

## Version Control

*Title:* **Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk policy and procedures**

*Purpose:*     **The purpose of this policy and these procedures is to help protect children and adults at risk. It provides guidance to Mid Devon District Council and its councillors, employees and volunteers.**

*Owner:* **Director of Corporate Affairs & Business Transformation**  
[JMay@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:JMay@middevon.gov.uk)  
**01884 234381**

*Date:* **7 June 2017**

*Version Number:* **7**

*Status:* **The safeguarding children and adults at risk policy and procedures edition 7 is to be adopted June 2017.**

*Review Frequency:* **Every three years**

*Next review date:* **June 2020**

*Consultation* **This document was sent out for consultation to the following:**

Safeguarding Lead  
 Leadership Team  
 Group Human Resources Manager

## Document History

This document obtained the following approvals.

<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Version Approved</b>
CWB – Safeguarding Children and Adults at risk policy.	<b>August 2017</b>	<b>7.0</b>

## Mid Devon District Council

# *Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk policy and procedures*

Policy Number: 7.0

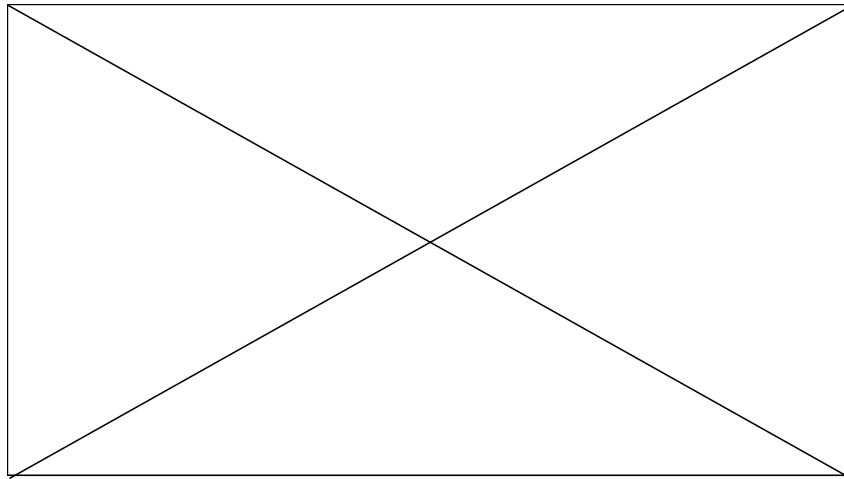
May 2017



# **Child Protection and Safeguarding**

Everybody's business  
Everybody's concern  
Everybody's responsibility

**Does this apply to me; I do not work with  
children or adults at risk?**



**Simple answer is 'yes' so if we see or hear  
something that does not feel quite right, you  
have a duty to report**

# **Contents**

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Policy Statement**
  - 2.1 Aims**
  - 2.2 Objectives**
- 3.0 What is Child Abuse?**
  - 3.1 Forms of Abuse**
- 4.0 Recognising Adults at Risk**
  - 4.1 Categories of Adults**
  - 4.2 Increase Risk of Abuse**
  - 4.3 Forms of Abuse**
- 5.0 Responding to Concerns and Allegations**
  - 5.1 Important Rule**
  - 5.2 Corporate Safeguarding Officer and Service Designated Officers**
- 6.0 Response Situations**
  - 6.1 Specific Response Procedures**
  - 6.2 Support to those who raise a concern or allegation**
  - 6.3 Whistleblowing**
- 7.0 Confidentiality**
- 8.0 Photography and Child Abuse Imagery**
- 9.0 Good Practice for MDDC**
  - 9.2 Use of Contractors**
  - 9.3 Facilities**
  - 9.4 Guidance for Staff**

## **Appendices**

**Appendix A – List of Types of Abuse and Indicators**

**Appendix B - Recommended Legislation and Guidance**

**Appendix C – Useful Contacts**

**Appendix D - Declaration**

## 1.0 Introduction

This guidance and procedures document is to be used in conjunction with the Devon District Councils [Joint Safeguarding Policy](#).

The purpose of this document is to give guidance and outline procedures for officers and Members in respect of safeguarding children and adults at risk.

Mid Devon District Council has both a moral and legal obligation (Appendix B) to ensure a duty of care. We have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and adults at risk who participate in our services, so that they do so in a safe and positive atmosphere free from harassment and bullying. However, we do recognise that not everyone has positive experiences in their life and are committed in our role to promote the welfare of children and adults at risk by encouraging good practice.

Mid Devon District Council is committed to ensuring that all children and adults at risk are protected and kept safe from harm whilst engaged in services organised and provided by the Council. A number of services can play an important role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of individuals as part of their day-to-day work, recognising welfare issues, sharing information, making referrals and subsequently managing or reducing risks. These services are housing, homelessness, public health and leisure as well as other front line roles.

The purpose of this policy and these procedures is to help protect children and adults at risk. It provides guidance to Mid Devon District Council and its councillors, employees and volunteers.”

The Council aims to do this by:

- Raising the awareness of the duty of care responsibilities relating to children and adults at risk throughout the Council.
- Actively encouraging good practice amongst all staff, elected members and volunteers throughout the Council and promoting wider awareness wherever possible, i.e. partnership organisations and user groups.
- Creating a safe and healthy environment within all our services, avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur.
- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children and adults at risk. Listening, minimising dangers and working closely with other agencies.
- Recruiting, training, supervising and supporting staff, elected members and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect individuals from abuse, and themselves against false allegations. Staff and volunteers who work with children and

adults at risk will be subject to the appropriate level Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

- Responding to any allegations appropriately and implementing the appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Staff, elected members and volunteers to adopt and abide by the Devon District Councils Joint Safeguarding Policy and the MDDC Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk guidance and procedures.

Objectives to achieve these aims:

- To provide appropriate training for staff; elected members and volunteers, to enable them to recognise the potential signs and indicators of abuse and to improve good practice.
- To aid staff; elected members and volunteers to respond sensitively and seriously to anyone who discloses information about abuse, and be confident and able to take appropriate action swiftly, regardless of whom the allegation is about, e.g. carer/staff member.
- To maintain a level of good working practice at all times and therefore reducing the risk to participants under the care of our staff and volunteers.
- To promote the general welfare and well-being of children and adults at risk during and within Council services.
- To develop and implement effective procedures for recording and responding to incidents and accidents.
- To develop and implement effective procedures for recording and responding to complaints of alleged or suspected abuse.
- Ensure all service areas identify any potential risks to children and adults at risk which feeds into the corporate risk register.

### **3.0 What is Child Abuse?**

Children under the age of 18 years are protected by the Children's Act of 1989 and 2004. A person is a "child" until they reach 18 years of age.

