

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACROSS BORDERS

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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Child Protection Policy: Purpose of this document¹

The purpose of this document is to set out the scope and level of contact that Children and Families Across Borders (CFAB) has with children, as well as our impact on children. It should help the reader understand what our policy is to protect children and how we implement child protection in practice. In particular, it should make clear that all trustees, staff, volunteers and independent contractors have a legal and moral responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation. This document should also make clear who is responsible for keeping our policies and procedures up to date. This policy shall be accessible to service users, to the wider public, and to partner agencies of CFAB.

CFAB is committed to protecting all children, irrespective of disability, gender identity, sex, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, migration or care status, or any other protected characteristic. We recognise that some children face additional barriers to protection and we will take proactive steps to address these.

Child Protection Policy: How CFAB works with children

CFAB’s mission is to protection children and reunite them with their families. Our work often is to be the bridge between child protection services in the UK and those in other countries, as well as to provide direct support to children recently reunited with family in the UK.

It common for CFAB to cooperate with an adult or another agency to help pass on safeguarding referrals. CFAB often works for the agencies, both in the UK and abroad, which hold statutory child protection responsibility. We also often support the adult carers for children on arrival to the UK.

¹ This policy has been revised in line with the International Child Safeguarding Standards. [international child protection standards.pdf](#)

Therefore it is beholden on CFAB to uphold their requirements even though the ultimate responsibility of the child’s protection is not devolved to CFAB.

Because some CFAB staff act as intermediaries in the work of child protection, there may be limitations to what can be achieved, depending on the child protection legislation in overseas countries. It is important to note that it is not the role of CFAB to decide whether a child has been abused or is at risk of significant harm or not. Rather, it will be CFAB’s role to work in partnership with agencies and professionals, to obtain and to provide relevant information, to encourage best practice, and most importantly, contribute to the child’s welfare and safety.

Although CFAB does not operate social media or platform services aimed at children, our staff must be aware of online risks and the Online Safety Act framework when advising or supporting children, families and professionals.

This policy is a statement of intent. Different country and local contexts will at times make the policy’s application difficult and pose challenges. In recognition of the variation in local practice and circumstances it is intended that partner agencies of CFAB will adapt standards and criteria to fit the overall purpose of this policy.

Child Protection Policy: Who is this policy for?

CFAB fully recognises its responsibilities regarding child protection. This policy applies to all staff, trustees, volunteers, and independent contractors working with the charity.

The table below outlines how the intended audiences for this policy should engage with it.

Role	Responsibility
Trustees	Read this policy and follow the outlined procedures if there are any concerns. Ensure policy implementation through the CEO. The designated safeguarding trustee lead must understand their responsibility when concerns are reported.
CEO	Ensure all parties identified in this policy understand their responsibilities when it comes to protecting children. Ensure this policy is kept updated and is available publicly. Regularly attend Designated Safeguarding Officer training.
Head of Services	Work with concerned individuals or staff to determine whether safeguarding thresholds have been breached. Manage case-related safeguarding concerns and advise on relevant safeguarding practices when the need arises. Lead on social work team guidance as relevant to specific cases and ensure the team receives regular safeguarding training.
Managers	Engage with this policy and ensure direct reports understand the importance of child protection and the procedures outlined. Understand their role as a line manager if questions or concerns are reported to them.
Employees	Read this policy and follow the outlined procedures if there are any concerns. Send this policy and procedures to any independent contractors used in the course of professional work. Questions should be directed to your line manager at CFAB.
Volunteers	Read this policy and follow the outlined procedures if there are any concerns. Questions should be directed to your line manager at CFAB.
Independent Contractors	Read this policy and follow the outlined procedures if there are any concerns. Questions should be directed to your key contact in CFAB.

CFAB Policy on Child Protection

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child requires agencies concerned with the welfare of a child to protect children from violence and abuse and to prevent a child suffering from violence and abuse. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees every person a life of security and social protection. Both conventions together with national law and guidance form the basis for this policy and related practice guidance. For a full list of other relevant legislation, please see Annex A.

