only one form of criminal exploitation. Full definitions provided by the NSPCC. Replaced with generic statement of criminal exploitation and link in references.
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**Note:** The electronic version of this policy will always supersede any printed version.

### **Introduction**

The Dorset Children's Foundation (DCF) acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of every child and young person who has been entrusted to its care and is committed to working to provide a safe environment for all children and families.

A child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday (HM Government 2018). Children and their parents/carers need to feel sure that the people in charge of the activities and services provided to them are trustworthy, responsible and will do everything they can to keep the child or young person from harm (including abuse, injury neglect and privacy).

Unfortunately, sometimes people who work or volunteer may pose a risk and may wish to harm a child. In addition, accidents can happen unless steps are taken to minimise them. **Therefore, safeguarding children and young people is everybody's business.**



The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect children and young people who receive The Dorset Children's Foundation services, from harm.
- Provide staff and volunteers who interact with our children and families with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding children who access our services.

**The DCF believes that:**

- Children and young people should not experience abuse of any kind whilst using our services.
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe whilst accessing our services and to practise in a way that protects them.

**The DCF recognises that:**

- The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, culture, language, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

**Definition of safeguarding children**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance 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
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes (HM Government 2018)

**Definitions of Types of Harm**

Child abuse is when a child is intentionally harmed by an adult or another child – it can be over a period of time but can also be a one-off action. It can be physical, sexual or emotional and it can happen in person or online. It can also be a lack of love, care and attention – this is neglect (NSPCC 2022)

Physical Abuse	Physical abuse is deliberately causing physical harm to a child. This might involve punching, kicking, biting, burning, scalding, shaking, throwing or beating with objects such as belts, whips, or sticks. It also includes poisoning, giving a child alcohol or illegal drugs, drowning or suffocation. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of illness in a child.
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	In pregnancy an unborn child can be harmed by domestic violence <b>(PDSCP 2022)</b> .
Emotional Abuse	<p>Emotional abuse is where repeated verbal threats, criticism, ridicule, shouting, lack of love and affection causes a severe adverse effect on a child's emotional development. It includes conveying to children that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.</p> <p>Emotional abuse may include not giving a child opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature inappropriate expectations being imposed on a child, over protection and limitation of exploration and learning.</p> <p>It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another person as in domestic abuse. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.</p> <p>Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of children, or it may occur alone. Children who are emotionally abused suffer emotional maltreatment or neglect. It's sometimes called psychological abuse and can cause children serious harm <b>(PDSCP 2022)</b>.</p>
Neglect	<p>Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs whether physical or psychological and is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. It's dangerous and children can suffer serious and long-term harm.</p> <p>Neglect is when a parent or carer fails to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment), medical care, or protection from physical and emotional harm or danger.</p> <p>It also includes failure to ensure access to education or to look after a child because the carer is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.</p> <p>In pregnancy neglect may occur as a result of misusing alcohol or drugs <b>(PDSCP 2022)</b>.</p>
Sexual Abuse	<p>A child or young person is sexually abused when they are forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may involve physical contact including penetrative sex, oral sex, masturbation, kissing, rubbing, or touching outside of clothing, or it may involve non-contact activities such as involving children in watching sexual activities, producing or looking at sexual images, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse and it can happen online.</p> <p>Abusers can be men, women or other children. Sexual abuse also comes in many forms including Sexual Exploitation and FGM <b>(PDSCP 2022)</b>.</p>
Child Sexual Exploitation	Child Sexual Exploitation is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. this illegal activity is done by people

