
Family Futures Policies and Procedures Manual for all Staff

VAA Integrated Safeguarding Policy



A Not for Profit Agency for the 21st Century

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INTEGRATED SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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Family Futures Safeguarding Children Policy Framework

This policy relates to the services at Family Futures that:

- Provide assessment and treatment, through the Complex Trauma Service, Wellbeing Hub, and other services, for children/young people and their families
- Assess adopters as part of the Family Futures i-Adopt programme

Introduction

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the agency's service users are safeguarded from all forms of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation, whether deliberate or inadvertent, in accordance with written policies and procedures. This policy and procedures relate to children/young people who are Family Futures service users and to those children/young people with whom Family Futures staff come into contact.

Everyone at Family Futures has a duty to ensure that the safeguarding of children/young people is given priority and that they therefore understand the Integrated Safeguarding Policy and that they know what to do when they are concerned about a child/young person.

Safeguarding of children/young people depends upon the effective joint working with any local authority/region/police who are making child protection enquiries in respect of the child(ren). It is essential therefore that Family Futures staff see this as a shared responsibility and liaise and co-operate with any local authority and police force that is making such enquiries so that an assessment can be made of the child/young person's needs and circumstances and so that they can be adequately safeguarded.

It is vital that all parties are informed and that an assumption is not made that external professionals are communicating with each other. This includes the Local Authority Social Care and Child Protection Team, the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) responsible for support the family (prior to an order being submitted and three years post order, this is the placing authority. Prior to the three years, this is the RAA where the family live), and the parents approving agency (VAA or RAA) if relevant. RAA's and VAAs are not statutory services and therefore it is the LA who are responsible for ensuring all safeguarding processes are implemented to keep the child safe.

The actions that Family Futures staff need to take if they are worried about a child/young person are set out in the Integrated Safeguarding Procedures below.

Related Policies and Procedures

This Integrated Safeguarding Policy and Procedures document needs to be read in conjunction with Family Futures’:

- Adults at Risk Policy and Procedures (Section 5 of Agency Manual)
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Policy and Procedures (Section 6 of Agency Manual)
- Risk Management Policy and Procedures (Section 7 of Agency Manual)
- Positive Interventions and Restraint Policy and Procedures (Section 9 of Agency Manual)
- Internet, photographs and mobile phones policy and procedures
- OFSTED Notification Policy and Procedures (Section 10 of Agency Manual)

For information regarding safeguarding children and young people online, please refer to the *Internet, Photographs and Mobile Phones Policy*.

This integrated process is based on the premise that all these elements are interrelated and need to be considered together in deciding on the correct course of action to take. There is also a flowchart that provides a summary of the procedures for each of these areas and shows how they interrelate to ensure that all appropriate steps are taken. The flowchart, whilst a helpful tool, should not be used in isolation and must be used in conjunction with the relevant Policies and Procedures.

Legal and Guidance Framework:

The legal and guidance framework that underpins the Family Futures Integrated Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are as follows:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The Children Act 2004
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

And most significantly;

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#) (see details below)
- [The London Child Protection Procedures 2025](#) (published by the London Safeguarding Children Board; see below for details)

Supplementary Guidance

- OFSTED's National Minimum Standards relating to Adoption (July 2014)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (July 2015). (This document is useful as a reference when considering how schools are managing safeguarding issues.)

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

Key Principles

- Safeguarding is a shared responsibility and requires a whole-system approach.
- A child-centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the lived experience of the child/young person and their needs and views.
- Family Futures recognises the strengthened 2023 emphasis on multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, clear accountability, timely information sharing, contextual safeguarding, and listening to the lived experience of children and families. Family Futures staff will work collaboratively with safeguarding partners, including local authorities, police, and health services, to ensure children receive the right help at the right time. For services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part.
- Working collaboratively with parents and carers, building trust, and embedding co-operative and respectful communication to co-design the support required.

Information Sharing

Working Together 2023 sets out the framework for agencies to work together to protect children/young people from abuse or harm and/or to promote their wellbeing. It stresses that no single professional can have a full picture of a child/young person's needs and circumstances and, if children/young people 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.

In line with Working Together 2023, Family Futures staff understand that effective information sharing is essential for safeguarding. Staff should be confident in sharing

information lawfully and proportionately where there is a safeguarding concern, without delay. The Designated Safeguarding Lead, senior management, and relevant Family Futures staff will work closely with the appropriate local safeguarding partners, such as the Local Authority, police, or ICBs.

Contextual Safeguarding

Working Together 2023 recognises that harm can occur outside the family environment, including online spaces, peer groups, and community settings. Family Futures will consider contextual risks when identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns.

