



Safeguarding / Child Protection

September 2024



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Purpose and Aim

World Alternative Education's Child Protection Policy aims to provide clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with child welfare concerns. The policy is explicit in the company's commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures to keep children safe. The purpose of the policy is, therefore, to ensure that our children's welfare is of paramount importance, early and additional help is offered to prevent escalation and where child protection concerns are identified referrals are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways that support the needs of the child's well-being. Staff are committed within World Alternative Education to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in our care through all our policies, procedures and practices. We expect all our pupils, parents, and visitors to share this commitment and understanding.

Introduction

World Alternative Education fully recognises the contribution it can make to keeping children safe and supporting the pupils in its care.

There are four main elements to the child protection policy:

1. **Prevention** – positive atmosphere, careful and vigilant teaching, pastoral care, support to pupils, providing good adult role models and the identification of early and additional support/services to children and families and recognising and reducing risks to children including harassment, bullying, victimisation, exploitation, radicalisation and issues such as honour based violence female genital mutilation and forced marriage.
2. **Protection** – following agreed procedures, ensuring all staff respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns and that every member of staff has regular training and update and are supported to refer their concerns to the designated lead safeguarding lead **Andrew Burlison** or deputy designated safeguarding lead **Martin Coy** or the MASH (children's safeguarding through CSN 0191 520 5560) directly IF NECESSARY. In certain specific cases such as females genital mutilation (mandatory reporting FGM from October 2015), radicalisation or forced marriage there are SPOCS/named team and individuals within the police who can be contacted.
3. **Reconsideration** –following and challenging the progress of new referrals and existing cases to ensure that individual cases are reconsidered if there remains no improvement to a child's circumstances.
4. **Support** – to pupils and all staff and to children who may be vulnerable due to their individual circumstances.

In the event of any of these issues being recognised information should be shared directly with the designated safeguarding leads which may result in the situation being monitored and supported in school or the pupils being referred to specific services.

This policy applies to World Alternative Education's whole workforce.

Framework and Legislation

No companies operate in isolation. Keeping children safe from significant harm is the responsibility of all adults especially those working with children. The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice are the responsibilities of World Alternative Education which includes the partnership of several agencies who work with children and families across the county.

World Alternative Education is committed to respond in accordance with Child Protection, Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board and partner agencies in all cases where there is a concern about significant harm and or child abuse.

Significant harm is defined in The Children's Act 1989 as the ill treatment (including sexual abuse and physical abuse) or the impairment of health (physical or mental) or development (physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural) as compared to a similar child.

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Child Abuse is defined as any form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm on them, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or by others



Note: harm now includes the impairment of a child's health or development as a result of witnessing the ill treatment of another person (Adoption of Children Act 2002)

Local authorities have a duty to investigate (under S47 of the Children Act 1989). Where a local authority is informed that there is a child who is living, or is found, in their area and they have reasonable cause to suspect that child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm they must make such enquiries as necessary to promote or safeguard the child's welfare. The MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub), children's safeguarding undertakes this responsibility on behalf of the local authority once a referral has been made.

Keeping children safe in education September 2016 contains information on what schools and colleges **should** do and sets out the legal duties with which schools and colleges **must** comply. It should be read alongside Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 which applies to all the schools, including maintained nursery schools. The Children Act 1989 sets out the legal framework.

Serious Crimes Act 2015

We acknowledge the measures that the serious crime act 2015 introduced to enhance the protection of vulnerable children and others. This particularly includes protection from domestic abuse, furthermore we are aware of the risks of vulnerable children participating in organised crime. We are aware of the change to the offence of child cruelty which makes it explicit that the offence covers cruelty which causes psychological suffering or injury as well as physical harm.

Roles and Responsibilities for all staff

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy as:

- Protecting ALL children from maltreatment and abuse; including in addition to the four categories of harm (PHYSICAL, SEXUAL, EMOTIONAL, NEGLECT) issues such as child sexual exploitation (CSE), honour based violence (HBV) inclusive of female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, preventing radicalisation and extremism, harassment, bullying and victimisation.
- Preventing impairment of children's 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.

This includes everyone under the age of 18.

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. Due to the regular contact with children all staff at World Alternative Education have, we hold a particularly important role in safeguarding as we are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children and to prevent concerns from escalating. Children can make disclosures or show signs of a abuse at any time and to any individual and safeguarding incidents can occur within schools.