	<p>who have power over young people and use it to sexually abuse them This can involve a broad range of exploitative activity, from seemingly 'consensual' relationships and informal exchanges of sex for attention, accommodation, gifts or cigarettes, through to very serious organised crime. Both girls and boys are at risk of sexual exploitation, and it is seriously harmful to children both emotionally and physically. Children and young people often find it very hard to understand or accept that they are being abused through sexual exploitation, and this increases their risk of being exposed to violent assault and life-threatening events by those who abuse them <b>(PDSCP 2022).</b></p>
Female Genital Mutilation	<p>FGM is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for nonmedical reasons. It is also known as female Genital Cutting, Female Circumcision and 'Sunna'. It is a form of child abuse and is illegal in the UK <b>(PDSCP 2022).</b></p>
Forced Marriage	<p>A forced marriage is where one or both people do not consent to the marriage and pressure, or abuse is used <b>(PDSCP 2022).</b></p>
Child trafficking and Modern Day Slavery	<p>Is a type of abuse where children are recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Modern day slavery is not an issue from history or confined to certain countries. It is a global problem including the UK and is still happening today <b>(PDSCP 2022).</b></p>
Grooming	<p>Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know for example a family member, friend or professional. Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation. Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know for example a family member, friend or professional. Groomers may be male or female and could be any age. Many children and young people don't understand they have been groomed, or that what has happened is abuse <b>(PDSCP 2022).</b></p>
Radicalisation	<p>Is the process through which a person comes to support or be involved in extremist ideologies. It can result in a person becoming drawn into terrorism and is in itself a form of harm. Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. It includes calls for the death of members of the British armed forces. The process of radicalisation may involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being groomed online or in person</li> <li>• exploitation, including sexual exploitation</li> <li>• psychological manipulation</li> <li>• exposure to violent material and other inappropriate information</li> <li>• the risk of physical harm or death through extremist acts.</li> </ul> <p>It happens gradually so children and young people who are affected may not realise what it is that they are being drawn into <b>NSPCC (2021).</b></p>

<p>Harmful Sexual Behaviour</p>	<p>The age of sexual consent in the UK is 16, so sex with any boy or girl under 16 is unlawful whether or not both people have given their consent. A child under the age of 13 cannot consent to sex.</p> <p>If someone is drunk, drugged, unconscious, or has been threatened or bullied then they cannot consent to sexual contact or activity, and sex without consent is rape.</p> <p>Sexual consent is something that has to be 'got' (received) as well as 'given'. Your child needs to understand that consent is not just about saying 'yes' or 'no'; many of the signs that a person is uncomfortable with something are non-verbal and it is important that teenagers look out for these signs. Such as; someone turning away from you, looking frightened or nervous, tensing up and pushing you away etc.</p> <p>Many young people are unclear that consent is something that needs to be sought and given even in an intimate relationship. It is very important that your teenager understands that both people in a sexual relationship must agree to it and can change their mind and withdraw at any time if they want to stop. As a parent it can feel awkward talking to your child about sexual consent; however it is important to have the conversation to help your child have healthy sexual behaviour.</p> <p>Consent means agreeing to do something. when it comes to sex, this means someone agreeing to take part in a sexual activity.</p> <p>Children and young people who develop harmful sexual behaviour harm themselves and others (<b>PDSCP 2022</b>).</p>
<p>Bullying</p>	<p>Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else.</p> <p>It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone.</p> <p>It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. It could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical bullying: hitting, slapping or pushing someone</li> <li>• verbal bullying: name calling, gossiping or threatening someone</li> <li>• non-verbal abuse: hand signs or text messages</li> <li>• emotional abuse: threatening, intimidating or humiliating someone</li> <li>• exclusion: ignoring or isolating someone</li> <li>• undermining, constant criticism or spreading rumours</li> <li>• controlling or manipulating someone</li> <li>• making silent, hoax or abusive calls</li> </ul> <p>The following types of bullying are also hate crime:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• racial, sexual, transphobic or homophobic bullying</li> <li>• bullying someone because they have a disability</li> </ul> <p><b>NSPCC (2022a)</b></p>
<p>Cyberbullying</p>	<p>Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying offline, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming and mobile phone.</p>



	<p>Cyberbullying can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sending threatening or abusive text messages</li> <li>creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos</li> <li>trolling – the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games</li> <li>excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups</li> <li>shaming someone online</li> <li>setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child</li> <li>encouraging young people to self-harm</li> <li>voting for or against someone in an abusive poll</li> <li>creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name</li> <li>sending explicit messages, also known as sexting</li> <li>pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations <b>(NSPCC 2022)</b>.</li> </ul>
<p>Criminal Exploitation</p>	<p>Criminal exploitation is child abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes <b>NSPCC (2022b)</b>.</p>