Child-centred and Trauma-informed Practice

In line with 2023 guidance, Family Futures places the child's voice, experience, and outcomes at the centre of safeguarding practice. All responses will be trauma-informed, recognising the impact of abuse, neglect, and adversity on children and families.

In addition, it emphasises that every professional should, in particular, be alert to the need for early help for a child/young person who:

- Is disabled and has specific additional needs
- Has special educational needs
- Is engaging in online activities that are not being monitored
- Is a young carer
- Is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child/young person, such as substance misuse, adult mental health problems and domestic violence
- Is at risk from harm outside the home
- Has returned home to their family from care; and/or
- Is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect.

This updated policy replaces references to Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and should be read alongside all other Family Futures safeguarding procedures.

For information regarding safeguarding children and young people online, please refer to the *Internet, Photographs and Mobile Phones Policy*.

Families First Reform

Family Futures recognises the ongoing implementation of the Department for Education's Families First for Children reform programme. We commit to adapting our safeguarding practices in line with evolving statutory guidance to better serve our families and children.

London Child Protection Procedures

The London Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) London Child Protection Procedures 7th Edition 2025 can be found here: [London Safeguarding Children Procedures](#)

The London Child Protection Procedures are underpinned by Working Together to Safeguard Children. The London Child Protection Procedures set out in detail (in Part A) the expectations of key agencies in working together to safeguard children/young people. Part B includes practice guidance on specific forms of abuse.

New staff are familiarised with the London Child Protection Procedures as part of their induction programme and all staff are updated as part of the annual safeguarding update training.

Although we use the London board to underpin the work and to outline what constitutes a safeguarding concern and appropriate actions, Family Futures also works with Family Futures from around the UK and sometimes Europe. When a child/young person's LA or region is outside of the London area then Family Futures would make sure it is liaising with the Local Area, linking up with their policy and requirements. For example:

[North and South Tyne Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures Manual.](#)

[Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures](#)

[Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures Manual](#)

Right Care, Right Person Approach

Family Futures acknowledges the police's 'Right Care, Right Person' approach. In any urgent safeguarding situation requiring police attention, if assistance is declined, Family Futures will escalate the matter appropriately to ensure the safety of the child. For more information, please see [Right Care, Right Person](#).

Safeguarding Children Procedure

Creating the right environment for safeguarding children:

Duties of the Management Team

It is the responsibility of the Management Team of Family Futures to:

- Implement the Family Futures Integrated Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Carry out an annual review of Family Futures Integrated Safeguarding Policy and Procedures in August each year
- Ensure regular meetings take place with the Safeguarding Consultant Reem Wipfler, to review the Policy and Procedures as well as individual cases or any other concerns.
- Ensure the development and implementation of safe recruitment of staff practices that comply with the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. As part of this process Family Futures will ensure that all qualifications and enhanced DBS checks are up to date and references are checked as well as other checks are made as appropriate.
- Building risk assessment and risk register reviews annually.
- Ensure all staff have regular supervision, consultation and appraisals so that practice is monitored and reviewed
- Ensure that all staff receive regular training to enable them to apply the policy and procedures to safeguard children/young people.
 - New members of staff will be inducted into the Family Futures Integrated Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and will undertake NHS England [Safeguarding Children and Young People \(SGC\)](#), Level One and Two. Senior clinical staff will undertake Level Three.
 - Current members of staff who have already been trained will participate in the once yearly update training session with the Family Futures Safeguarding Consultant, Reem Wipfler and will retake level one and two of the NHS online training.
 - Senior staff members will annually retake level three NHS training
- Ensure that all staff are supported in this area of work and, as part of induction and supervision, that their training needs are identified and reviewed in relation to safeguarding.
 - This may mean additional supplementary or specialist safeguarding training in addition to the induction programme or the annual top up session
 - The Management Team are also aware that as the Assessment, Therapy and iAdopt staff may on occasion provide out of hours telephone, text and email support to families they need to have updated telephone details of the

relevant managers to contact for support and advice should a safeguarding issue occur out of office hours.

- The Registered Manager & CEO is the Family Futures designated lead for safeguarding. The Registered Manager & CEO may delegate responsibility to either another Manager or a member of the iAdopt Team and the Therapy Team to carry out any task in pursuance of implementing the procedures. However, the clinical managers will remain accountable and ultimately responsible for the Agency's work in respect of safeguarding children/young people. This principle applies throughout this document.