Therefore it is important that ALL staff:

- Ensure that they listen to and reflect on the voice of the child at ALL times and take seriously any concerns raised to them by a child.
- Ensure that they report ANY concerns of harm to any child to the designated safeguarding lead immediately.
- However, ALL staff can refer their concerns directly to the MASH, children's safeguarding if necessary and the police in the stated incidents above. They should inform the designated safeguarding lead as soon as possible if they have reported concerns directly.
- Ensure that they record any information shared directly with them by a child or observed/witnessed with the designated safeguarding lead immediately. This could include sharing information on behalf of the

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designated safeguarding lead with other agencies. All discussions, decisions and reasons for them should be recorded in writing at hearing to the World Alternative Education's recording and information sharing policy/procedure.

- Ensure that they maintain an attitude of '**it could happen here**' and report any concerns regarding the behaviour of a child in school directly to the designated safeguarding lead.
- Ensure that they maintain an attitude of '**it could happen here**' and report any concerns regarding the behaviour of an adult/staff member directly to the director.
- Ensure that they feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practices of staff and potential failures in the company's safeguarding regime through whistle blowing procedures and the staff behaviour/code of conduct policy.
- Ensure that they attend regular formal training/updates to support them in recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse, particularly in support of early identification of needs of children to prevent an escalation of need or risk to the child.
- Ensure that under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act, April 2015, the company has 'due regard' to 'prevent' and to assess risk of children and young people being radicalised drawn into extremism (based upon potential risks in local area and that clear protocols are in place for all visitors so that views are appropriate and not an opportunity to influence others).
- Ensure from October 2015 that there is mandatory reporting to the police in all cases where staff discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl ages under 18.
- Ensure that staff understand through online safety training the additional risks for pupils online and continue to promote the company's eSafety Policy in the protection of all pupils.

World Alternative Education will work with social care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Role of the Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputies

World Alternative Education has appointed Andrew Burlison to be the designated safeguarding lead. He has the overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection and have the appropriate authority and training to undertake such a role including being able to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters. He is able to take part in strategy discussions and inter agency meeting and to support other trained staff to do so as well as contribute to the assessment of children.

World Alternative Education has appointed Martin Coy as the deputy designated lead who is part of the safeguarding team. This individual is trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead. Whilst the activities of the designated safeguarding lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies the ultimate LEAD RESPONSIBILITY for child protection will not be delegated and remains with the designated safeguarding lead. The designated safeguarding lead has a very detailed role, (see below). However, if there is an IMMEDIATE safeguarding concern and the designated safeguarding leads are unavailable please seek immediate support using the key contacts highlighted in appendix 1.

The broad areas of responsibility for the designated safeguarding leads are identified here:

Manage referrals

- Refer cases of suspected abuse to the MASH, children's safeguarding.
- Refer cases to the Disclosure and Barring Service (cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child: and/or
- Refer to the Police (cases where a crime may have been committed including sexual exploitation (MSET lead), radicalisation (through the Single Point of Contact for the Channel Panel), female genital mutilation and forced marriage).
- Support staff who make referrals to the MASH, children's safeguarding, channel panel or police as appropriate.

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- Work with others.
- Liaise with the head teachers to inform them of issues, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
- For all cases which concern a staff member, liaise with the head teacher, or governors, and the DO at the local authority for the child protection concerns.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matter of safety with relevant agencies.

Undertake training

- The designated safeguarding lead and any deputies should receive appropriate training. Their knowledge and skills should be refreshed at regular intervals so they:
- Understand and keep up with any developments to their role
- Understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, for example through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as early help assessments.
- Having a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to the effectively when required to do so.
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understand the company's child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff.
- Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers.
- Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure, written records of concerns and referrals.
- Understand and support the company with regards to the requirements of the prevent duty and be able to provide advice and support to the staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation.
- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses.
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measure the company may put in place to protect them.

Raise awareness

- The designated safeguarding lead should ensure the company's policies are known, understood and used appropriately:
- Ensure the company's child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with the governing body and the workforce in this regard to ensure its effectiveness. This includes ensuring that all staff receives the policy on their induction.
- Ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of World Alternative Education in this.
- Link with the LSCB to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding.

Child protection file

- Where children leave, the company ensure their child protection file is transferred appropriately for any new school or placement as soon as possible. Ensuring secure transit and confirmation of receipt. This may through an electronic system.

Availability

- During term time the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should always be available (during school hours) for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Mr. Andrew Burlison's mobile numbers are held on site and can be contacted at any time.
- Whilst generally speaking the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) would be expected to be available in person, it is a matter for the individual schools and colleges, working with the designated safeguarding lead, to consider whether in exceptional circumstances availability via phone and/or Skype or other such mediums is acceptable.