CFAB is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people. CFAB acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to all allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. Paid staff and volunteers will work together to encourage the development of an ethos which embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of unborn babies, children, young people and adults. For the purposes of this policy, children will refer to those under the age of 18 year including unborn babies.

CFAB is not a statutory agency and therefore has no power to investigate allegations of abuse, or to take direct action to protect children. Nevertheless, CFAB contributes to the protection of all the children with whom it is concerned, through channelling of information and provision of advice about child protection procedures and legislation in different countries.

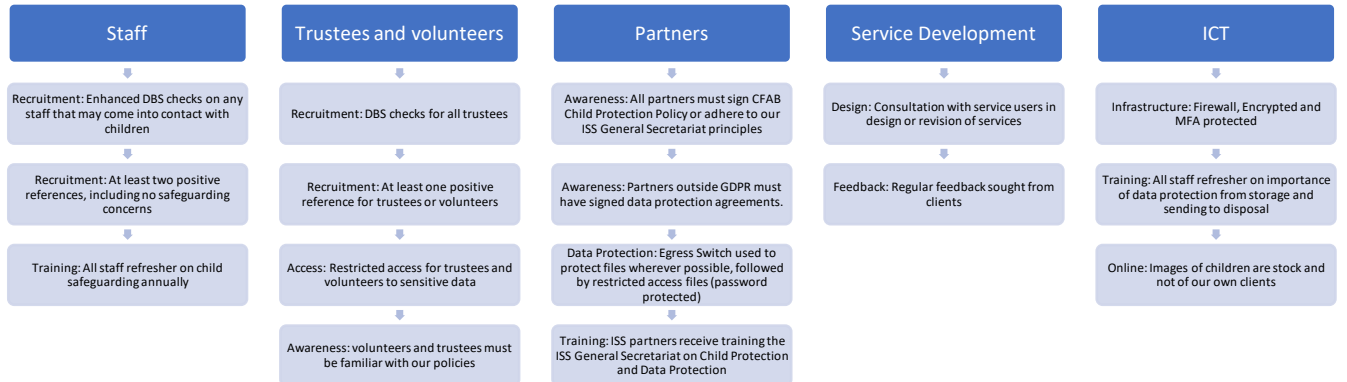
When children are in the UK they will be protected under the legislation of this country, with a common understanding of what is regarded as abusive behaviour and neglectful care. When children are abroad, then the laws, customs and procedures of the country in which the child is living that is considered as their habitual residence will be the first point of reference. It is important that professionals are sensitive to differing family patterns and lifestyles and to child rearing patterns that vary across different racial, ethnic and cultural groups, and recognise that there are many ways to bring up and protect children. Please refer to our Child Protection Procedures for detailed steps to take.

The work of CFAB in child protection matters is based on the following principles:

1. The welfare of the child – including unborn children – shall be the paramount consideration. (The term “children” is used to denote all those under the age of 18 years).
2. Children shall be protected from all forms of physical, psychological or emotional violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parents, guardians, institutions or any other person or agency that exercises the de facto care of them.
 - a. Abuse is a deliberate act of ill-treatment that can harm or is likely to harm a child or young person’s safety, well-being and development. Abuse can be physical, sexual or emotional.
 - b. Neglect of a child or young person also constitutes abuse and can be defined as failing to provide or secure for a child or young person the basic needs of physical safety and well-being.
3. Children have a right to be heard and to participate in decisions that affect them, in line with Article 12 UNCRC, and CFAB will ensure their wishes and feelings inform assessments and planning so far as compatible with their safety and welfare.