The Children's Act 2004, adds to this stating that "Any reference to a child includes, in addition to a person under the age of 18, a person aged 18, 19 or 20 who (a) has been looked after by a local authority at any time after attaining the age of 16; or (b) has a learning disability ("learning disability" means a state of arrested or incomplete development of mind which induces significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning).

A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and young people may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

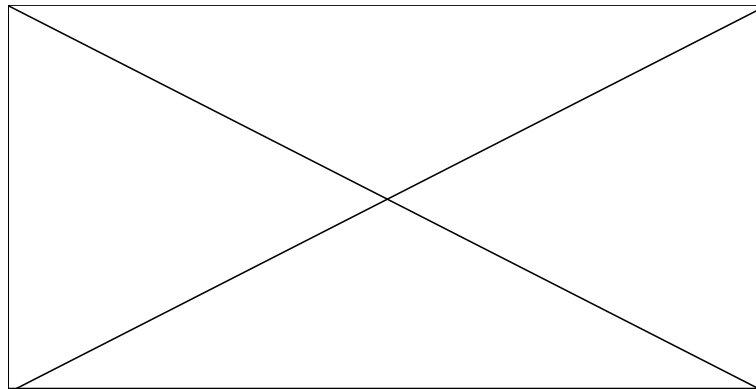
### 3.1. The Main Forms of Abuse

It is generally accepted that there are five main forms of child abuse.

#### Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is defined as when someone deliberately hurts a child, such as hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning or suffocating a child deliberately and with the intention of causing harm.

If a child is hurt by a relative, friend or stranger and it causes them physical harm, such as cuts, bruises, broken bones or other injuries, it is physical abuse.



Physical abuse, as well as being a result of a deliberate act, can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

Further information is [available](#)

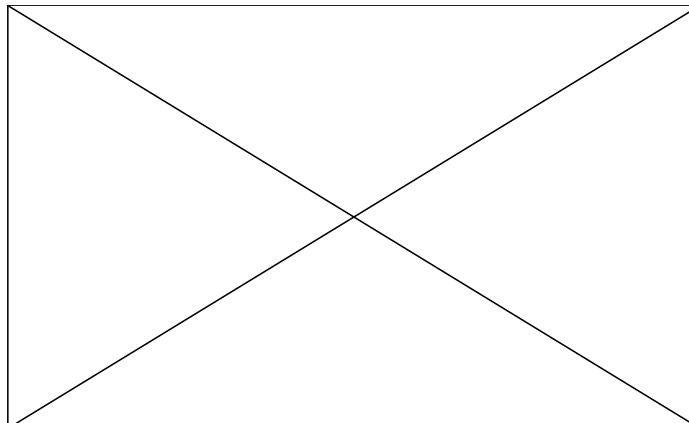
## Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is severe and persistent ill treatment of a child. It can have long-lasting and devastating effects on a child's emotional health and development.

Emotional abuse can take different forms such as when a child is unfairly blamed for everything, or told they are stupid, worthless or ugly and made to feel very sad and unhappy.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or young people. It may also involve causing children or young people to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child or young person.

Emotional abuse may be the only form of abuse suffered by a child, or it might be an element of other child abuse and neglect.



## Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child or young person is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as rape, buggery or oral sex or non-penetrative acts such as fondling.

Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children or young people in looking at, or in the production of, child abuse imagery or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children or young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.



Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other young people. This includes people from all different walks of life.

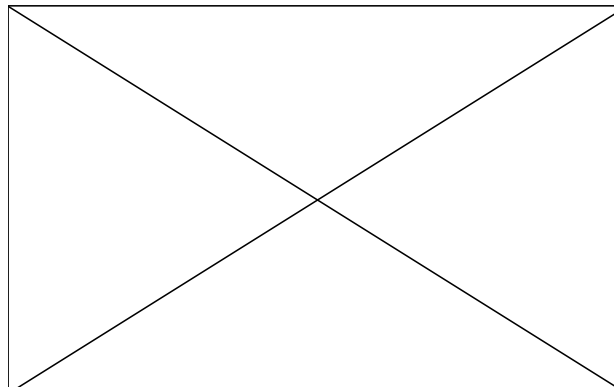
Further information is [available](#)

## Neglect

Neglect is where a child is not being looked after properly. Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic and essential needs, which is likely to result in serious impairment of the child or young person's health or development.

It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, leaving a young child home alone or the failure to ensure that a child or young person gets appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child or young person's basic emotional needs. Children need adequate food, water, shelter, warmth, protection and health care and they need their carers to be attentive, dependable and kind. If a child does not have a safe and stable home, this is neglect.

There are many signs that may indicate neglect; if your common sense and instincts tell you that something is wrong then you should take action.



A child's circumstances may also make them more vulnerable to neglect, such as children who are in care or seeking asylum. Further information is [available](#)

## Child Sexual Exploitation

In February 2017 the government published a revised definition for Child Sexual Exploitation:

**“Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.**

**“The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.”**

These often involve the young person being given things such as food, accommodation, drugs, affection, and gifts of money in return for performing sexual activities. Victims will often be groomed for a period of time before physical or sexual abuse takes place.

### REMEMBER

**Child sexual exploitation is never the victim’s fault, even if there is some form of exchange: all children and young people under the age of 18 have a right to be safe and should be protected from harm.**

### How children are sexually exploited?

Children can be sexually exploited in many different ways, to help you understand and recognize what might be going on here are a few models that you should be aware of:

#### **The inappropriate relationship**

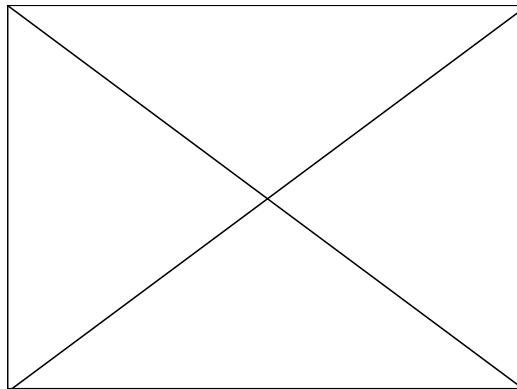
The young person is in a relationship with an older partner who exerts a great deal of influence and control over them due to an imbalance of power. The young person is likely to believe they are in a serious adult relationship and not recognise its exploitative nature.

## Peer exploitation

The young person is in a relationship with another young person who is coercing them into some form of sexual activity with their friends. Based on national and local analysis we believe that in Devon that the majority of child sexual exploitation is perpetrated by the peer groups of the victims and that over half of those that sexually exploit children are themselves under 18.

