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This Policy Relates to the following Legislation

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- The Care Standards Act 2000
- The Education Act 2002
- The Serious Crime Act 2015
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003)

This Policy Relates to the following Regulations

- Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015
- The Independent School Regulations 2014

This Policy Relates to the following Guidance

- Every Child Matters 2004
- Statutory Guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of The Children Act 2004
- The PREVENT duty: for schools and childcare providers 2015
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020
- Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation: procedural information 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 (updated 2020)
- Guide to Children’s Home Standards Including Quality Standards April 2015
- The Pan-Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures Manual:
- <https://sussexchildprotection.procedures.org.uk/#>
- Reference to the Brighton and Hove statutory Local Safeguarding Children Boards (L.S.C.B. also known as F.D.F.F. – Front Door For Families).
- Information Sharing Guide for Practitioners (2015)
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- What To Do If You’re Worried a Child is being Abused – DfES 2015

This Policy Applies To:

- a) All those directly employed by The Lioncare Group and who are in positions and roles that require them to interact with or work alongside or around or in proximity to the children in our care.
- b) All those indirectly employed by The Lioncare Group by virtue of being sub-contracted or commissioned and paid by The Lioncare Group to carry out work on behalf of The Lioncare Group and where such work causes them to interact with or work alongside or around or in proximity to the children in our care.
- c) All those working in partnership with The Lioncare Group in the form of voluntary work or student placements and where such work or activity involves interacting with or work alongside or around or in proximity to the children in our care.

Responsibilities Associated with this Policy:

All employees, whether they are 'front-line' engaged directly in the task of caring for, educating, and supporting the children in our care, or 'ancillary' (e.g. House Keeper, Maintenance Worker, Administrator etc.), are personally responsible for managing their own conduct in relation to following this policy.

All employees whether they are 'front-line' or 'ancillary' are also responsible for supporting their colleagues and co-workers to follow this policy.

Members of the Management Team (Senior Therapeutic Carers, Deputy Managers, Head Teacher, and Registered Managers) are responsible for ensuring all those employed directly or indirectly or on a voluntary basis or as a student placement are made aware of this policy and guidance, and for monitoring their safe and proper conduct whilst interacting with or work alongside or around or in proximity to the children in our care and for taking such action as necessary to prevent children being at risk of harm because of an adult's failure to follow this policy and guidance.

The Executive Team (Assistant Directors and Chief Executive Officer) are responsible for reviewing this policy and at least annually and more frequently if and when it is considered necessary to do so, and for ensuring this policy remains fit-for-purpose.

Monitoring and Review of this Policy:

The implementation of this policy and its corresponding guidance will be monitored continuously, and the policy itself will be reviewed at least annually by the Executive Team and in consultation with relevant others including where possible and feasible those involved in caring for, educating, and supporting the children in our care, and consultation with the children themselves. At our monthly Safeguarding Monitoring Group we review how effective our policy is in practise and what impact this has on safeguarding issues that arise.

Policy Statement

Safeguarding is defined as;

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes (Working Together to Safeguard Children DfE 2017)

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

At The Lioncare Group, we attempt to ensure that all possible precautions are taken to protect the children in our care from experiencing abusive or damaging or exploitative situations. We fully recognise and support every child's right to grow up free from abuse and exploitation. However, we are fully aware of the potential that a child might suffer physical, sexual or emotional abuse during their stay with The Lioncare Group. This could occur whilst the child is within one of our homes, away from the home on an activity, or when the child is in the temporary care of other adults (e.g. on contact visits to family / relatives or at school). Such abuse might be perpetrated by an adult with responsibility for caring for the child cared for by The Lioncare Group, by adults including parents and teachers, or by other children either cared for by The Lioncare Group or interacting with the children in our care.

The Lioncare Group has developed clear policies and written procedures for responding to this serious matter. The policy has been produced in line with current legislation and regulation and guidance. The policy is designed to ensure the following core principles are upheld at all times:

- **Immediate Action** must be taken in any matter relating to Safeguarding
- The first priority must always be to **Protect the Welfare and Safety of the Child.**
- All relevant agencies and external professionals must be informed **Without Delay** i.e. as soon as a safeguarding matter has been brought to the attention of anyone employed by or associated with The Lioncare Group.