Duties of Family Futures staff

It is the responsibility of the whole staff team that they follow the Family Futures Integrated Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

If any member of staff (including all administrative and non-clinical staff) becomes concerned that a child/young person may be at current risk of harm or that their wellbeing is compromised by the care s/he is receiving they should raise their concerns with one of the Service managers for the Complex Trauma Service, Wellbeing Hub, iAdopt Services and any other service. The relevant manager will then consider the concerns within the context of the policy and procedures and advise accordingly. If one of the managers is not available, in an urgent situation a member of staff should contact the duty manager (which is allocated every day) or a member of the senior team for support or guidance. When appropriate staff should use their knowledge and resources to contact Local Authority or the police about their concerns directly and complete the appropriate referral form, if there are urgent concerns. In such circumstances a formal referral to Local Authority, the police or accident and emergency services (for any urgent medical treatment) must not be delayed by the need for consultation with management or the nominated safeguarding children adviser, or the completion of an assessment.

Where appropriate the relevant manager will refer the concerns (and relevant background and history) to the relevant Local Authority/region or will support the staff member to do so. The Local Authority will then determine what next steps to take both in the immediate and longer term and should keep Family Futures appraised on and involved in these steps as appropriate. The role of Family Futures staff is to ensure that safeguarding concerns are referred to the appropriate agency but not to conduct the investigation themselves.

Concerns related to past abuse/neglect

Responses to allegations by a parent/carers or child/young person that they have been abused in the past must be given the same priority as current abuse and will follow the same procedures as contemporary incidents. There is some likelihood that any alleged perpetrator may still present a risk to children/young people and action will therefore need to be taken

to protect any children/young people in contact with him/her. Where an adult (as distinct from an adult at risk) does not wish to disclose details of their alleged abuser and does not wish for a safeguarding referral to be made, their wishes need to be respected. However, where there is a possibility that children/young people may be being harmed now, the relevant manager will need to consider the best next steps, in consultation where necessary with the Family Futures Safeguarding Consultant, Reem Wipfler.

Please note, that some of the children and young people who will be having assessment and treatment at Family Futures through the Wellbeing Hub and other services, have not been Looked After by the Local Authority. Therefore, an allegation of historic or current abuse needs to be taken extremely seriously, because a child or young person living within their birth family context could be at continued risk.

Considering a referral

The discussion with the Complex Trauma Service, Wellbeing Hub, iAdopt Service or other services manager should focus on the following:

- Whether there is a need to make a referral to the relevant Local Authority either because the child/young person is in need of services or because there is a likelihood of previous or present of significant harm
- Whether there is a need to seek the views and/or inform other professionals who also have an involvement or interest in the child(ren) and his/her family
- Designate who will take any necessary action and within what timescale
- Review the implications of the safeguarding concerns for the continuation of work with Family Futures
- If there is any concern about how to proceed, the Complex Trauma Service, Wellbeing Hub, iAdopt Service or other services manager may deal with the matter directly or contact the Family Futures Safeguarding Consultant, Reem Wipfler, for advice. This conversation will be detailed in the Integrated Safeguarding Log and the case file (please see below).

Making a safeguarding referral

All safeguarding concerns must be notified to the relevant Local Authority (where the child/young person lives) by telephone within 24 hours of the concern arising and followed up in writing in two working days. Serious concerns, where immediate action to safeguard the child/young person may be necessary should be immediately referred to the police and/or to the Local Authority.

It is usual good practice to copy the referral to any other Local Authority/Region/VAA involved, e.g. a placing authority. If there is an allocated social worker for the child/young person, he/she should be copied into the referral or otherwise informed directly of it. As advised by the Service manager, it may be appropriate to make the referral directly to the Referral and Assessment Team at the appropriate Local Authority or to the local authority Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Please note that different local authorities name their teams who are responsible for safeguarding differently and any doubts over whom to refer to should be discussed with the Service manager dealing with the issue.

Where possible and appropriate Family Futures staff should seek to discuss their concerns with the parents/carers and inform them of the intention to make a referral to the Local Authority. *However, if the child and young person is at risk and is attending the Wellbeing Hub or other service for birth families, discussion with the parent would not be appropriate if it could lead to further risk of harm.*

Prior to their engagement at Family Futures all families are informed that this can sometimes happen. However, the overriding consideration is for the safety of the child/young person or any other child/ren in the family and so there should be no undue delay in making an appropriate referral. There may be some exceptions to informing parents or carers of the decision to make a child safeguarding referral, such as if it is considered likely that discussion would place the child/young person at further risk of significant harm, risk interference with the police investigation or place the staff member at personal risk. In this case staff members should discuss their concerns with a Service manager.