## Organised exploitation

The young people (often connected) are passed through networks, possibly over geographical distances, between towns and cities where they may be forced /coerced into sexual activity with multiple people. Often this occurs at 'sex parties' and young people who are involved may be used as agents to recruit others into the network.

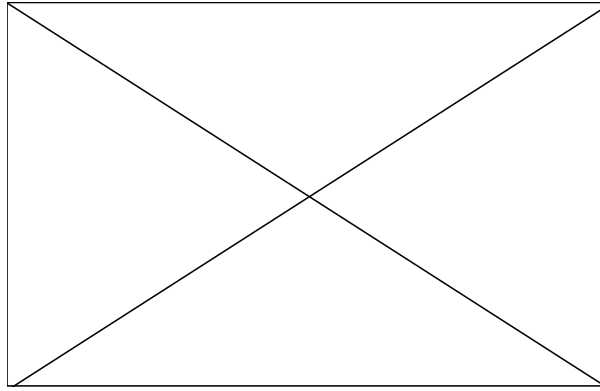


## Online Exploitation

Any of the above models may involve online exploitation where the young person shares sexual images or videos or is coerced into carrying out sexual acts via web-cam. According to the [Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre \(CEOP\)](#) most child sexual exploitation offences take place online. Analysis by the centre reveals that 13 and 14 year olds represent the largest single victim group of online exploitation.

'Internet Abuse' relates to four main areas of abuse to children:

- Abusive images of children (although these are not confined to the Internet);
- A child or young person being groomed for the purpose of Sexual Abuse;
- Exposure to pornographic images and other offensive material via the Internet; and
- The use of the internet and in particular social media sites, to engage children in extremist ideologies.



Further information is available on:

[Child Safety Online](#): A practical guide for parents and carers whose children are using social media

See [UK Safer Internet website](#) - latest tips, advice and resources to help children and young people have a safe and positive time online

[CEOP, thinkUknow website](#) – advice and guidance for children, young people, their parents and carers as well as professionals on the safe use of the internet and how to report concerns

**REMEMBER**

**It is not your job to judge or investigate BUT to inform**

## 4.0 Recognising Adults at risk

The Care Act main changes:

A duty for the Local Authority, which MUST, if it believes an adult is subject to, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, make enquiries or cause others to make enquiries. The enquiry should establish whether any action needs to be taken to stop or prevent abuse or neglect, and if so, by whom.

The types of abuse recognised have been revised from the previous guidance to include 'Self Neglect' and 'Modern Slavery'. The Act also changes the term 'Institutional Abuse' to 'Organisational Abuse'.

A statutory Safeguarding Adults Board must be established by each local authority

It defines an "adult at risk" as someone over 18 years old who;

- (a) Is unable to look after their own well-being, property, rights or other interests;
- (b) Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, (either from another person's behaviour or from their own behaviour) and
- (c) They are unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it because they have a disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than other adults.

A particular condition or disability does not automatically mean that an adult is an adult at risk. However, their circumstances as a whole should be considered."

Safeguarding key principles:

The [Devon Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy](#) will apply to everyone in Devon and will be underpinned by the six key principles of Adult Safeguarding:

- Empowerment – presumption of person led decisions and informed consent
- Prevention – it is better to take action before harm occurs
- Proportionality – proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- Protection – support and representation for those in greatest need
- Partnership – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse

- Accountability- Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding

For more information see:

- Devon Safeguarding Adults website:  
<https://new.devon.gov.uk/devonsafeguardingadultsboard/>

To report a Safeguarding Adults Concern to Devon County Council contact Care Direct on free phone **0345 155 1007** or email [customerservicecentreperformancesecure-mailbox@devon.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:customerservicecentreperformancesecure-mailbox@devon.gcsx.gov.uk)

#### 4.1 **There are a number of categories of abuse:**

**Physical Abuse** may involve assault, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm, including by fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

**Sexual Abuse** is any sexual activity including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males; women can also commit acts of sexual abuse as can children

**Psychological abuse** may involve age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed, causing the victim frequently to feel frightened, including all types of maltreatment though it may occur alone.

Some level of emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable withdrawal of services/supportive networks.

**Discriminatory Abuse** is any unequal treatment based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation (known as ‘**protected characteristics**’ under the **Equality Act 2010**).

**Institutional Abuse** Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, or in relation to care provided in

one's own home. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

**Neglect and acts of omission** Neglect is deliberately withholding or unintentional failure to provide appropriate and adequate care and support which is necessary for the adult to carry out daily living activities. It is likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development.

**Self-neglect** this covers a wide range of behaviour from neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

**Financial and Material abuse** Includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affair or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse of property, possessions or benefits.

**Domestic Violence** Domestic violence and abuse includes any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. It also includes so called 'honour' - based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Coercive or controlling behaviour is a core part of domestic violence. Coercive behaviour can include:

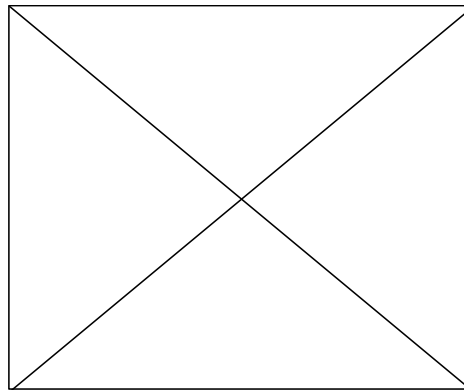
- acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation
- harming, punishing, or frightening the person
- isolating the person from sources of support
- exploitation of resources or money
- preventing the person from escaping abuse
- regulating everyday behaviour.

[Devon Domestic Abuse Support Service](#) web site SPLITZ

For further information and [guidance](#) on this subject go to Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse website.

**Modern Slavery** encompasses slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Victims of modern slavery should be given protection, get the help they need to recover from their experiences and access to the justice they deserve. Further [guidance](#) is available. You will find a [referral form](#) located on Gov.uk



**Radicalisation** is defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism and extremism and, in some cases, to then participate in terrorist groups

Children and young people can be drawn into violence or they can be exposed to the messages of extremist groups by many means. These can include through the influence of family members or friends and/or direct contact with extremist groups and organisations or, increasingly, through the internet via social media or other websites. This can put a young person at risk of being drawn into criminal activity and has the potential to lead to the child or young person suffering significant harm'.