- All employees of The Lioncare Group and regardless of job role or position or status have individual and personal **responsibility for reporting** all and any Safeguarding issue or concern to the relevant Registered Manager or Head Teacher without delay.
- All employees of The Lioncare Group and regardless of job role or position or status have individual and personal **responsibility for completing** all incident forms and records before leaving shift.
- In matters relating to an allegation of possible harm to a child or possible risk of harm to a child made against an employee of The Lioncare Group, it is not the role of The Lioncare Group to make a decision as to whether or not the allegation is significant or not; it is the role of the **L.A.D.O.** to make this decision and to instruct and inform The Lioncare Group on the actions to be taken and followed.
- In all matters relating to Safeguarding of children, there is an absolute need for a measured and objective approach to be taken that is based on **factual accuracy and clarity**.
- All matters of a safeguarding nature must be **investigated**, either by the police in the first instance or if the police and L.A.D.O. have given consent and permission, as an internal investigation carried out by The Lioncare Group in line with the procedures of Brighton and Hove L.S.C.B. and best practice and employment law and legislation.
- If the police and L.A.D.O. have given The Lioncare Group consent and permission to carry out an internal investigation, the respective Registered Manager of the relevant home, or the Head Teacher of The Lioncare School, is responsible for ensuring a signed and dated **factual account is taken from every person** that was involved in the event being investigated and in any way; for the avoidance of doubt, this will always include every employee on duty at the time of the event being investigated (and whether or not they were directly involved) and also any person who is known to have or believed to have information relating to the event being investigated and may include the child¹ who is central to the event being investigated and / or other children who may have witnessed the event being investigated and / or a social worker or therapist or teacher or similar who may have spoken with the child or spoken to by the child who is central to the event being investigated.

From the moment a safeguarding matter is raised and throughout all stages of addressing the matter and including any and all investigation of the matter, a detailed note is taken and maintained in the form of an **Action Report**. All information concerning the steps, decisions and actions agreed and taken is accurately recorded on the Action Report. These notes must be kept securely and may be required by the Police or Social Services Department in the course of conducting their investigation.

Brighton & Hove L.A.D.O., Ofsted, the parent of the child², and the local authority (L.A.) with responsibility for the child must be informed of an allegation **immediately** and **without delay**. The L.A. must be involved and kept informed of all steps in an investigation.

The Chief Executive Officer of The Lioncare Group has ultimate responsibility for Safeguarding and welfare issues for children cared for by The Lioncare Group.

The nature of the abuse and the allegation will determine whether or not it is appropriate for a child to be removed from the home in which they are living or our school. For example, if the allegation is of abuse of a child by another child and all relevant parties with authority consider it in the best interest of both children for this to happen, one or both children may be removed from home in which they are living or the school either temporarily or permanently.

In the event of an allegation being made against an adult caring for the children cared for by The Lioncare Group, it would in most cases (but not every case) be in the best interests of the adult and the child for the adult to be temporarily suspended from duty, pending the outcome of the investigation. However, and as described above, suspension is considered by the High Court and ACAS to be a very serious action for an employer to take against an employee and each situation would be considered individually and with guidance and consultation with legal representatives. A 'no-lone-working' may be implemented as an alternative. The decision to suspend an employee is always at the absolute discretion of the Chief Executive Officer.

Form In Which A Disclosure Or Allegations May Be Presented

¹ In this case the child's social worker must first be contacted and written agreement obtained for a statement to be asked for and given by the child before such a statement can be asked for or obtained from the child.

² Unless to do so is not reasonably practicable or would place the child's welfare at risk.

- Allegation reported by an independent person or agency about abuse that may have occurred at The Lioncare Group.
- Allegation reported by an adult caring for the children at The Lioncare Group about people independent to the organisation (parents / other carers / teachers / friends / strangers).
- Allegation reported by an adult caring for the children at The Lioncare Group, against a colleague.
- Allegation reported by a child against another child also cared for by The Lioncare Group, an adult caring for them in The Lioncare Group, or a child interacting with those cared for by The Lioncare Group

A disclosure or allegation may be made concerning an alleged event occurring very recently, and may also be made concerning an alleged historic event occurring in the past. Regardless of the time-scale when the alleged event is said to have happened, all disclosures and allegations are treated with equal concern and responded to in the same way.

Incidents And Significant Events Involving A Child Whilst They Are At School

If a child living in one of our children's homes is involved in an incident or significant event whilst that child is attending school or college or a place of education or training, the Registered Manager (or in their absence, the Deputy Manager) of that home is responsible for ensuring they are notified of the incident or significant event.

The Registered Manager is responsible for requesting and receiving a record of that incident or significant event. They are also responsible for ensuring that all those working in the home take all necessary and appropriate action to ensure the child is kept safe and protected from harm at all times, in light of the information the Registered Manager has been given.

In line with the recommendations by Lord Lamming in his report, and in line with statutory regulations contained in the Children's Homes [England] Regulations 2015, the Registered Manager of the home is responsible for making sure all relevant agencies and authorities and professionals are informed without delay and including a formal notification to Ofsted, MASH, the Social Worker of the Placing Authority, and where appropriate the parents or legal guardians of the child. If the incident or significant event involves an allegation of abuse against the child by an adult whilst the child was attending school, the L.A.D.O. must be notified and informed without delay.

The notifications made by the Registered Manager are separate from and additional to any notifications that may or may not have been made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the school or college or place of education or training. It must never be assumed or taken for granted that because the incident or significant event occurred whilst the child was attending school or college or place of education or training, that the responsibility for reporting and notification of the incident or significant event rests solely with the school or college or place of education or training. The Lioncare Group adopts the principle that two or more notification of the same incident or significant event is always safer and therefore better than no notification.