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- The designated safeguarding lead and company should arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangement for any out of hours/out of term activities. Mr. Andrew Burlison's details are given to the group leaders of any visits happening outside of school hours.
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the company's suite of safeguarding policies particularly the child protection policy and the staff behaviour policy, especially new or part time staff who may work with the different establishments.
- Be aware of all school excursions and residential and clarify with group leaders their role and responsibilities in connection with safeguarding/child protection.
- Ensure a company policy about managing behaviour and discipline including the use of reasonable force, is in place.
- Ensure an effective whole school policy against bullying/cyber bullying inclusive of measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils is in place.
- Inform the LA of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without schools permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

Information for Parents

At World Alternative Education, staff are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the students in our care and will take any reasonable action to safeguarding their welfare. In cases where the company has reason to be concerned that a child may be suffering significant harm, ill treatment, neglect or other forms of harm, staff have no alternative but to follow Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board procedures and inform the MASH, children's safeguarding or police of their concern

Procedures

The designated safeguarding lead (or deputy DSL) will be informed immediately by an employee of the company, pupil of the company, parent or other persons, in the following circumstances:

- Suspicion that a child is being harmed
- There is evidence that a child is being harmed

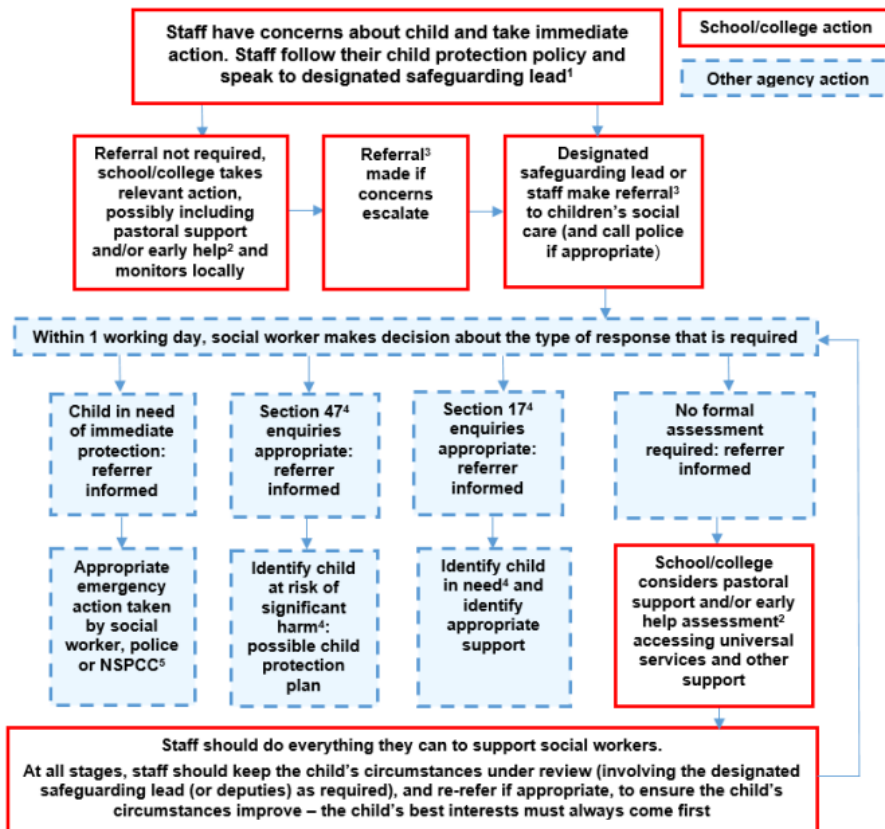
The designated safeguarding lead will keep a full record of concerns raised and make referrals to the MASH, children's safeguarding if necessary.

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Actions where there are concerns about a child



1. In cases which also involve an allegation of abuse against a staff member, see part four of this guidance.
2. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child’s life. Where a child would benefit from co-ordinated early help, and early help inter-agency assessment should be arranged. Chapter One of Working Together to Safeguard Children provides detailed guidance on the early help process.
3. Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. This can include s17 assessments of children in need and s47 assessments of children at risk of significant harm. Full details are in Chapter One of Working Together to Safeguard Children.
4. This could be applying for an emergency protection order (EPO).

Training and Support

All staff members should be aware of the systems within the company which support safeguarding and these should be explained to them as part of their induction to ensure they can discharge their responsibilities effectively. This includes: the child protection policy, staff code of conduct, safer working practice document and the names of the designated safeguarding lead and their deputies.