**Safeguarding Duties and Responsibilities of individuals working within the DCF.**

- All children and young people have the right to a friendly, secure, caring and safe environment whilst accessing the services and activities provided by DCF
- Anyone who works with the DCF will have direct contact with children and young people at some point, and could, therefore, be a danger to them and/or may become directly aware of concerns. Responsibility for safeguarding children and young people must be shared as they can only be protected effectively when all the relevant agencies and individuals accept responsibility and co-operate with one another.
- The DCF has a responsibility to handle any incident or allegation of abuse:
  - In a secure and responsible way
  - By following its safeguarding policies and procedures
  - Quickly, ensuring any further harm or damage is minimised or stopped.
  - By reporting it to all relevant agencies and regulators in full
  - Plan what to say to those involved with your charity and the media (only if appropriate and necessary)
  - Openly so that the charity's reputation for acting with integrity is maintained
  - By reviewing what happened to understand how to stop it from happening again (HM Government 2017)
- The DCF has a responsibility to inform organisations we work with and children and young people, their parents and carers as appropriate, of its duty to follow up any safeguarding concerns and report suspected cases of harm when disclosed or observed.



#### **All staff and volunteers:**

- Should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.
- Must not knowingly put any child in harm's way.
- Are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Volunteers must report anything suspicious to paid members of staff who will then forward the information to the Nominated Safeguarding Officer
- Must not use inappropriate language or behaviour.
- All allegations of abuse against a worker/volunteer/trustee, however minor, must be reported to the Nominated Safeguarding Officer
- No DCF member of staff or volunteer or trustee will be alone with a child or adult at risk without alerting others to the reason, in the first instance their manager (in the case of trustees the Founders or if not immediately available another appropriate manager or member of staff).
- Have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with the this policy and their duties and responsibilities within it.
- Should speak with the Nominated Safeguarding Officer or Safeguarding Trustees if they have safeguarding concern, or want to complain about a lack of action on a safeguarding concern.

#### **Specific responsibilities**

##### **Trustees:**

- Have the ultimate responsibility to ensure DCF complies with their legal duties to ensure the safety of children and young people who use the DCF services.
- It is the role of the lead safeguarding trustees to oversee, champion, and challenge the work of the DCF in relation to safeguarding.
- Must ensure the DCF has a designated, appropriately trained and informed individual to be the Nominated Safeguarding Officer.

##### **Director of Operations / Deputy Director of Operations**

- Ensure that any organisation the DCF contracts to, or partners with to deliver services to children or young people have undergone appropriate safeguarding checks.
- Provide effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know the reporting structure and their role in safeguarding children using DCF services.
- Ensure appropriate training is provided to those staff working with children and young people

##### **Safeguarding Team:**

- The Safeguarding Team are the conscience for safeguarding in the DCF and oversee safeguarding issues ensuring that the DCF complies with legal, professional, and Charity Commission requirements of good practice.



- Will support practice improvement across the foundation and liaise with the lead safeguarding trustee as required.
- Will ensure safeguarding policies, procedures and training is in place that confirms to current legislation.
- Are responsible for supporting good safeguarding practice and providing professional expertise relating to safeguarding issues, where required.
- Provide effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently.
- Provide appropriate training to those staff working with children and young people
- To flag concerns and gaps in safeguarding policy and practice throughout the foundation, as appropriate.

#### **Governance Team**

- Ensure any policy or procedure relating to safeguarding is updated in a timely manner after being fully reviewed by the safeguarding team.
- To monitor dissemination of the policy ensuring it has been made available to all staff and volunteers and there is a record of all individuals who have read the document.