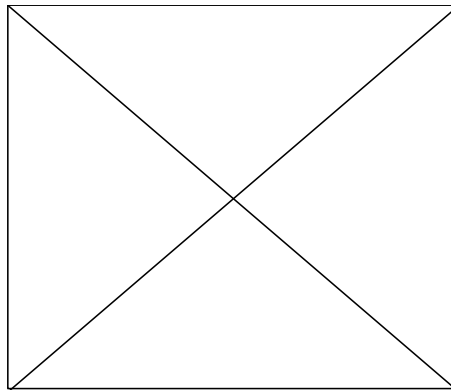
This may take the form of a “grooming” process where the vulnerabilities of a young person are exploited to form an exclusive friendship which draws the young person away from other influences that might challenge the radical ideology. The risk of radicalisation can develop over time and may relate to a number of factors in the child's life. Identifying the risks require practitioners to exercise their professional judgement and to seek further advice as necessary. The risk may be combined with other vulnerabilities or may be the only risk identified.



For further information go to [Devon & Cornwall Police](#) website and Government [Revised Prevent Duty Guidance](#) Free online training on [PREVENT](#)

Protecting vulnerable people from, being drawn into terrorism. Channel forms a key part of the Prevent strategy. The process is a multi-agency approach to identify and provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

Any concerns about the child or young person should be reported to the designated safeguarding officer in their organisation, who will discuss these concerns with the police. The LSCB Referrals Procedure should be followed. A multi-agency assessment meeting (MASH) will determine the appropriate response and level of support to the family.



## Be Curious

The Safer Devon Partnership, Devon Safeguarding Children Board, Devon and Cornwall Police and local authorities from across Devon have come together to raise awareness of three issues affecting our communities:

- Violent extremism and radicalisation
- Child sexual exploitation
- Modern slavery.

The aim of **Be Curious** is to encourage people across the county to look out for signs of exploitation in their communities.



**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** - FGM is a criminal offence – it is child abuse and a form of violence against women and girls and therefore should be treated as such.

FGM is a procedure where the female genital organs are injured or changed and there is no medical reason for this. Whilst FGM may be an isolated incident of abuse within a family, it can be associated with other behaviours that discriminate against, limit or harm women and girls. These may include other forms of honour-based violence (e.g. forced marriage) and domestic abuse.

For further [guidance](#) on this subject go to Devon's Safeguarding Children Board Procedures Manual

### **Types and Indicators of abuse**

Please see **appendix A** for details of the types of abuse and what the indicators could be.

## 5.0 Responding to Concerns and Allegations

These procedures inform all staff, elected members and volunteers of what actions they should take if they have concerns or encounter a case of alleged or suspected abuse, i.e. response actions. The procedures apply to all Mid Devon District Council staff, elected members and volunteers.

### Am I going to be able to spot abuse?

It is always possible that a victim may have very visible signs of abuse which raise concerns with you or other people, so it is essential to be aware of and act on, the following procedures. However, it is appreciated that in MDDC, contact with victims is unlikely to be prolonged and the above symptoms may well not be apparent during appointments so staff and other people will not be aware of them. However, you may become aware of something 'not quite right'.

## 5.1 Important Rules

It is important that all staff, elected members and volunteers is aware that the first person that has concerns or encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. However, staff, elected members and volunteers do have a duty of care to the child or adults at risk to report any suspicions you may have.

**REMEMBER**  
**Call 999 if it's an emergency or the person is in danger**

Nothing in this procedure should prevent the application of common sense and if a member of staff, elected member or volunteer comes across an individual in distress or obvious physical need, they should ensure their immediate needs are met by calling in the appropriate professional help, including the police or ambulance services if necessary. Once their immediate needs have been met then the basic response procedures detailed in section 6.0 should be followed.

**REMEMBER**  
**The needs of the Individual always come first**

### **CHANNEL process**

This is a multi-agency meeting that aims to identify whether an individual is at risk of being drawn into terrorism along with the nature and extent of that risk. The meeting will then develop a support plan for the individual which is reviewed regularly.

Channel aims to protect and divert young people from the risks they face through early multi-agency intervention.

More information about the [Channel Process](#) can be found on the gov.uk website.

## 5.2 Corporate Safeguarding Officers and Service Designated Officers

Each frontline service has a designated person trained to deal with safeguarding issues. The Service Designated Officers and Corporate Safeguarding Officer are responsible for dealing with reports or concerns about the protection of children / adults at risk appropriately. Staff and Councillors can find contact details on the Safeguarding Page of SharePoint, the Council's internal webpages.

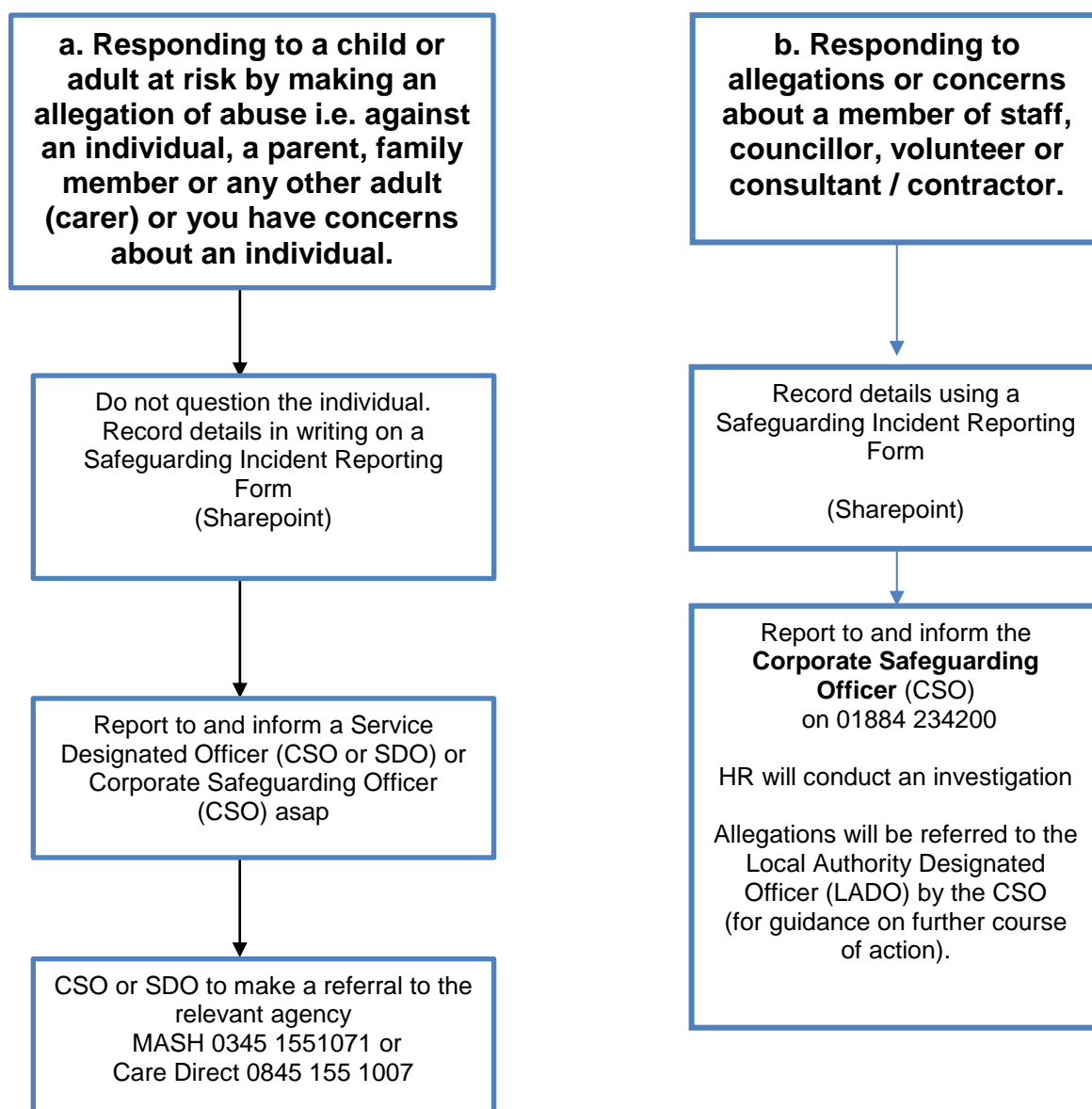
**If you are a member of the public and have a concern about MDDC services you can contact the corporate officer. However, if you have a concern about someone not in relation to MDDC services please contact the relevant organisation directly listed below.**