4. CFAB has a responsibility towards the children brought to its attention. All referrals to CFAB, which concern allegations of possible or known abuse, shall be given priority and should be considered with an open and inquiring mind and healthy suspicion.
5. Children must be protected regardless of the consent of their families and guardians. However, unless doing so will be deemed to cause harm to the children, it is best practice to work in partnership with those who hold parental responsibility and seek their consent.
6. When dealing with protection matters, consideration and sensitivity shall be paid to ethnic, cultural and religious background of the people concerned, as well as any specific or special needs.
7. Communications for service users, including children, shall be in a format that can be easily understood.
8. All information will be treated in confidence, in compliance with CFAB's confidentiality and data protection policies, and it will be shared on the basis of "need to know" in order to protect the children concerned.
9. The wishes and feelings of children where ascertainable should always be taken into consideration, as well as the views of the carers and other family members, insofar as this is consistent with the children's welfare.
10. CFAB acts as an advocate for the rights of children, based on the principles that every child matters and all children should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential. This applies both in terms of individual cases and through campaigning on behalf of wider groups on specific issues.

Figure 1 below outlines how we manage safeguarding risk in different parts of our organisation. The main area of where we might come across risk of harm or child protection concerns will be in carrying out our core social services work. There are different ways in which this might occur, all of which underline why staff must be familiar with our child protection policy and procedures. For example, our UK-based staff undertake assessments of adults and children, often providing support to adult family members. A child could also call our free Advice Line. This would be an extremely rare occurrence as normally an adult (often a social worker) calls because they are concerned about a child. Perhaps of most significance is our family support services, which directly support children and young people by helping to register them at school or with the GP and whilst completing life story work sessions.



CFAB trustees, staff and volunteers must bring any evidence of risk of harm or of failure to protect children to the attention of the appropriate authorities. For more information about what child abuse is and signs of child abuse, please see our Child Protection Procedures. Abuse is not limited to physical harm but includes emotional harm and witnessing of harm to someone else. It may also be a series of seemingly low-level threats/events, which may make it more difficult to detect.

Any member of staff who works directly with children or who are registered with the relevant regulatory body are subject to Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (now Disclosure & Barring Service) record checks which are updated every three years.

Trustees, staff and volunteers will have access to in-house training to support child safeguarding within the organisation. Specialist training (such as for children with disabilities or children who are victims of human trafficking, faith-based abuse or child marriage) will be based on the individual job roles and risks to children.

Partners and contractors which work with CFAB must be satisfied that they understand our approach to child protection and can adhere to our standards. Where required, we will make international child safeguarding standards available in other languages. Where CFAB works through, or alongside, partner organisations, we will:

- assess partner safeguarding capacity and risk;
- require partners to have child safeguarding measures consistent with this policy and the International Child Safeguarding Standards; and
- provide proportionate support to help partners strengthen safeguarding where needed.

All CFAB social workers are qualified to national standards and take responsibility for the cases allocated to them, with management support. Registration with Social Work England and their renewal of such registration is the responsibility of each social worker. Without registration a social worker will not be able to undertake any tasks of their role within CFAB. But the overall responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of this policy lies with the Chief Executive Officer, who will decide with the Head of Services what is the most appropriate course of action in child protection cases if there should be any concerns. The Chief Executive Officer will be overseen by the Chair of the Policy and Practice committee of the Board.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our policies which protect staff (Bullying & Harassment, Health & Safety, etc), our Safeguarding Flowchart for the ISS Case Team, as well as those which enable our clients and the public to express their views on our services (Complaints Procedure) or access their data (Subject Access Request).

Child Protection Policy: Key contacts in CFAB

CFAB's Designated Safeguarding Officer is the CEO (Carolyn Housman). If a matter cannot be reported to the CEO, it should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Trustee lead (David Jones). Contact information for both individuals can be obtained by calling (+44) 0207 735 8941 or by emailing info@cfab.org.uk.

Conclusion

CFAB will periodically complete the Keeping Children Safe self-assessment against the International Child Safeguarding Standards and, where proportionate, seek external assurance of our safeguarding arrangements.

It is required that all CFAB trustees, staff, volunteers and contractors are conversant with and abide by this Child Protection Policy. Practice and actions concerning this policy are governed by the CFAB Protection of Children Procedures.

Please sign your consent below.

I have read and understood the 'CFAB Child Protection Policy'. I understand my role in child protection and understand that this agreement lasts in perpetuity.