To ensure that those caring for children living in our homes are made aware of and informed of any and all incidents or significant events involving a child in their care whilst that child is attending school or college or a place of education or training, the Registered Manager is responsible for confirming with the person in charge, at the admission stage of a child's placement at that school or college or place of education or training, that a record of any incident or significant event involving or affecting that child will always be sent to the Registered Manager or to a person nominated by the Registered Manager to receive all such records.

The Registered Manager is also responsible for ensuring all records and information relating to any incident or significant event involving or affecting a child living in the home whilst that child is attending school or college or a place of education or training is shared with those caring for the child in the home, so that necessary changes can be made to Safeguarding Risk Profiles, Care Plans, Positive Behaviour Support Plans, or/and other Case Records and Plans and Programmes, to ensure all children living at the home are kept safe and protected from harm at all times.

Procedures For Responding To A Disclosure Or Allegation Of Abuse:

Any person who knows or believes that a child cared for by The Lioncare Group, or formally cared for by The Lioncare Group, has been or is being abused by another person (child or adult) must directly and without delay

inform the Registered Manager³ of the relevant home or the Head Teacher of The Lioncare School (unless the Registered Manager, Head Teacher, or a more Senior Member of the Leadership Group is the alleged abuser, in which case steps A) to E) below should be followed).

The Registered Manager's or Head Teacher's first priority will be to ensure that the welfare and safety of the child, and all children cared for by The Lioncare Group, is protected. Their next priority is to contact and pass on information directly to the following external agents and officers:

- a) The L.A.D.O. (Local Authority Designated Officer) of Brighton and Hove L.S.C.B.
- b) The Police (if a criminal act has been committed or believed to have been committed).
- c) The Practice Manager of Brighton and Hove Safeguarding Team (F.D.F.F.).
- d) Ofsted (in the case of the homes).
- e) The child's Social Worker and/or Placing Authority.
- f) The child's parent(s) and/or guardian(s) (unless this is deemed by the child's social worker inappropriate or not in the child's best interest).
- g) The Chief Executive Officer of the Lioncare Group (if the situation deems it appropriate to do so i.e., they are not implicated in the alleged abuse).

Darrel Clews is the B&HCC L.A.D.O. and can be contacted as follows:

Darrel Clews
Local Authority Designated Officer
Performance & Safeguarding Service
Families, Children & Learning Directorate
Room RG124
Moulsecoomb Hub North Building
Hodshrove Lane
Brighton
BN2 4SE
Tel: 01273295643
Mobile: 07795335879
Fax: 01273295392

In addition to the above, The Lioncare Group has implemented the following extra procedure to be followed in every instance where an allegation or concern has been raised against an adult employed by The Lioncare Group:

- h1) The Registered Manager/Head Teacher (or Deputy Manager/Senior Pastoral Lead and/or Senior Learning Support Assistant in their absence) receiving the allegation or concern must inform the Chief Executive Officer of The Lioncare Group and cc'd the Assistant Directors, without delay.
- h2) The Chief Executive Officer then takes responsibility for checking the correct procedure is being followed and that the correct people have been notified.
- h3) The Chief Executive Officer, with assistance from the Registered Manager or Head Teacher, ensures that the child is safeguarded and protected by deciding if the employee is to be instructed to 'no-lone-working', be Redeployed, instructed to Refrain From Working, or Suspended, or other additional measure needing to be in place to protect the child (e.g. the adult involved is not left in a position of authority in the home or school etc.).

The following information is required when reporting an allegation of abuse:

- The child's name
- Date of birth
- Home address
- Clear details of the alleged abuse or injury

³ In the absence of the Registered Manager, the Deputy Manager is responsible. In their absence, the Assistant Directors are responsible. In the very unlikely event that none of these people are contactable, the Chief Executive Officer must be informed.

- Details of any action already taken

Designated Safeguarding Leads for The Lioncare Group:

The Lioncare Group has designated the following people to lead and oversee the procedures for responding to a disclosure or allegation of abuse of a child cared for by The Lioncare Group:

1. The respective Registered Manager of the home or the Head Teacher of The Lioncare School are the people to whom allegations or concerns should be reported and can be contacted by telephone (i.e. the relevant number for the relevant home or the school) or by email or on their respective mobile numbers.
2. The respective Deputy Manager of the relevant home or the Senior Pastoral Lead and/or Senior Learning Support Assistant of The Lioncare School are the people to whom allegations or concerns should be reported in the absence of the Registered Manager or Head Teacher and can be contacted by telephone (i.e. the relevant number for the relevant home or the school) or by email or on their respective mobile numbers
3. **Matt Vince** (Chief Executive Officer and Responsible Individual and Chair of the School Leadership Group) is ultimately responsible for overseeing all matters related to Safeguarding and child protection in regards to The Lioncare Group and can be contacted on T: 01273 720424 or E: matt@lioncare.co.uk or M: 07810 645934.
4. The Chief Executive Officer, Assistant Directors, Registered Managers, Head Teacher, Deputy Managers, and Senior Therapeutic Carers are trained as Designated Safeguarding Leads at Level 5.
 - A. If a Registered Manager of The Lioncare Group is the subject of the allegation or concern, the allegation or concern must be reported directly and without delay to Matt Vince at Lioncare House on T: 01273 720424 or matt@lioncare.co.uk or M: 07810 645934; Matt is then responsible for informing all appropriate agencies and authorities and especially the L.A.D.O., and for initiating child protection and Safeguarding procedures. Matt Vince will be nominated as responsible for ensuring that procedures in relation to the allegation or concern are in place and followed through correctly.
 - D. If a Deputy Manager of The Lioncare Group is the subject of the allegation or concern, and the respective Registered Manager of The Lioncare Group is absent or not contactable, the allegation or concern must be reported directly and without delay to the Chief Executive Officer at Lioncare House (contact details as before); The Chief Executive Officer is then responsible for informing all appropriate agencies and authorities and especially the L.A.D.O., and for initiating child protection and Safeguarding procedures. Matt Vince will be nominated as responsible for ensuring that procedures in relation to the allegation or concern are in place and followed through correctly.
 - E. If the Head Teacher of The Lioncare School is the subject of the allegation or concern, the allegation or concern must be reported directly to Matt Vince at Lioncare House (or other contact details as before); Matt Vince is then responsible for informing all appropriate agencies and authorities and especially the L.A.D.O., and for initiating child protection and Safeguarding procedures.
 - F. If the Senior Pastoral Lead and/or Senior Learning Support Assistant of The Lioncare School is the subject of the allegation or concern, and the Head Teacher is absent or not contactable, the allegation or concern must be without delay to Matt Vince at Lioncare House (or other contact details as before); Matt Vince is then responsible for informing all appropriate agencies and authorities and especially the L.A.D.O., and for initiating child protection and Safeguarding procedures.
 - G. If the Assistant Directors are the subject of the allegation or concern, the allegation or concern must be reported directly to Matt Vince at Lioncare House (or other contact details as before); Matt Vince is then responsible for informing all appropriate agencies and authorities and especially the L.A.D.O., and for initiating child protection and Safeguarding procedures.
 - H. If the Chief Executive Officer of The Lioncare Group is the subject of the allegation or concern, the allegation or concern must be reported directly and without delay one of the Assistant Directors who then contacts the Chair of the Board of Directors of The Lioncare Group, Beverley Collins, and hands over the allegation or concern. The Chair of the Board of Directors will inform all appropriate agencies and authorities and especially the L.A.D.O., and including the Independent External Consultants to The Lioncare Group who will form a temporary 'Emergency Organisational Committee' for the purpose of assisting and supporting and advising the Chair of the Board of Directors in their task of initiating and undertaking and overseeing correct and proper child protection and Safeguarding procedures and practice. The Emergency Organisational Committee consists of Andrew Collie (Organisational Consultant), Diane Thackrah (Social Care Consultant),

Dr Simon Tucker (Independent Consultant), and Beccie Mannall (Regulation 44 Inspector).

There must be no delay in the reporting and passing on of information related to allegation or concern of mistreatment or abuse of a child or misconduct by an employee of The Lioncare Group.

Safeguarding does not recognise as relevant any matters such as 'friendships', 'acquaintances', 'loyalty' or personal beliefs as to whether or not someone could have or is capable of having abused a child or mistreated them. Likewise, The Lioncare Group does not recognise as relevant any matters such as 'friendships', 'acquaintances', 'loyalty', 'length of service, position within the organisation, or personal beliefs as to whether or not someone could have or is capable of having carried out an act of misconduct whilst engaged in a professional capacity caring for and looking after children placed with The Lioncare Group.

To be clear, everyone regardless of position or status or length of employment has a legal duty and obligation to report and pass on any concern relating to an allegation of abuse and without delay.

Details should be immediately recorded and entered in the Daily Record Sheet and also on the Universal Logging Sheet of the respective Children's Home. An incident form must be completed immediately detailing all relevant information in full, paying particular attention to times, dates and exact wording used / clear descriptions of observed events.

The Registered Manager or Head Teacher maintains a detailed Action Log of all events and actions taken during the course of an investigation. They follow up the initial oral notification of an allegation, made to relevant agencies and especially the L.A.D.O., with confirmation in writing by email.

The Registered Manager or Head Teacher ensures any actions and requests by other agencies deemed necessary are taken, including arrangements for medical examination, provision of reports, and support for the child, opportunities for the child to speak with an independent adult (i.e. Advocate), and attendance at strategy meetings. The Senior leadership Team and all adults working at The Lioncare Group and employed by The Lioncare Group are committed to working effectively in partnership with other agencies concerned with Safeguarding and Child Protection e.g. the Placing Authority, the Local Authority, Schools, Hospitals, General Practitioners, the L.A.D.O., the L.S.C.B., the Police etc.