## 6.0 Basic Response Procedure

In general there are 2 situations that staff, elected members and volunteers may need to respond to:

Diagram 1 illustrates the basic response procedure/actions that should be followed for the two response situations.

### Basic response procedure/actions



### **REMEMBER**

Call 999 if it's an emergency or the person is in danger

## 6.1 Specific Response Procedures

More specifically the following procedures should be followed in each situation.

### Responding to a child or adults at risk making an allegation of abuse

Abused individuals will only tell people they trust and with whom they feel safe. By listening and taking seriously what the child or adult at risk is saying you are already helping the situation. The following points are a guide to help you respond appropriately.

1. **Stay calm.**
2. Listen carefully to what is said.
3. Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – **do not promise to keep secrets.**
4. Allow the child or adult at risk to continue at their own pace.
5. Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times **avoid asking questions** that suggest a particular answer. Use **TED** (Tell me what happened, Explain what happened, Describe what happened).
6. Reassure the child or adults at risk that they have done the right thing in telling you.
7. Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.
8. Record in writing on a Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form (see sharepoint) all the details that you are aware of and what was said using the child or adults at risk own words, as soon as possible.
9. Report to and inform your Service Designated Officer (if relevant), or the Corporate Safeguarding Officer.
10. Service Designated Officer / Corporate Safeguarding Officer inform relevant agency.
11. Service Designated Officer (if relevant) will be required to complete a brief summary of concerns and outcomes on the monitoring form and send to the Corporate Safeguarding Officer at least once a quarter for monitoring purposes.

#### REMEMBER

**It is not your job to judge or investigate BUT to inform**

## **Responding to allegations or concerns against a member of staff, councillor or volunteer**

1. Take the allegation or concern seriously.
2. Consider any allegation or concern to be potentially dangerous to the child or adults at risk.
3. Record in writing on a Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form (see sharepoint) all the details that you are aware of as soon as possible.
4. Report to and inform the Corporate Safeguarding Officer. The criteria are where a member of staff (including volunteers):
  - behaves in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
  - possibly commits a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
  - behaves towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children

The role of the Designated Officer is not to investigate, but to ensure that correct procedures are being followed and that, where necessary, Children's Services and the Police are involved.

The CSO and / or LADO may feel that the allegation is due to poor practice, which needs to be addressed through training rather than an investigation. However this will be recorded.

### **REMEMBER**

**It is not your job to judge or investigate BUT to inform**

## **6.2 Support to those who raise a concern or allegation**

The council has a duty of care to the person raising the concern or allegation depending on the outcome or complexity of the allegation. To support the Service Designated Officer we have a number of work place coaches and details are available on [sharepoint](#) for you to self-refer and we have an employee assistance service for counselling which is a self-referral service using freephone number 0800 3687325 and arranging an appointment to chat to someone.



### 6.3 Whistleblowing

*The disclosure by a person, usually an employee in a government agency or private enterprise, to the public or to those in authority, of mismanagement, corruption, illegality, or some other wrongdoing. (Legal Dictionary definition)*

You are a “whistleblower” if you’re a worker and you report certain types of wrongdoing. This will usually be something you’ve seen at work - though not always.

The wrongdoing you disclose must be “in the public interest”. This means it must affect others e.g. the general public. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 specifies “Qualifying Disclosures” as follows:

- a criminal offence, e.g. fraud
- someone’s health and safety is in danger
- risk or actual damage to the environment
- a miscarriage of justice
- the company is breaking the law, e.g. doesn’t have the right insurance
- you believe someone is covering up wrongdoing

As a whistleblower you’re protected by law - you shouldn’t be treated unfairly or lose your job because you “blow the whistle”. For further information please refer to MDDC [Whistleblowing Policy](#)

### 7.0 Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that **confidentiality** is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only, i.e. Service Designated Officer, Corporate Safeguarding Officer, MASH and Care Direct.

It is extremely important that allegations or concerns are not discussed, as any breach of confidentiality could be damaging to the child or adult at risk, their family and any child protection investigations that may follow.

Informing the parents of a child or young person you may have concerns about needs to be dealt with in a sensitive way. If there is a possibility that the Child Protection allegation involves a parent or family member the concern should not be discussed with them until consultation with the SDO.

Any individual under supervision has the right to be notified about the cause for concern. This should be done in joint consultation with MASH and the Police. It is important that the timing of this does not prejudice the investigation.

Recorded information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to Service Designated Officer and Corporate Safeguarding Officers, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

If enquiries arise from the public (including parents) or any branch of the media, it is vital that all staff, elected members and volunteers are briefed so that they do not make any comments regarding the situation. Staff, elected members and volunteers should be informed who the relevant designated Council spokesperson will be and all enquiries directed through them. Staff, elected members and volunteers should reply 'no comment' to all questions / enquiries.