Signed:

Name (print):

Date:

Annex A: Key Legislation that is foundational to our Child Protection Policy

Legislation

International Conventions and Protocols

Legislation and procedures for the protection of children varies from country to country. All countries save for the United States of America are signatories to:

Next date of review: April 2027

- ~ The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
 - Article 3 (1) requires that in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.
 - Article 19 requires agencies concerned with the welfare of children both to protect children from violence and abuse, and to prevent them from suffering violence and abuse.
 - Article 20 states that a child who is deprived of his or her family environment shall be entitled to special protection by the state.

Many countries are signatories to:

- ~ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948
 - Article 25 guarantees every person a life of security and social protection.
- ~ The European Convention on Human Rights 1950
 - Article 8 provides that everyone has a right to the respect for his private and family life and any interference with that right must be lawful and necessary to protect other people's rights or the wider community.
- ~ The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union:
 - Article 24 provides that children have a right to such protection and care as is necessary for their well-being. Their best interests are a primary consideration in all actions taken whether by public or private authorities.
- ~ Brussels IIa (Council Regulation (EC) No 2201/2003) and The 1996 Hague Convention on Protection of Children
 - These instruments govern jurisdiction in proceedings relating to children, the mutual recognition of judgments concerning children between signatory states, and provide a framework for cross-border co-operation and communication between states to facilitate the protection of children.
- ~ Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2010)
- ~ General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679

National Legislation

Within the UK the policy is in line with the following legislation:

- ~ Children Act 1989
- ~ Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- ~ Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- ~ Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR),

including Schedule 8 provisions on safeguarding of children and individuals at risk

- ~ Domestic Abuse Act 2021 – provides a statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right where they see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse.
- ~ Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Sections 83-91 Adoptions with a foreign element).
- ~ Children Act 2004
- ~ Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005
- ~ Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 – this concerns the checking of staff
- ~ Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007
- ~ Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- ~ The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- ~ Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015 – includes higher standard of care to victims of human trafficking
- ~ Children and Social Work Act 2017 (established the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and Social Work England).
- ~ Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019 - changes the law and removes the “reasonable chastisement” defence from 7 November 2020. This means that all forms of physical punishment of children will be against the law in Scotland, and children will have with the same legal protection from assault as adults.
- ~ Online Safety Act 2023 – placing duties on online platforms and search services to protect children from harmful content, including pornography, and requiring effective age assurance and risk management

And the following guidance

- ~ Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) – statutory guidance for all organisations who work with, or have functions relating to, children, including the voluntary and community sector
- ~ What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners (PDF) (Department of Education, 2015)
- ~ Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (DfE, May 2024)
- ~ Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 Part 11 Code of Practice (Miscellaneous and General) and Part 7 (Guidance on Safeguarding)
- ~ National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (updated in 2023)

~ Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2017)

In England, sections 10-12 of the Children Act 2004 create a statutory framework for co-operation 'between local authorities, key partner agencies ('relevant partners') and other relevant bodies ('other bodies or persons'), including the voluntary and community sector, in order to improve the well-being of children in the area. The duty to make these arrangements is placed on the local authority and a duty to co-operate with the local authority is placed on the relevant partners.' (Explanatory Notes Children Act 2004).

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) provides that, "Everyone who works with children - including teachers, GPs, nurses, midwives, health visitors, early years professionals, youth workers, police, Accident and Emergency staff, paediatricians, voluntary and community workers and social workers - has a responsibility for keeping them safe." (paragraph 15)

"No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action." (paragraph 16)

"Feedback should be given by local authority children's social care to the referrer on the decisions taken. Where appropriate, this feedback should include the reasons why a case may not meet the statutory threshold to be considered by local authority children's social care for assessment and suggestions for other sources of more suitable support". (paragraph 21)

Professionals who fail to report cases of abuse or neglect do not face criminal penalties for non-reporting; however they may be subject to professional disciplinary proceedings or held to account through Serious Case Review reports or actions for professional negligence.