If the referral is deemed to be urgent in that the child/young person may need to be removed immediately and if this situation arises out of normal working hours, then the duty team (where the child/young person lives) should be contacted.

PREVENT

In a situation where the child or young person is vulnerable to radicalisation, both in person or online, an additional referral will be required to the PREVENT officer at their Local Authority/region.

Strategy Meetings and Child Protection Conferences

Following receipt of a referral the Local Authority will make a decision as to whether to hold a Strategy Meeting. This is a statutory meeting led by children/young people's social care but involving relevant partners, to share information and plan a child protection investigation, should this be necessary. Family Futures may attend the local authority/region's Strategy Meeting and, if so, Family Futures' role at this meeting is to ensure that the referral information is fully understood and to share any actions they may be taking that may impact on the investigation.

In some cases, a Child Protection Conference is agreed (usually to be held within 15 days of the Strategy Meeting). Family Futures staff, if invited to attend, should provide reports and information to this process, as requested by the Local Authority.

Family Futures may hold its own 'safeguarding review meeting' in more serious cases within 48 hours to discuss the case with all the relevant team members and a Complex Trauma Service, Wellbeing Hub, iAdopt Service or other services manager. The outcomes from these meetings will be recorded and placed on both the case file and detailed in the Integrated Safeguarding Log (see below).

Recording of safeguarding concerns and actions

- All safeguarding discussions, concerns, and outcomes must be recorded in the Integrated Safeguarding Log and on both the child/young person and parent record on CHARMS.
- A careful and full record (verbatim where possible) should be made of what the child/young person or parent/carer or any other informant has said regarding the safeguarding concerns. Any signs or symptoms of significant harm or injury observed should also be fully recorded as described above
- When a decision is made in consultation with the Complex Trauma Service, Wellbeing Hub, iAdopt Service or other services manager that a safeguarding referral will not be made, evidence of this decision along with the reasons informing the decision needs to be recorded on CHARMS and Integrated Safeguarding Log
- Where a referral is agreed, an Integrated Safeguarding Referral Form, CAF form, or the local authority's safeguarding form will be completed and must, where possible (as some forms are completed online), be signed by the member of the team and the Complex Trauma Service, Wellbeing Hub, iAdopt Service or other services manager involved, and placed on the case file. *Please note that Local Authorities and Regions do not necessarily communicate so aside from copying in the Local Authority, where the child was placed (if pre order, or within three years of the order) and the Local Authority where the child lives now one also needs to consider copying in the RAA or VAA who are the parents approving agency, or responsible for providing Post Adoption Support. RAA and VAA are not statutory services it is the LA who are the statutory service and responsible.*
- The Integrated Safeguarding Log must be updated during every step of the safeguarding process and this must also be copied verbatim into the case file. This process is usually completed by the relevant administrator for the case and initial enquiries.

- The progress of the referral will be tracked by the case Keyworker and/or relevant administrator
- Every three months the Lead Coordinator will meet with a Complex Trauma Service Manager and other service managers to audit outstanding safeguarding issues and ensure appropriate action has been taken
- Any action taken or discussion within Family Futures and/or with outside agencies in respect of safeguarding concerns should be recorded on the child/young person's file within two working days
- Any significant development in the case should be recorded on the Integrated Safeguarding log and in the CHARMS. These should be discussed with a Complex Trauma Service, Wellbeing Hub, iAdopt Service or other services Manager and this discussion recorded in the Integrated Safeguarding Log and in the CHARMS.

Notifications to OFSTED

OFSTED should be informed within 24 hours of all serious safeguarding referrals made to the Local Authority/region. Please see OFSTED Notification Policy for more details.

All serious referrals (serious injury, death of a child/young person, serious self-harm, repeated absconding or going missing or suicide) must be notified to OFSTED using the relevant Notification Form. A decision will be made regarding whether an OFSTED notification is necessary following a discussion with the Complex Trauma Service, Wellbeing Hub, iAdopt Service or other services Manager. This notification would be in addition to any referral to the local authority/region. Full details of the nature of the concern and relevant information regarding the child/young person's circumstances and background should be shared when making any referral.

Discussion with the child

If a safeguarding concern arises from contact with a child/young person, the degree of discussion with the child/young person will depend on the child/young person's age and understanding. The Staff members must listen carefully to what the child/young person tells them. Reassure the child/young person that they have done the right thing in telling them what they are worried about or what has happened to them and tell them they are not to blame. If it is considered safe to do so and if the child/young person has age-appropriate understanding, the child/young person should be informed of the intention to make a referral to the local authority.