## **8.0 Photography and Child Abuse Imagery**

There is increasing evidence that some people have used children and young people's activities and events, as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or video footage. Staff, elected members and volunteers should be vigilant at all times and any person using cameras or videos within Mid Devon District Council services and at events or activities which involve children and young people should be approached and asked to complete a [Consent Form](#) for the use of Cameras and other Image Recorders (see sharepoint).

When commissioning professional photographers or inviting the press to cover Council services, events and activities you must ensure that you make your expectations clear in relation to child protection.

- Check credentials of any photographers and organisations used.
- Ensure identification is worn at all times, if they do not have their own – provide it.
- Do not allow unsupervised access to children or young people or one to one photographic sessions.
- Do not allow photographic sessions outside of the activities or services, or at a child or young persons home.
- Parents must be informed that photographs of their child or young person may be taken during Council services, activities or events, and parental consent forms need to be signed agreeing to this. This must include information about how and where these photographs will be used (see SharePoint).
- It is recommended that the names of children or young people should not be used in photographs or video footage, unless with the express permission of the child or young person's parent.

## **9.0 Good Practice for Mid Devon District Council**

### **9.1 The Care of the Organisation**

Anyone could have the potential to abuse children or young people in some way and it is important that all reasonable steps are taken by Mid Devon District Council to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and adults at risk.

An enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service will be required for the posts / officers who are working or supporting directly with children and adults at risk.

### **9.2 Use of Contractors**

Mid Devon District Council and its staff, elected members and volunteers should undertake reasonable care that contractors doing work on behalf of the Council are monitored appropriately.

Any contractor or sub-contractor, engaged by the Council in areas where workers are likely to come into contact with children or adults at risk, should have its own equivalent Policy or failing this, must comply with the terms of this policy.

Where there is potential for contact with children and adults at risk it is the responsibility of the manager who is using the services of the contractor to check that the correct Disclosure & Barring certificate has been satisfactorily completed.

### **9.3 Facilities**

Mid Devon facilities which are used by the public need to be kept in a safe condition and risk assessed.

#### **9.4 Guidance for staff can be found on SharePoint covering:**

- Good practice for employees
- Recruitment
- When making a referral
- Recognising the signs of abuse
- Thresholds
- Types of abuse and indicators
- Safeguarding incident form
- Photo consent
- Example activities consent form
- Body maps
- Useful contact numbers
- Safeguarding websites with partner agencies

# Types of Abuse and Indicators

## Appendix A

**Physical Abuse** may involve assault, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm, including by fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

Types of physical abuse:

- Rough handling
- Physical punishments
- Inappropriate or unlawful use of restraint
- Making someone purposefully uncomfortable (e.g. opening a window and removing blankets)
- Involuntary isolation or confinement
- Forcible feeding or withholding food
- Unauthorised restraint, restricting movement (e.g. tying someone to a chair)

Possible indicators of physical abuse:

- No explanation for injuries or inconsistency with the account of what happened
- Injuries are inconsistent with the person's lifestyle
- Bruising, cuts, welts, burns and/or marks on the body or loss of hair in clumps
- Frequent injuries
- Unexplained falls
- Subdued or changed behaviour in the presence of a particular person
- Signs of malnutrition
- Failure to seek medical treatment or frequent changes of GP

**Sexual Abuse** is any sexual activity with a child or sexual assault or sexual acts with an adult to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males; women can also commit acts of sexual abuse as can children

Types of sexual abuse

- Rape, attempted rape or sexual assault
- Inappropriate touch anywhere
- Non- consensual masturbation of either or both persons
- Non- consensual sexual penetration or attempted penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth
- Any sexual activity that the person lacks the capacity to consent to

- Inappropriate looking, sexual teasing or innuendo or sexual harassment
- Sexual photography or forced use of pornography or witnessing of sexual acts
- Indecent exposure

#### Possible indicators of sexual abuse

- Bruising, particularly to the thighs, buttocks and upper arms and marks on the neck
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- Bleeding, pain or itching in the genital area
- Unusual difficulty in walking or sitting
- Foreign bodies in genital or rectal openings
- Infections, unexplained genital discharge, or sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy in a woman who is unable to consent to sexual intercourse
- The uncharacteristic use of explicit sexual language or significant changes in sexual behaviour or attitude
- Incontinence not related to any medical diagnosis
- Self-harming
- Poor concentration, withdrawal, sleep disturbance
- Excessive fear/apprehension of, or withdrawal from, relationships
- Fear of receiving help with personal care
- Reluctance to be alone with a particular person

**Psychological abuse** may involve age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed, causing the victim frequently to feel frightened. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment though it may occur alone.

#### Types of psychological or emotional abuse:

- Enforced social isolation – preventing someone accessing services, educational and social opportunities and seeing friends
- Removing mobility or communication aids or intentionally leaving someone unattended when they need assistance
- Preventing someone from meeting their religious and cultural needs
- Preventing the expression of choice and opinion
- Failure to respect privacy
- Preventing stimulation, meaningful occupation or activities
- Intimidation, coercion, harassment, use of threats, humiliation, bullying, swearing or verbal abuse
- Addressing a person in a patronising or infantilising way
- Threats of harm or abandonment
- Cyber bullying

Possible indicators of psychological or emotional abuse

- An air of silence when a particular person is present
- Withdrawal or change in the psychological state of the person
- Insomnia
- Low self-esteem
- Uncooperative and aggressive behaviour
- A change of appetite, weight loss/gain
- Signs of distress: tearfulness, anger
- Apparent false claims, by someone involved with the person, to attract unnecessary treatment

### **Discriminatory Abuse**

Types of discriminatory abuse:

- Unequal treatment based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation (known as '**protected characteristics**' under the **Equality Act 2010**)
- Verbal abuse, derogatory remarks or inappropriate use of language related to a protected characteristic
- Denying access to communication aids, not allowing access to an interpreter, signer or lip-reader
- Harassment or deliberate exclusion on the grounds of a protected characteristic
- Denying basic rights to healthcare, education, employment and criminal justice relating to a protected characteristic
- Substandard service provision relating to a protected characteristic

Possible indicators of discriminatory abuse

- The person appears withdrawn and isolated
- Expressions of anger, frustration, fear or anxiety
- The support on offer does not take account of the person's individual needs in terms of a protected characteristic

### **Institutional Abuse**

Types of organisational or institutional abuse:

- Discouraging visits or the involvement of relatives or friends
- Run-down or overcrowded establishment
- Authoritarian management or rigid regimes