If the allegation is made against an adult caring for the children at The Lioncare Group, the Registered Manager or Head Teacher will confer with the Chief Executive Officer and a decision will be authorised by Chief Executive Officer as to whether or not to consider implementing a **No-Lone-Working** measure, or **Redeployment** of the adult, instructing the adult to **Refrain from Working** with a child or children, or to **Suspend** the adult from duties without prejudice pending the outcome of an investigation.

With this in mind, The Lioncare Group may consider the suspension of an employee as a possible option, but not the only option, in the following circumstances;

- There is cause to suspect a child is at risk of Significant Harm
- The allegation warrants investigation by the police
- The allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal

We are aware that this may be viewed as conflicting with regulation 33(2)(a) of the Children's Home [England] Regulations 2015; we will therefore always aim to seek independent consultation on the matter. In any case, the decision to suspend an employee is a serious matter and is only made at the absolute discretion of the Chief Executive Officer and in accordance with the recognised guidance published by ACAS, and following consultation and discussion with the L.A.D.O., and in accordance with the (all the) law of England.

When the L.A.D.O sends back his initial review and they state it met the threshold of harm a form will be sent back with:

1. Summary of the Incident as Understood by L.A.D.O. (*this is a 'checks-and-measures' to ensure that we and L.A.D.O. both have a clear take on the matter under scrutiny*)
2. Outline of Process of Thinking and Reasoning Carried Out by L.A.D.O. (*this is to help us understand clearly how L.A.D.O. reached his initial evaluation – it is what L.A.D.O. already does in his emails to us, so all we are doing is formalising it more clearly*)
3. Initial Evaluation Reached by L.A.D.O. (*this is in a separate box so that it stands out to us very clearly and so reducing any risk of us overlooking or not seeing it etc.*)

4. Advice and Guidance Given by L.A.D.O. to The Lioncare Group

At this stage, **no details are passed on** to the adult regarding the nature of the allegation, as to do so could potentially corrupt any subsequent police investigation or criminal prosecution against the adult that may be initiated.

The Chief Executive Officer will seek guidance from the police and L.A.D.O. before contacting the adult involved. If and only when the Chief Executive Officer has received authorisation to proceed, and had this confirmed in writing, the adult will be contacted and informed verbally and in writing of the allegation being made against them, the procedure being followed for the investigation, their right to representation, and the appropriate routes for communication to be followed throughout the duration of the investigation. They are informed of the need for them not to visit the home or school or attempt to make contact with anyone connected with the home or school, apart from the named appropriate person within the organisation to contact, throughout the course of the investigation.

There are three main possible routes of investigation that may follow a disclosure or allegation and these may run separately or jointly depending on the specific circumstances:

1. Police / Criminal Investigation (if there is clear evidence that a crime has been committed)
2. A Section 47 Investigation (under section 47 of the Children Act 1989)
3. Internal Investigation carried out by The Lioncare Group

If the Police, L.A.D.O., and Placing Authority consider the matter should be dealt with by the Police and/or the Local Area Safeguarding Team, then the investigation will be handed over to them and The Lioncare Group will support them with their investigation. This will involve attendance at an all-agency external strategy meeting. The meeting will attempt to ascertain if an offence has been committed, decide whether a police investigation is required, and if so, plan the relevant stages of the investigation.

If the Police Investigation / Section 47 Investigation / Internal Investigation find grounds to support the allegation, a full investigation will be initiated by the Police and Area Safeguarding Team. Depending on the outcome of this investigation, the adult concerned may be liable to disciplinary action and / or summary dismissal by the company in addition to any criminal prosecution initiated by the local authority or police.

If the Police, L.A.D.O., and Placing Authority consider the matter does not warrant Police action or external investigation, and is best dealt with by The Lioncare Group, Chief Executive Officer will formally commission an appropriate lead investigator. The lead investigator maintains a record of all actions taken during the investigation, interviews all persons involved in the matter, and prepares a report on their findings.

If the outcome of a Police Investigation / Section 47 Investigation / Internal Investigation finds no grounds for upholding the allegation, the adult to whom the allegation related will be reinstated and offered appropriate counselling, advice or support.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. Apart from keeping the child, those with parental responsibility, and accused person up to date with progress of the case, information should be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to protect children, facilitate enquiries, and manage related disciplinary or competency procedures.

The Police should not provide identifying information to the press or media, unless and until a person is charged, except in exceptional circumstances, e.g. an appeal to trace a suspect. In such cases, the reasons should be documented and partner agencies consulted beforehand.

Support

Support For The Child

The Lioncare Group together with Children's Social Care and/or the Police, where they are involved, will always consider the impact on the child concerned and provide support as appropriate. Liaison between the agencies will take place in order to ensure that the child's needs are addressed. It will be made clear to the child and (where appropriate their family), who will keep them informed of the progress of the allegation or complaint.