CFAB adheres to the principles listed below for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland regarding sharing of data:

England

The need to share information where there are concerns about the safety of children is emphasised in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) – statutory guidance for all organisations who work with, or have functions relating to, children, including the voluntary and community sector

In paragraph 22, the guidance states, "Effective sharing of information between professionals and local agencies is essential for effective identification, assessment and service provision."

Early sharing of information is the key to providing effective early help where there are emerging problems. At the other end of the continuum, sharing information can be essential to put in place effective child protection services. Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) have shown how poor information sharing has contributed to the deaths or serious injuries of children."

The guidance goes on to state in paragraph 24;

"Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. To ensure effective safeguarding arrangements:

All organizations should have arrangements in place which set out clearly the processes and the principles for sharing information between each other, with other professionals and with the LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children's Board.)

No professional should assume that someone else will pass on information which they think may be critical to keeping a child safe. If a professional has concerns about a child's welfare and believes they are suffering or likely to suffer harm, then they should share the information with local authority children's social care."

However, sharing information relating to children must take place in a manner consistent with the rights of the information subjects or on the basis of the need to protect and secure the safety of a child. Consent should always be sought when it does not jeopardize the safety of the child.

The government's advice for practitioners on Information Sharing (March 2015) sets out 7 golden rules to sharing information which are set out below.

Sharing information in relation to a child without the child's consent may be necessary in some circumstances, notwithstanding any duty of confidentiality owed to the child.

The Guidance states that professionals must have a clear and legitimate purpose for sharing information. Where the sharing of information would result in an individual being identified, professionals should consider whether they have consent to share that information. In the absence of consent, a professional may share information if necessary to fulfil a public function or to protect the vital interests of the information subject, for example, where a child may be at risk of, or suffering, significant harm. Professionals must consider how information is shared, including;

- Identifying how much information to share;
- Distinguishing fact from opinion
- Ensuring the right information is given to the right individual
- That the information is shared securely
- That the individual concerned is informed that information has been shared unless this would create or increase the risk of harm
- Information sharing decisions must be recorded

Finally, the information sharing guidance states that personal information collected by one organization can be shared with other organizations provided that the information is not going to be used for a purpose incompatible for the purpose that it was originally collected for. In relation to a child at risk of significant harm, the sharing of personal information relating to the child with other practitioners is unlikely to be incompatible with the purpose for which it was originally collected.

Wales

Guidance about information sharing is contained in Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 Part 11 Code of Practice (Miscellaneous and General and in Part 7 (Guidance on Safeguarding). The Code of Practice provides that Local Authorities must ensure that personally identifiable information is shared within the principles of the Wales Accord on Sharing Personally Identifiable Information (WASPI). The Guidance overlaps with much of the aforementioned Information Sharing (2015) guidance. Part 7 provides as follows;

"3.41 It is not possible to give guidance to cover every circumstance in which sharing of confidential information without consent will be justified. You must make a judgement on the facts of the

individual case. Where there is a clear risk of significant harm to a child or serious harm to an adult, the public interest test will almost certainly be satisfied (except as described in 3.43). There will be other cases where you will be justified in sharing limited confidential information in order to make decisions on sharing further information or taking action - the information shared should be necessary for the purpose and be proportionate.

3.42 There are some circumstances in which sharing confidential information without consent will normally be justified in the public interest. These are:

- when there is evidence or reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering, or is
- at risk of suffering, significant harm; or...
- to prevent significant harm to a child or serious harm to an adult, including through the prevention, detection and prosecution of serious crime.'

Scotland

The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021) provides the basis for single and multi-agency procedures on child safeguarding. The Guidance urges practitioners to consider potential consequences of failing to share information regarding harm or potential harm to children from abuse, neglect and exploitation. It offers the below principles for sharing information with other agencies in Scotland:

- Where there is a child protection concern, relevant information should be shared with police or social work without delay, provided it is necessary, proportionate and lawful to do so.
- The lawful basis for sharing information should be identified and recorded.
- Agency data protection leads should be able to advise where doubt about the appropriate lawful basis exists

More information: [Help protect children from child abuse - Child Protection Scotland](#)

Northern Ireland

Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2017) refers to the importance of effective information sharing arrangements. Practitioners are advised to consider the Information Sharing advice contained in HSS CC 3/96 (Revised) – Sharing to Safeguard – September 2008 – Amended May 2009. This document states that ‘there is an inherent duty of confidentiality for all agencies attached to all personal information about individuals. However, there are justifications for the disclosure of such personal information...Where disclosure is necessary to protect a child or children, the public interest in disclosure will outweigh the public or individual expectation of confidentiality.’