- Lack of leadership and supervision
- Insufficient staff or high turnover resulting in poor quality care
- Abusive and disrespectful attitudes towards people using the service
- Inappropriate use of restraints
- Lack of respect for dignity and privacy
- Failure to manage residents with abusive behaviour
- Not providing adequate food and drink, or assistance with eating
- Not offering choice or promoting independence
- Misuse of medication
- Failure to provide care with dentures, spectacles or hearing aids
- Not taking account of individuals' cultural, religious or ethnic needs
- Failure to respond to abuse appropriately
- Interference with personal correspondence or communication
- Failure to respond to complaints

Possible indicators of organisational or institutional abuse:

- Lack of flexibility and choice for people using the service
- Inadequate staffing levels
- People being hungry or dehydrated
- Poor standards of care
- Lack of personal clothing and possessions and communal use of personal items
- Lack of adequate procedures
- Poor record-keeping and missing documents
- Absence of visitors
- Few social, recreational and educational activities
- Public discussion of personal matters
- Unnecessary exposure during bathing or using the toilet
- Absence of individual care plans
- Lack of management overview and support

### **Neglect and acts of omission**

Neglect is deliberately withholding or unintentional failure to provide appropriate and adequate care and support which is necessary for the adult to carry out daily living activities. It is likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development.

Types of neglect and acts of omission:

- Failure to provide or allow access to food, shelter, clothing, heating, stimulation and activity, personal or medical care
- Providing care in a way that the person dislikes



- Failure to administer medication as prescribed
- Refusal of access to visitors
- Not taking account of individuals' cultural, religious or ethnic needs
- Not taking account of educational, social and recreational needs
- Ignoring or isolating the person
- Preventing the person from making their own decisions
- Preventing access to glasses, hearing aids, dentures, etc.
- Failure to ensure privacy and dignity

Possible indicators of neglect and acts of omission:

- Poor environment – dirty or unhygienic
- Poor physical condition and/or personal hygiene
- Pressure sores or ulcers
- Malnutrition or unexplained weight loss
- Untreated injuries and medical problems
- Inconsistent or reluctant contact with medical and social care organisations
- Accumulation of untaken medication
- Uncharacteristic failure to engage in social interaction
- Inappropriate or inadequate clothing

**Self-neglect** this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour

Types of self-neglect:

- Lack of self-care to an extent that it threatens personal health and safety
- Neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings
- Inability to avoid self-harm
- Failure to seek help or access services to meet health and social care needs
- Inability or unwillingness to manage one's personal affairs

Indicators of self-neglect:

- Very poor personal hygiene
- Unkempt appearance
- Lack of essential food, clothing or shelter
- Malnutrition and/or dehydration
- Living in squalid or unsanitary conditions
- Neglecting household maintenance
- Hoarding

- Collecting a large number of animals in inappropriate conditions
- Non-compliance with health or care services
- Inability or unwillingness to take medication or treat illness or injury

### **Financial and Material abuse**

Types of financial or material abuse:

- Theft of money or possessions
- Fraud, scamming
- Preventing a person from accessing their own money, benefits or assets
- Employees taking a loan from a person using the service
- Undue pressure, duress, threat or undue influence put on the person in connection with loans, wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions
- Arranging less care than is needed to save money to maximise inheritance
- Denying assistance to manage/monitor financial affairs
- Denying assistance to access benefits
- Misuse of personal allowance in a care home
- Misuse of benefits or direct payments in a family home
- Someone moving into a person's home and living rent free without agreement or under duress
- False representation, using another person's bank account, cards or documents
- Exploitation of a person's money or assets, e.g. unauthorised use of a car
- Misuse of a power of attorney, deputy, appointeeship or other legal authority
- Rogue trading – e.g. unnecessary or overpriced property repairs and failure to carry out agreed repairs or poor workmanship

Possible indicators of financial or material abuse:

- Missing personal possessions
- Unexplained lack of money or inability to maintain lifestyle
- Unexplained withdrawal of funds from accounts
- Power of attorney or lasting power of attorney (LPA) being obtained after the person has ceased to have mental capacity
- Failure to register an LPA after the person has ceased to have mental capacity to manage their finances, so that it appears that they are continuing to do so
- The person allocated to manage financial affairs is evasive or uncooperative
- The family or others show unusual interest in the assets of the person

- Signs of financial hardship in cases where the person's financial affairs are being managed by a court appointed deputy, attorney or LPA
- Recent changes in deeds or title to property
- Rent arrears and eviction notices
- A lack of clear financial accounts held by a care home or service
- Failure to provide receipts for shopping or other financial transactions carried out on behalf of the person
- Disparity between the person's living conditions and their financial resources, e.g. insufficient food in the house
- Unnecessary property repairs

### **Domestic Violence** Types of domestic violence or abuse

Domestic violence or abuse can be characterised by any of the indicators of abuse outlined in this briefing relating to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Domestic violence and abuse includes any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. It also includes so called 'honour' - based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Coercive or controlling behaviour is a core part of domestic violence. Coercive behaviour can include:

- acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation
- harming, punishing, or frightening the person
- isolating the person from sources of support
- exploitation of resources or money
- preventing the person from escaping abuse
- regulating everyday behaviour.

Possible indicators of domestic violence or abuse

- Low self-esteem
- Feeling that the abuse is their fault when it is not
- Physical evidence of violence such as bruising, cuts, broken bones
- Verbal abuse and humiliation in front of others
- Fear of outside intervention

- Damage to home or property
- Isolation – not seeing friends and family
- Limited access to money

**Modern Slavery** encompasses slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Types of modern slavery:

- Sexual exploitation, such as escort work, prostitution and pornography
- Debt bondage – being forced to work to pay off debts that realistically they never will be able to

Possible indicators of modern slavery:

- Signs of physical or emotional abuse
- Appearing to be malnourished, unkempt or withdrawn
- Isolation from the community, seeming under the control or influence of others
- Living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation and or living and working at the same address
- Lack of personal effects or identification documents
- Always wearing the same clothes
- Avoidance of eye contact, appearing frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers
- Fear of law enforcers

**Radicalisation** is defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism and extremism and, in some cases, to then participate in terrorist groups

Possible changes in behaviour may give cause for concern from those closest to them

- General changes of mood, patterns of behaviour, secrecy;
- Changes of friends and mode of dress;
- Use of inappropriate language;
- Possession of violent extremist literature;
- The expression of extremist views;
- Advocating violent actions and means;
- Association with known extremists;
- Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology.

Protecting vulnerable people from, being drawn into terrorism. Channel forms a key part of the Prevent strategy. The process is a multi-agency approach to identify and provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** - FGM is a criminal offence – it is child abuse and a form of violence against women and girls and therefore should be treated as such.