Although it may be necessary to ask some questions of the child/young person or carers to decide whether suspicion of abuse or neglect has been justified, it is **not** the task of Family Futures to conduct a formal safeguarding assessment or investigation. Once the threshold of

suspicion of abuse or neglect has been met there should be no further reason for continuing to question the child/young person. If the child/young person wants to talk about what happened, the member of the Family Futures team should listen and make a note but should not encourage further disclosure. Care should be taken not to compromise any subsequent safeguarding enquiries or police investigation. Staff should avoid asking leading questions.

As soon as possible, the staff member should:

- Take care to record what the child/young person has said using the child/young person's own words.
- Record the date, time and setting and any names mentioned, to whom the information was given, and other people present.
- Sign and date the session note or telephone log if applicable.

Children subject to a Child Protection plan

Family Futures staff will maintain their safeguarding responsibilities in relation to those children/young people referred to Family Futures who are subject to a child protection plan.

If there are significant new developments the team member or the Service Manager will inform the local authority immediately and follow the referral procedures as outlined above unless it is possible to update an existing referral already underway.

Family Futures staff will actively participate in all core group meetings for children subject to Child Protection plans. Our involvement ensures the provision of insights that may otherwise be overlooked, enhancing the safety and welfare of the child.

International Safeguarding

Where Family Futures becomes aware of safeguarding concerns relating to a child/young person who is not normally resident in the UK the above Policies and Procedures will apply, but any referral will need to be made to the authority responsible for child protection in the area in which the child/young person normally lives. When the child/young person has been placed by a UK authority within the last three years but the child/young person does not normally live in the UK, the placing authority should be copied into any safeguarding correspondence.

It is not possible to compile a full list of overseas authorities responsible for safeguarding, and for this reason whenever a family becomes involved in Family Futures and their normal place of residence is overseas, the arrangements for safeguarding in their home country need to be researched by the administrator responsible for the case and details of this authority should be recorded on the family's front sheet. This is to avoid any undue delays in making a referral should concerns come to light. If it is unclear to whom the referral should be made,

or for any general advice on international safeguarding, it may be necessary to contact Children and Families Across Borders in the first instance. The phone number for Children and Families Across Borders is 020 7735 8941 and their website is <http://cfab.org.uk/>

Learning from Serious Child Safeguarding Incidents

Family Futures ensures that procedures for incident reporting and review are in line with updated expectations and is committed to maintaining and developing learning and improvement processes.

Information for service users

This Integrated Safeguarding Policy and Procedures document is available online at <https://www.familyfutures.co.uk/about/policies/>.

Information packs include the telephone numbers of the family's local safeguarding contact details including the out-of-hours duty team.

Details of how to complain about Family Futures, including accessing Family Futures' Independent Person (Reem Wipfler) and how to contact OFSTED are included in the information packs given to service users. The Children's Guide to Family Futures includes details of the Children's Commissioner and OFSTED as well as information about Family Futures' Independent Person.

Escalation Policy

The Escalation Policy is in place in order to take further action if the local authority fails to respond to a safeguarding referral appropriately and within a 'reasonable' timescale. The Escalation Policy is as follows:

- Discuss with the equivalent of Service Manager at the relevant local authority what action they have taken in relation to the safeguarding or LADO referral. The following may then be necessary:
 - To have a discussion with the local authority's Quality Assurance Unit
 - To re-send the original safeguarding referral form annotating and highlighting the concerns that have not been addressed satisfactorily and requesting a response to the referral regarding action to be taken by the Local Authority. This should be sent to the relevant manager within the local authority or the Manager of social services within this authority

- Sending a letter/email to the chair of the local safeguarding board outlining the concerns regarding the unsatisfactory response from the local authority
- Making an OFSTED notification if advised by a Complex Trauma Service, Wellbeing Hub, iAdopt Service or other services Manager.

Policy Information

Policy Information	Details
Business Name	Family Futures CIC
Policy Title	VAA Integrated Safeguarding Policy
Responsible Person	Jay Vaughan, Chair, CEO and Registered Manager Stephen Mulley, Therapy Service Manager and Responsible Individual
Date Reviewed by	Reem Wimpler, Safeguarding Consultants – 20.05.2026
Date Updated	20.05.2026
Review Date	19.05.2027

Appendix: Step-by-step guide for Integrated Safeguarding Concerns

**Step-by-step guide for Integrated
Safeguarding Concerns**

Staff member becomes aware of concerns about a child or young person



Staff member discusses with an Assessment, Treatment or Permanency Service manager