Children and Families Across Borders

Child Protection Procedures

Child Protection Procedures: Introduction¹

Child safeguarding is a general term, covering the identification of risk of harm and prevention of child abuse through to identification and action. Child protection procedures are the steps to address concerns about this significant harm. These procedures set out what CFAB does to prevent, identify and take action to protect children from abuse, although in most cases CFAB will only become aware of a case when there is a serious child protection concern.

CFAB's social work team may come across cases of child abuse, which are in the process of being addressed through a relevant authority either in the UK or abroad. However, staff may also come into direct or indirect contact with children through their family support work. These procedures concern observations or suspicions of abuse of a child/ren which may be perpetrated by a staff, trustee, volunteer or other person associated with our work. It is everyone's responsibility to safeguard children.

It should be kept in mind that children in crisis and emergencies are especially vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Protection systems for such persons in different countries may be rudimentary or non-existent. Abuse happens to male and female children of all ages, ethnicity and social backgrounds, abilities, sexual orientation, religious belief and political persuasion, whatever their care arrangements are. Some groups, such as children with disabilities, or babies are particularly vulnerable.

Child Protection Procedures: What is child abuse?

Child abuse is any action by another person – adult or child – that causes significant harm to a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can just as often be about a lack of appropriate love, care and attention.

Children develop and mature at different rates; what is worrying for a younger child, might be normal behavior for an older child. If a child looks or acts a lot older or younger than their age, this could be a cause for concern. Some symptoms of child abuse include:

- Talks of being left home alone or with strangers.
- Poor bond or relationship with a parent, also known as attachment.
- Acts out excessive violence with other children.
- Lacks social skills and has few if any friends.

For more examples about what child abuse may look like at different ages, visit: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/signs-symptoms-effects/>

In line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, CFAB recognises children who see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse as victims in their own right, even when they are not the direct target of the abuse.

CFAB adopts the definitions of abuse and neglect used in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and the International Child Safeguarding Standards, recognising physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation, neglect, domestic abuse and other forms of exploitation (including trafficking and online abuse) as forms of significant harm.

Who should I report child abuse to?

- If there is an imminent threat to a child, you should report it to the police on: 999 (within the UK). You can also use this online form: [Report a crime or incident | Police.uk \(www.police.uk\)](#) although a phone call is always preferable to ensure a swift response.
- Unless there is a conflict of interest, all concerns should be reported to CFAB's CEO (Carolyn Housman, carolyn.housman@cfab.org.uk), who is the accountable person for child protection or to the Chair of the Policy and Practice Committee of the Board, David Jones, acts as a secondary point of contact for anyone concerned about a safeguarding risk. David can be reached on davidnjones@peopleneedpeople.org.uk. The Head of Services (Sorcha Morgan) is responsible for delivering effective safeguarding in our social work practice. Separate guidance is available for the social work teams.
- If you are concerned about a child located in the UK, children services can be contacted at any local council. You can find their details here: <https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council> Every local authority has a statutory responsibility to have a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who is responsible for co-ordinating the response to concerns that an adult who works with children may have caused them or could cause them harm. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) works within Children's Services and gives advice and guidance to employers, organisations and other individuals who have concerns about the behaviour of an adult who works with children and young people.
 - You should receive acknowledgement of your reported concern within 24 hours. If you do not have acknowledgement within 24 hours, the staff member who raised the concern should chase it up with the relevant authorities and let the Service Manager or Head of Services (if case-related) or the CEO, Carolyn Housman, (if related to staff or partners) know.
 - If the local authority's response is inadequate, or doesn't sufficiently address the risk of abuse, employees must discuss this with the appropriate person (Head of Services or CEO) on the same day. The appropriate person must then review the details on the same day and make a decision to take action regarding any escalation required.
- If you are concerned about a child, you can report this to the local authority safeguarding team. Find the correct local authority/team here: [Report child abuse to a local council - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- CFAB staff must also comply with any mandatory reporting duties in force, including the existing FGM mandatory reporting duty and any new duty relating to child sexual abuse.
- If you are concerned about the actions of a CFAB employee but cannot report it through CFAB's procedures, and it is not urgent, you can check the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) website for advice and support. CFAB's office are located within Westminster, and our LSCB information is here: [Welcome to lscp | lscp \(rbkc.gov.uk\)](#)
- NSPCC offers free advice 24 hour/day for concerns about child abuse. You can reach them on 0808 800 5000.
- ChildLine offers free advice for children and young people. Telephone: 0800 1111 (free)
- The National Crime Agency has a team of child protection advisers if you are worried about online sexual abuse. You can find out more here: [CEOP Safety Centre](#)
- The Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Act 2003 and The Serious Crime Act 2015 provides a mandatory duty for reporting FGM. This legislation requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to make a report to the police where, in the course of their professional duties, they either:
 - Are informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
 - Observe 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.