All staff members should receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively with opportunities to contribute to reviewing and shaping the safeguarding arrangements.



Professional Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of safeguarding. World Alternative Education recognises that the only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the child and that sharing relevant proportionate information between professionals is an important factor in keeping children safe. Staff will be informed on a need to know basis.

Record Keeping

Well kept records are essential to good safeguarding practice. World Alternative Education is clear about the need to record any concerns, discussions held, decisions made and reasons for those decisions about a child or children within its care. All staff will follow the company's information sharing and recording policies to ensure recording keeping is compliant.

Safeguarding recording within World Alternative Education is held electronically through secure spreadsheets accessed only by the safeguarding team and all staff have received training in the recording expectation and retention. When a child leaves our company we follow the appropriate transfer procedures and retention guidelines.

Attendance at Safeguarding Conferences

In the event of World Alternative Education being invited to attend child protection conferences, the designated safeguarding lead, designated deputies or appropriate member of staff will represent the company and/or identify the most appropriate trained member of staff to provide information relevant to any child protection conference. This also applies to any team around the family meetings.

Supporting Children

World Alternative Education recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth and to view the world in a positive way. World Alternative Education may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of some of the children in its care. The company, therefore, recognises that such children might exhibit challenging and defiant behaviour and will take careful note of the context of such behaviour. World Alternative Education also recognises that children are capable of abusing their peers. Peer on peer abuse can take many forms and any concerns raised will be investigated and dealt with appropriately. No peer on peer abuse should be tolerated or minimised as part of growing up and all those involved will be provided with an appropriate level of support. It is understood that those pupils who have experienced abuse in their own lives may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered and sensitive approach in order that the child can receive appropriate help and support. See peer on peer abuse policy for detailed information.

Therefore World Alternative Education will endeavour to support all its pupils through:

- The curriculum to encourage self esteem, self motivation, self protection.
- The company ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all pupils and adults a sense of being respected and valued.
- Approaches which allow children and young people to develop critical thinking, literacy skills and digital literacy skills.
- A curriculum which explores human rights, equality, democracy and tolerance and prepares children and you people fully for life in modern Britain.
- A coherent management of behaviour and discipline policy & procedures inclusive of the use of reasonable force.
- Liaise with other professionals and agencies who support children and parents.

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- A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents whenever it is in the child's interest to do so.
- The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group whose role it is to respond appropriately in all safeguarding situations.



World Alternative Education recognises that, statistically, children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are the most vulnerable to abuse. All staff who work, in any capacity, with children with profound and multiple disabilities sensory impairment and/or emotional and behavioural problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse. All staff must give consideration to children who are subject to a statement of special needs, an education health and care plan or have a medical condition, as these can mask safeguarding issues and must not be dismissed.

World Alternative Education also recognises that in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol misuse or mental health issues children may also be vulnerable and in need of support and protection.

Whistle Blowing/Confidential Reporting

World Alternative Educations Confidential Reporting Policy provides guidance to staff and volunteers on how they can raise concerns and receive appropriate feedback on action taken, when staff have concerns about any adult's behaviour.

Management of a safeguarding concern or allegation about an adult:

If staff have safeguarding concerns, or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including supply staff and volunteers) posing a risk of harm to children, then this should be referred to the DSL without delay. Where there are concerns/allegations about the DSL, this should be referred to the appropriate Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) via consultation without delay, (Durham - Marian Garland 01325 406459. Sunderland - Daneille Rose 0191 561 7198 or 0191 561 3901) who will determine what action follows. A multi-agency strategy meeting may be arranged to look at the complaint in its widest context, a senior member of staff must attend this meeting, which will be arranged by the Designated Officer. All issues must be recorded on the allegation management form and the outcome reached must be noted to ensure closure.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or in light of any changes in legislation and/or guidance.

This policy document will be reviewed in September 2025.

Signed by:

Martin Coy (General Manager)

M Coy

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Appendix 1: Key contacts – Darlington

Safeguarding procedures and key contacts for Darlington

Children’s Initial Advice Team professional line will be available to support all professionals with a new child concern.