FGM is a procedure where the female genital organs are injured or changed and there is no medical reason for this. Whilst FGM may be an isolated incident of abuse within a family, it can be associated with other behaviours that discriminate against, limit or harm women and girls. These may include other forms of honour-based violence (e.g. forced marriage) and domestic abuse.

### Recommended Legislation and Guidance

#### Legislation

- The Care Act 2014 in particular Sections 42 to 46 related to safeguarding, further information can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>
- The Children Act 2004, specifically Section 11 which places a duty on key people and public bodies, including district councils, to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Further information can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>
- [The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#) - This Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (SVGA) 2006 was passed to help avoid harm, or risk of harm, by preventing people who are deemed unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults from gaining access to them through their work.
- The Independent Safeguarding Authority was established as a result of this Act. On 1 December 2012 the Criminal Records Bureau and Independent Safeguarding Authority merged to become the [Disclosure and Barring Service](#) (DBS). Organisations with responsibility for providing services or personnel to vulnerable groups have a legal obligation to refer relevant information to the service.
- The Counter Terrorism Act 2015 section 26 which places a duty on certain bodies, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The Prevent Agenda is one of four strands which makes up the Governments counter-terrorism strategy. Further information can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/contents>
- The Modern Slavery Act 2015. Further information can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/contents/enacted>
- The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 in particular Part 10 relating to forced marriage. Further information can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/12/contents/enacted>
- The Serious Crime Act 2015 particularly Part 5 relating to female genital mutilation, child cruelty and domestic abuse. Further information can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/9/contents/enacted>

- The policy is written with reference to the principle of Think Child, Think Parent, Think Family. Further information can be found at:  
<http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/think-child-think-parent-think-family-0>

- Human Rights Act 1998  
[www.hmsso.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/19980042.htm](http://www.hmsso.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/19980042.htm)

- The Data Protection Act 1984 and 1998  
[www.legislation.hmsso.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/19980029.htm](http://www.legislation.hmsso.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/19980029.htm)

- [Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation](#)

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a collective term for procedures, which include the removal of part or all of the external female genitalia for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons.

- [Protection of Children Act 1978](#) –

It is an offence to take, permit to be taken, make, possess, show, distribute or advertise indecent images of children in the United Kingdom. A child for these purposes is a anyone under the age of 18.

## Guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (Department of Health)  
<http://www.doh.gov.uk>
- Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures (LSCB)  
[www.devon.gov.uk/socserve/childprotect](http://www.devon.gov.uk/socserve/childprotect)
- Every Child Matters (Department for Education and Skills)  
[www.dfes.gov.uk/everychildmatters](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/everychildmatters)
- First Check – NSPCC  
[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)
- No Secrets: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect adults at risk from abuse" (March 2000).  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/no-secrets-guidance-on-protecting-vulnerable-adults-in-care](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/no-secrets-guidance-on-protecting-vulnerable-adults-in-care)
- For information about different substances and their impact have a look at the [FRANK](#) website
- The Drug and Alcohol Service for under 18's - Have a look at the [Y-Smart](#) website
- [Adolescents and Risk: Helping Young People Make Better Choices](#)
- For local information see the [Devon Young Carers](#) website
- Take a look at the [Carers Trust](#) website
- [Stop Abuse For Everyone](#) - For Everyone. We want a world where everyone is safe, equal and respected and see an end to domestic violence and abuse.



### Useful contact numbers:

**Care Direct** – If you suspect a vulnerable adult is being abused

- 0845 155 1007
- Monday – Friday 8am – 8pm  
Saturday 9am – 1pm
- Referrals should be emailed to [csc.caredirect@devon.gov.uk](mailto:csc.caredirect@devon.gov.uk)

An **Emergency Duty Team** which offers an emergency crisis service matters which cannot wait until the local office opens (both children and adults at risk), they operate from **Monday – Friday 5pm – 9am (4pm – 9am on Fridays)** and also at weekends and Bank Holidays **0845 6000388**

#### **ChildLine**

- 0800 1111
- [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Confidential telephone line advice for children who are being abused or are at risk – there are a number of ways to contact ChildLine and more information is available on their website.

#### **Devon and Cornwall Constabulary (Police)**

- |                              |          |
|------------------------------|----------|
| • Police Central Switchboard | Tel: 101 |
| • Police Emergency           | Tel: 999 |

#### **Domestic Abuse**

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| • If you are concerned about an adult (aged 16+) who is affected by domestic abuse, |                      |
| • Contact Devon Domestic Abuse Services on:   | <b>0345 155 1074</b> |
| • The National Domestic Violence Helpline on:                                       | <b>0808 2000 247</b> |
| • National Women's Aid on:  | <b>0808 2000 247</b> |
| • Men's Advice Line on:   | <b>0808 801 0327</b> |
| • Samaritans on:  | <b>08457 909090</b>  |
| • ChildLine on:   | <b>0800 1111</b>     |
| • NSPCC on:   | <b>0808 800 5000</b> |
| • Shelterline on:   | <b>0808 800 4444</b> |

Wherever possible these numbers should be provided to the victim to seek advice. If

you are working with someone disclosing that they are a perpetrator of abuse they can also seek advice using the same numbers and should be encouraged to do so.

### **LADO – Local authority Designated Officer**

- 01392 384964
- Referrals should be emailed to the Child Protection Officer who will refer to LADO
- [www.devon.gov.uk/index/childrenfamilies/childprotection/lado.html](http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/childrenfamilies/childprotection/lado.html)

**Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** – if you are concerned about a child / young person

- To make a referral – 0345 1551071
- Monday to Thursday 9am – 5pm
- Friday 9am – 4pm
- Referrals should be emailed to [mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk)

If you think a child is in immediate danger, contact the police on 999.

### **NSPCC –**

- **0808 800 5000**
- [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

The NSPCC's telephone helpline provides advice and support for children who have been abused and for adults or other children who are concerned that a child has been abused.

### **Vulnerability to radicalisation**

Channel is a partnership approach involving a multi-agency panel deciding on the most appropriate action to support individuals vulnerable to radicalisation (it is similar to MAPPA and MASH).

Email [prevent@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk](mailto:prevent@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk)

## Declaration

Mid Devon District Council is fully committed to safeguarding the well being of children and adults at risk by protecting them, from neglect, physical, sexual and emotional harm.

Working as an employee or volunteer of Mid Devon District Council or as an elected member it is important that you have taken time to thoroughly read this Policy and Procedures.

By being made aware of the policy it is our intention to ensure that all are proactive in providing a safe and secure environment for the children and vulnerable adult in our care.

.....  
Declaration:

I have read and understood Mid Devon District Council's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and I accept the principles therein.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Name: .....  
(Please print)

Position in Organisation:.....

This will be kept in your personnel file