- Third party-reports will still trigger a safeguarding duty and concerns should be passed to social services or police if there is an immediate risk.
- Employees may receive safeguarding concerns from the general public via email or the telephone Advice Line as part of our referral intake process. Where the concern is received via telephone, the employee must:
 - listen to the concern
 - as soon as possible during the call, advise the caller that their concern will be passed onto a qualified social worker
 - take the caller's contact details and send these to your line manager (if in a social work team) or to the Head of Services (if outside the social work team), confirming receipt of the message with the designated person. They will then determine whether safeguarding thresholds have been breached and how to take forward the concern.
 - The Head of Services will then advise the caller on the steps taken.
- If the safeguarding concern arises within the context of CFAB's working with a partner organisation or service (for example, an ISS partner or Independent Social Worker), employees must check with their manager for any agreed safeguarding processes contained in the Service Level Agreement or ISS Safeguarding Policy. Usually, this will involve contacting the designated officer within the partner organisation. Employees must also consider any local safeguarding children or adults multi-agency arrangements, including their local child protection or adults at risk procedures which are detailed on the Local Safeguarding Children Partners and Local Safeguarding Adult Board Websites.

Child Protection Procedures: Should I record the incident?

Yes, you should. If you're in a situation where a child discloses abuse to you, there are a number of steps you can take. Remember, the protection of the child is the most important consideration.

Receive: Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief. A common reaction to news as unpleasant and shocking as child abuse is denial. However, if you display denial to a child, or show shock or disgust at what they are saying, the child may be afraid to continue and will shut down. Accept what is being said without judgement. Take it seriously.

Reassure: Reassure the child, but only so far as is honest and reliable. Don't make promises that you can't be sure to keep, e.g. "everything will be all right now". Reassure the child that they did nothing wrong and that you take what is said seriously. Don't promise confidentiality – never agree to keep secrets. You have a duty to report your concerns, but you should always try to achieve consent first. Tell the child that you will need to tell some people, but only those whose job it is to protect children. Acknowledge how difficult it must have been to talk. It takes a lot for a child to come forward about abuse.

React: Listen quietly, carefully and patiently. Do not assume anything – don't speculate or jump to conclusions. Do not investigate, interrogate or decide if the child is telling the truth. Remember that an allegation of child abuse may lead to a criminal investigation, so don't do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation. Let the child explain to you in his or her own words what happened, but don't ask leading questions. Do ask open questions like "Is there anything else that you want to tell me?" Communicate with the child in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and preference. This is especially important for children with disabilities and for children whose preferred language is not English. Do not ask the child to repeat what they have told you to another member of staff. Explain what you have to do next and whom you have to talk to.