Particular consideration is given in circumstances where there has been an allegation made or concern raised that a child may have been mistreated by someone caring for or interacting with that child (either in one of the

Children's Homes owned and operated by The Lioncare Group or another place frequented by that child e.g. a youth club or special interest group etc.), or by a member of staff of the school or college or place of training attended by the child (including The Lioncare School).

Where a decision has been taken by The Lioncare Group (if the person subject to the allegation or concern is an employee of The Lioncare Group) or the respective organization (if the person subject to the allegation or concern is employed by a different organization) not to suspend the person subject to the allegation or concern or where a suspension is lifted, the following procedure and guidance will be followed to ensure that the child is effectively and appropriately supported in regards to feeling comfortable seeing, being around and/or interacting again with the person subject to the allegation or concern:

- The Registered Manager or their deputy speaks with the child to make certain:
 - that the child feels safe and protected
 - that the child has opportunity to share any worries or concerns they may have about the carer or teaching staff
 - that these concerns are heard and steps taken to reassure the child and take actions needed to reduce the child's worries or concerns
 - that the child's safeguarding risk profile is updated to assess any new risk of harm presented by the situation and measures to reduce the risk of harm and this is made known to those caring for and/or educating the child.
- A plan is drawn up and agreed with the child and the child's placing authority (and parent/guardian where appropriate) for how the child will be supported if and when they have interaction again with the care or teaching staff involved, and before such interaction takes place.
- All information contained in the plan is shared with and made available to the child's carers and teachers and relevant others so that all those caring for and educating and supporting the child understand what they need to do to support the child.
- The child is helped and supported during initiation of interaction with the care or teaching staff involved, and closely monitored; if they show signs or indication of upset or distress there are plans in place for the care or teaching staff involved to be removed from the situation to reduce any upset or distress.
- The Registered Manager or their deputy speaks with the child following initial interaction with the care or teaching staff involved, in order to gauge how the child experienced this and if any further action is necessary to support the child.

Support For The Person Subject To The Allegation Or Concern

As soon as possible after an allegation has been received, the person subject to the allegation or concern will be advised to contact their union or professional association. It will be made clear to the person, who will update them on the progress of the investigation. This is an ongoing process and should be continued throughout any police investigation, Section 47 Enquiry or disciplinary investigation.

Use of Mobile phones by the adults

Photography and Videos Working with children may involve the taking or recording of images. Any such work should take place with due regard to the law and the need to safeguard the privacy, dignity, safety and well-being of the children.

Informed written consent from parents or carers and agreement, where possible, from the child, should always be sought before an image is taken for any purpose. Careful consideration should be given as to how activities involving the taking of images are organised and undertaken. Care should be taken to ensure that all parties understand the implications of the image being taken especially if it is to be used for any publicity purposes or published in the media, or on the Internet.

There also needs to be an agreement as to whether the images will be destroyed or retained for further use, where these will be stored and who will have access to them. Adults need to remain sensitive to any children who appear uncomfortable, for whatever reason, and should recognise the potential for such activities to raise concerns or lead to misunderstandings.

It is not appropriate for adults to take photographs of children for their personal use. It is recommended that when using a photograph the following guidance should be followed:

- if the photograph is used, avoid naming the child
- if the child is named, avoid using their photograph
- the home should establish whether the image will be retained for further use
- images should be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so and removed from the adults mobile phone without delay.

Restrictions On Identifying Teachers Against Whom Allegations Of Criminal Misconduct Have Been Made

With effect from 1 October 2012, the Education Act 2011 introduced reporting restrictions preventing the publication of any material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who has been accused by, or on behalf of, a pupil from the same school (where that identification would identify the teacher as the subject of the allegation). The reporting restrictions apply until the point that the accused person is charged with an offence, or until the Secretary of State or the General Teaching Council for Wales publishes information about an investigation or decision in a disciplinary case arising from the allegation. The reporting restrictions also cease to apply if the individual to whom the restrictions apply effectively waives their right to anonymity by going public themselves or by giving their written consent for another to do so or if a judge lifts restrictions in response to a request to do so. Breaching the reporting restrictions is a criminal offence.

The case manager should take advice from the LADO, Police and Children's Social Care services to agree the following:

- Who needs to know and, importantly, exactly what information can be shared;
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip;
- What, if any information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation; and
- How to manage press interest if and when it should arise.

Learning Lessons

Following the conclusion of investigation in to an allegation or concern, The Lioncare Group and the Local Authority Designated Officer will seek to review the circumstances of the case to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the organisation's procedures or practice. Where appropriate, this will include agreement to an action plan for future practice based on lessons learnt.

Team Induction, Training And Development:

We have a strong commitment to providing the adult teams across The Lioncare Group with opportunities for developing their awareness and understanding of matters relating to Safeguarding and how this knowledge can be applied to improve the welfare of children and young people. We consider personal development and training opportunities for individual team members, combined with group discussion, are essential elements in maintaining best practice. By providing individual and team training opportunities in key areas of safeguarding and child protection (including Online safety, Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation, Radicalisation and Domestic Abuse), we aim to provide the children cared for by The Lioncare Group with an environment in which they are protected and can grow up free from abuse and exploitation. We also strive to provide an environment that can facilitate breaking of the cycle of abuse, so often established within the family settings in which our children have been living, sufficiently to afford greater protection to the future generation of children.