#### **Safer Recruitment**

When undertaking pre-selection checks for all staff and volunteers, the following steps must be completed:

- All volunteers and staff must complete an application form. Application forms should be fully completed before an interview is conducted. Any gaps in an application form must be discussed at interview.
- At least two references should be taken up, including at least one regarding previous work with children if applicable, and one from a professional that is unrelated to the applicant
- Two forms of identity must be provided at, or following interview but before commencing a role at the DCF.
- Where appropriate, DCF staff/volunteers will complete a Disclosure and Barring Service application, or a check will be made against the Update Service, if they are working specifically with children or young people. If the staff/volunteer is likely to be unsupervised at any time we will apply for an Enhanced Disclosure.
- All staff positions are subject to a probationary period depending on contract length
- We reserve the right to refuse employment to, or terminate any person's employment, if we consider they may pose a risk to young people

#### **How to Report an Incident or case of Suspected Harm**

##### **Appendix 1 How to Report an Incident or Suspected Harm**

The first priority for all those working for DCF (trustees, staff, volunteers, contractors, etc.) should be to ensure the safety and protection of any child or young person whilst using DCF's services.





Therefore, if there is any concern, it is an individual's responsibility to act in a timely manner, if necessary, immediately where there is an urgent need for medical treatment or immediate risk of harm. Where a worker, volunteer or trustee suspects a child or young person has or is being harmed they will follow the process below:

1. If you have concerns about a child or young person's welfare and they have disclosed information you should:
  - Stay calm, treat them seriously, offer them support and listen to them but not press for more details. Don't ask leading questions, use **TED** ('tell me...', 'explain to me...', 'describe'...)
  - Explain that you cannot guarantee confidentiality and that you have a duty to report to a member of the DCF safeguarding team.
  - Write down what they tell you using their own words **as soon as possible**.
  - Keep any evidence safe, e.g., photographs of injuries.
  - Do not attempt to discuss any of the information you receive with the person alleged to have caused the harm
  - You must protect the source of your information.
  - You must not disclose the source of your information with anyone other than the safeguarding team.
2. If you believe the child or young person at risk is in immediate danger or a crime has been committed, call the police and/or an ambulance on 999. If not continue on to point 3.
3. Report the incident / information **as soon as possible** to the Nominated Safeguarding Officer or Chair of Trustees, if the safeguarding officer is unavailable or the allegation concerns them directly. The report must be within the same working day.  
If neither is available contact one of the Founders who will contact the appropriate person on your behalf, or assist you in making an appropriate decision until the safeguarding team can be contacted.
4. Record your own concerns/observations using as much information as possible such as what was said, what was observed, when, where and who else was there, date, time and place of disclosure/concerns.
5. Hand all information and evidence over to the Nominated Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours of disclosure or concern raised.
6. The incident will then be managed by the safeguarding team.
7. Do not discuss any of the information you have gained with anyone other than those in the safeguarding team.

### **Contacts**

DCF Nominated Safeguarding Officer: Rhian Wootten

DCF Designated Safeguarding Officer: Grahame Best



Founders: Patsy Hallmey

Trustees with safeguarding responsibilities: Alex Deutch, James Pantlin-Skeet, Amy Collins

**For concerns about an immediate risk or harm to a child or young person ring the Police on 999**

**References:**

HM Government (2018) Working together to Safeguard Children A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

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HM Government (2017) Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees What to do to protect people who come into contact with your charity through its work from abuse or mistreatment of any kind. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees#children-adults-at-risk> (Last accessed 03/05/22)

NSPCC (2021) Radicalisation - [Radicalisation and child protection | NSPCC Learning](#) (last accessed 03/05/22)

NSPCC (2022) Types of Abuse [Types of Child Abuse & How to Prevent Them | NSPCC](#) (last accessed 03/05/22)

NSPCC (2022a) Bullying and Cyberbullying [Helping Children Deal with Bullying & Cyberbullying | NSPCC](#) (last accessed 03/05/22)

NSPCC (2022b) Criminal Exploitation [Criminal exploitation and gangs | NSPCC](#) (last accessed 03/05/22)

PDSCP (2022) Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership Abuse What is it? [Abuse, what is it? - Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership \(pdscp.co.uk\)](#) (last accessed 03/05/22)