Record: Make some very brief notes at the time and write them up in detail as soon as possible. Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by Court. Record the date, time, place, words used by the child and how the child appeared to you – be specific. Record the actual words used; including any swear words or slang. Record statements and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions – keep it factual. If this is in the course of your normal social work duties, refer this directly to your line manager or the Head of Services with urgency. If this is outside of our international social work, refer directly to CFAB’s CEO, Carolyn Housman, or to our trustee safeguarding lead, David Jones. If you need to share this information and cannot get consent from the child, you must consider, on the facts of each case, whether it is in the public interest to share all or some of the information you have.

Do not discuss the case with anyone outside the social work team or the safeguarding leads.

When sharing information you should ensure it is necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure. You can find more information from the Government’s Information Sharing guidance for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers: [DfE non statutory information sharing advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers](#)

Child Protection Procedures: What are the responsibilities of staff, volunteers or trustees?

All CFAB staff, trustees, volunteers and contractors must comply with CFAB’s Staff Code of Conduct and Child Safeguarding Code of Behaviour, which set clear expectations on safe, respectful, and bounded relationships with children, both online and offline. Breaches may lead to disciplinary action, dismissal, termination of contracts, and referrals to statutory and regulatory bodies. Please refer to CFAB’s Child Protection Policy and the Staff Handbook for a more detailed description of the code of behaviour for trustees, staff and volunteers; the consequences of breaching this code are clear and linked to disciplinary and grievance procedures.

CFAB operates a safe recruitment, selection and vetting procedures that include checks into the eligibility and the suitability of all trustees, staff and volunteers who have direct or indirect (eg helpline, email) contact with children; in the case of trustees, because of their position within the charity, the commission takes the view that whenever there is a legal entitlement to obtain a DBS check in respect of such a trustee, a check should be carried out - this goes beyond circumstances where the trustee comes into contact with children.

All staff that may come into contact with children (i.e. CFAB’s social workers) have enhanced DBS checks. The Head of Services and team managers ensure that staff are monitored and supervised and that they have opportunities to learn about child protection in accordance with their roles and responsibilities. Safeguarding induction training is mandatory for all those who work directly with children, young people, their families and/or carers.

Trustees, staff and volunteers should learn about child protection in accordance with and as appropriate to their roles and responsibilities, including the emerging issues of eSafety, domestic violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, children who live away from home or go missing, child sexual exploitation, race and racism and extremism. More information and support can be sought from CFAB’s CEO.

CFAB is a regulated activity provider (RAP), which brings obligations under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2016, for example a duty to refer to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) when an employer or organisation believes a person has caused harm or poses a future risk of harm to vulnerable groups, including children. Trustees should also report this (and any other abuse or alleged abuse) as a serious incident to the Commission.

CFAB will foster an open culture in which staff, volunteers, contractors and partners feel safe to raise concerns. No one will suffer detriment for reporting a safeguarding concern in good faith (including concerns about senior leaders). Safeguarding concerns may also be raised under CFAB's Whistleblowing Policy, and – where appropriate – directly with external bodies such as the Local Safeguarding Partnership, Social Work England, or the Charity Commission.

The accountable person for child protection (Carolyn Housman) has responsibility for:

- Making sure all staff are aware how to raise safeguarding concerns
- Ensuring all staff understand the symptoms of child abuse and neglect
- Referring any concerns to social care
- Maintaining accurate and secure child protection records

Child Protection Procedures: Can I share data?

In line with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and DfE's Information sharing: advice for practitioners (2024), data protection law does not prevent information being shared to safeguard children or individuals at risk. Where there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, information must be shared with the appropriate agencies, even without consent, if necessary to protect the child's vital interests. Staff must still ensure that any information shared is necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure and that sharing decisions are clearly recorded.

CFAB adheres to the following 7 "golden rules" for information sharing:

1. Remember that the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act are not barriers to sharing information but provide frameworks to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.
2. Be open and honest with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. Seek advice if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
4. Share with consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.
5. Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure: Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.