Safeguarding development and training is offered in the following ways:

- Well supported induction of new members of the team, including agency and part-time workers with guided reading of core policies within the first week.
- Forums for discussing Safeguarding issues with independent consultants, experts and specialist trainers.
- Ongoing professional discussion during meetings and supervision and performance management procedures
- "In-house" training sessions and short external courses.
- Relevant literature held in the Lioncare House (head office) library and in the Homes and School.
- Recognised external professional courses and training in Safeguarding of children for all adults that includes but is not limited to:

- Face-to-Face level 3 course “Safeguarding & Protecting Children from Harm” delivered through the NASS trainer, Caroline Eyre.
- Child Protection through the Safeguarding Children Level 3 online training programme by ‘Me Learning’
- E-Safety through the Online-Safety-Risks to Children online training programme by ‘Me Learning’
- Child Exploitation (sexual and criminal) through the Child Sexual Exploitation Level 2 online training programme by ‘Me Learning’
- Radicalisation through the ‘Awareness of Prevent’ online training programme
- Domestic Abuse through the Domestic Abuse online Training Programme by ‘Me Learning’

Individual adults and small groups undertake training via the above programmes as detailed in individual performance review plans and the organisations’ overall training plan.

Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

In order to ensure our Homes and our School are fully compliant with all duties and responsibilities in relation to all things Safeguarding, we have ensured that in each setting there is at least one qualified Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and one qualified Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL). All DSL’s and DDSL’s have undertaken recognised Safeguarding Children Designated Officer training at level 5.

As of 07 July 2021, the respective DSL’s and DDSL’s across The Lioncare Group are as follows:

Springfields Therapeutic Children’s Home:	Sarah Jackson (DSL)	Registered Manager
	Dave Hollens (DDSL)	Deputy Manager
Westfields Therapeutic Children’s Home:	John James (DSL)	Registered Manager
	Andy Thompson (DDSL)	Deputy Manager
Hillfields Therapeutic Children’s Home:	Jane Rayner (DSL)	Interim Manager
	Wendy Simpson (DDSL)	Deputy Manager
The Lioncare School:	Sara Fletcher (DSL)	Assistant Director of Education and Learning
	Caroline Belchem (DDSL)	Head Teacher
The Lioncare Group (organisation):	Matt Vince (DSL)	Chief Executive Officer / Responsible Individual / Chair of the School Leadership Group
	Jane Rayner (DDSL)	Assistant Director of Care and Support
	Sara Fletcher (DDSL)	Assistant Director of Education and Learning

Safer Recruitment and Deployment of Staff including Regulated and Non-Regulated Work

The Lioncare Group takes a rigorous approach to deterring, preventing and detecting people who may cause, or seek to cause harm to children from working with children and young people. Our full Safer Recruitment policy outlines the detailed steps that are taken throughout the recruitment process into the induction process for new employees.

The Chief Executive Officer, Assistant Directors, Head Teacher, Registered Managers, Deputy Managers, and HR Administrators have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training either online via the NSPCC or face-to-face with NASS (National Association of Special Schools). We extend this training where appropriate to all those who may have involvement in aspects of the recruitment process.

Off Duty Conduct

Where your off-duty conduct seriously undermines the trust and confidence that the Organisation has in an employee, whether at a work-related social occasion or otherwise, under the Organisation’s disciplinary procedure this could result in the employee’s dismissal.

For example, if the employee is arrested and/or charged on suspicion of committing a criminal offence outside

employment, the Organisation will examine whether there is an adverse connection between the alleged criminal offence and the individual's employment. The Organisation will then consider, through undertaking a Risk Assessment, whether the offence is one that makes the individual unsuitable for your type of work or unacceptable to other employees, taking into account length of service, status, relations with fellow workers and the effect on the Organisation's business and reputation subsequent to a charge or conviction.

If the organisation is made aware by the L.A.D.O. or the Police or other relevant agency or authority that an employee is the subject of an allegation of engaging in domestic abuse, and/or that the individual has been arrested on suspicion of carrying out domestic abuse and/or they are formally charged with committing domestic abuse, we will act accordingly. Special measures will be implemented without delay to minimise any potential immediate risk to children in our care and/or risk to colleagues employed by The Lioncare Group and/or risk to others associated with the work undertaken by our organisation. A thorough Risk Assessment will be undertaken to inform the organisation on next steps, and will include advice and guidance from the L.A.D.O. and where appropriate from the Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Children Panel and other relevant agencies and authorities.