Monday - Thursday: 8:30am - 5pm

Friday: 8:30am - 4:30pm

Tel: 01325 406252

If you need to get in touch out of office hours, contact **the Emergency Duty Team on 01642 524552.**

Police Non-emergency 101

Health

School Nurse Service Tel 03000030013

CAMHS: County Durham and Darlington 0300 1239296

Virtual Head for CLA: Calvin Kipling via virtualschool@darlington.gov.uk

Designated Officer at the Local Authority: Liz Best

Tel: 01325 405319 or Mob 07717 301557

e-mail designatedofficer@darlington.gov.uk

Education Safeguarding Officer: Angela Turnbull

Angela.turnbull@darlington.gov.uk

[Tel: 01325 405848](tel:01325405848)

Early Help Team

Headquarters: Moor House Adventure Centre; Rainton Gate, West Rainton, Houghton le Spring, Tyne & Wear. DH4 6QY.

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To refer for Early Help, Safer families support or for advice contact Kelly-Ann Reay, Early Help Coordinator, Tel: 01325 405635 or 07946340385
All Children's Services Teams, Early Help Team and Education staff are remote working.



If you cannot speak to a **child's Social Worker or Early Help Worker call 01325 406222 option 1 and ask to speak to the duty worker.**

If you are unaware of the name or contact details of a child's Social Worker call 01325 400622 option 2 and the children's front door business support staff will help.

Darlington Council Coronavirus Support Hub

Darlington Council support hub is available to help those people in our borough most affected by the Coronavirus outbreak. The hub will be available seven days a week and is there for people who can't get help from family, friends or volunteers.

Call the hub on 01325 405000

Safeguarding Procedures

Advice from Darlington Safeguarding Partnership



Darlington
Safeguarding Partner:

Multi-agency Strategy Meetings, Initial Child Protection Conferences, Review Child Protection Conferences, Core Groups and Looked After Reviews for children will still be taking place using virtual platforms or telephone conference and have/will work with partners to manage this. Schools will be contacted, and arrangements shared for individual cases. *Reports for initial and reviews conference should be as sent to the unit 72 hours before conference and reports shared with parents/carers.*

Social Workers / Early Help Team visiting families due to child protection concerns, statutory visits

- Early Help Teams will be contacting families daily.
- Where face to face contact is required for all visits, staff will be telephoning in advance to clarify it is still safe to visit. Social Workers will see children in gardens areas, through windows etc ensuring social distancing or via virtual platforms.
- Children's Social Care are requesting colleagues across partner agencies proactively share information about families who they know are self-isolating, to avoid any unnecessary home visits and contact, ensuring all are protected from unnecessary exposure to the virus.

Durham Prevent Team

Contact the Prevent Team, advice or referral regarding radicalisation or terrorism.

Police Prevent Team (office hours) 0191 375 2234

DC 1023 Steven Smith, Prevent Counter Terrorism Case Officer

PC 1080 Billy Crampsie

Non-urgent enquiries 101, Emergency calls 999

To report illegal information, pictures or videos found on the internet www.gov.uk/report-terrorism.

Anti-terrorist hotline: 0800 789 321

Due Diligence and Counter Extremism Group (DDCEG) Helpline - (020 7340 7264) For education staff and governors to raise concerns relating to extremism directly and in confidence

CHANNEL Panel Chair

Jo Benson, Head of Youth Offending Service, contact details: 01325 406791

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Appendix 2: Key contacts – Sunderland

If you are worried about someone:

- In an emergency, please call: 999
- If there is no immediate risk, call the police on: 101

If you have concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or young person contact [Together for Children](#) on 0191 561 7007 (available 8.30am to 5:15pm Monday - Thursday, 8.30am to 4.45pm Friday)

If there is no immediate risk then go to:

<https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/14086/Report-a-Safeguarding-concern-professionals-and-volunteers>

Forms and guidance

- If you think someone is at risk of abuse, or has been abused, you will need to complete the relevant referral form.
- [Safeguarding Adults Concern \(SAC\) Form](#) - after extensive consultation, this new form has been produced for professionals to use as from 1 April 2017 to notify the Local Authority of a concern of suspected abuse and/or neglect. The SAC form replaces the Sunderland Safeguarding Enquiry Referral Form (SERF) and is the effective and only form that should be used after 1 April 2017. See also the new [Safeguarding Adults Concern \(SAC\) Form Guidance](#) and revised [Safeguarding Adults - Threshold Guidance Risk Assessment Tool](#).
- The children's referral form is available from [Sunderland Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) (SSCP).
- Ensure you have access to the safeguarding procedures for both children and adults from the respective safeguarding boards.

The forms are only to be used by professionals and volunteers who want to make a safeguarding referral.

Appendix 3: Key contacts – Durham

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If you have a concern about a child or young person's welfare who lives in County Durham, call First Contact on 03000 267 979. First Contact brings together children's services staff with partners such as Durham Constabulary and health services.



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