Monitoring

All adults employed by The Lioncare Group have individual 1:1 supervision in addition to Group Consultancy, and issues of welfare, safeguarding and child protection are routinely covered within these forums. Senior members of staff are supervised by the Registered Manager / Head Teacher, and they are in turn supervised by the Chief Executive Officer and Assistant Directors.

Every month one of the Assistant Directors chairs The Safeguarding Monitoring Group which acts as a group supervision forum for the management teams across the organisation. This is a working group with the specific task of peer monitoring and giving support around Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures, including notifications to external agencies. The group has focus on individual children, and those for whom there are no live issues will also be discussed so that issues that do not meet the thresholds for notification are not missed, and so that otherwise 'concealed' patterns of risk and the necessary protective work to address these can be noted. The minutes of the meeting are sent to the Chief Executive Officer for further monitoring and scrutiny.

Alternate meetings are attended by an external and independent Safeguarding Consultant who scrutinises referrals for compliance with guidance and good practice. This consultant also scrutinises all occasions of recruitment for compliance with policy and legislation.

Whistle Blowing

Consistent with the emphasis The Lioncare Group places on the safety and welfare of the children in its care, the integrity of the business, and the need to act with uncompromising ethics, we believe all adults employed by The Lioncare Group, or concerned with its management and organisation, or associated with the work of The Lioncare Group, should be able to raise issues of concern if they feel that wrongdoing or bad practice is occurring.

If an adult has a concern that the principles upon which this statement is based have been compromised for whatever reason, they should bring their concerns to the attention of their supervisor in the first instance, or otherwise with the Registered Manager of one of the Homes or the Head Teacher of the School, or the Assistant Directors or the Chief Executive Officer.

All adults employed by The Lioncare Group are made aware of their right and duty to "whistle-blow" and supported to feel confident to voice concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues. If an adult believes that a reported allegation or concern is not being dealt with appropriately by The Lioncare Group, they should report the matter to the Local Authority Designated Officer / Designated Officer (contact details as above). Alternatively, the NSPCC whistle blowing advice line can and should be used: 0800 028 0285.

Personal Responsibility

It is the duty of all adults employed by The Lioncare Group to report any of the following incidents whether these actions have been committed, are currently being committed, are likely to be committed or are suspected of being committed.

- Criminal activity
- Failure to comply with legal obligation, including the PREVENT duty and the Mandatory reporting of Female Genital Mutilation.

- Miscarriage of justice
- Endangering health and safety of individuals
- Damage to environment
- Malpractice by colleagues
- Deliberate concealment of information concerning one of the preceding sets of circumstances

No prejudice or discrimination will be taken against a person who, in good faith, reports such incidents.

Any person reporting such incidents will be made aware of whether this will remain confidential or whether there will be a need to disclose who has reported the incident to a third party.

Related Policies

The following Policies and Procedures of The Lioncare Group provide further detail of how the welfare of children is promoted and how they are protected from harm:

Policies for The Lioncare Group;

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection and Records Management Policy
- Disruptions Meeting Policy and Procedure
- Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation Policy
- Missing Child Policy
- Online Safety and Social Media Policy
- Physical Contact and Safe Touch
- Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Use of Restrictive Physical Intervention

Policies Specific to The Lioncare School;

- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy
- Health and Safety Policies
- Online Safety Policy
- Records Management Policy (in draft Autumn 17)
- Recruitment Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Search and Confiscation Policy
- Sensory Needs Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy

This policy also has direct links to;

- The Lioncare School Code of Conduct
- The Lioncare Group's Employee Handbook

Appendices

1. Guiding Principles When Receiving Or Identifying Or Responding To An Allegation Or Concern

The following guidance is offered to adults working with and caring for the children cared for by The Lioncare Group:

- Remain open to what the child is saying.
- ‘Park’ your own beliefs, suspicions, prejudice and/or opinions to one side: this is not about what you think might have happened... it is about what the child is saying actually happened.
- Treat the child and the information seriously at all times and particularly when there are instances of injuries and symptoms which cannot be explained, or when the explanations given are inconsistent.
- Don’t play-down what is said, prompt or probe the child.
- If seeking clarification, don’t take an investigative approach and don’t ask any leading questions.
- Don’t make assumptions or offer alternative explanations.
- Never promise or collude with the child in “keeping secrets”. Adults must understand it is not possible or good Safeguarding Practice to give a guarantee of confidentiality as this would place them in a compromising position. The child must be informed at the earliest appropriate opportunity of the need to share the information with certain stated adults e.g. the Manager or Head Teacher, social worker and possibly the Police, in order to empower them in the decision of whether or not to continue the conversation. The procedure that will be followed and possible outcomes must be explained to the child in order to reduce their anxieties or fears, and in order that a relationship based on trust is maintained between the adult and child.
- If the alleged abuser is a child, both they and the “victim” of the abuse should be regarded at all times as needing protection, and appropriate arrangements made in consultation with the local authorities of each child. This may include temporary relocation of one or both children to an alternative placement pending the outcome of an investigation.
- Make a written record of the information (where possible in the child/adult's own words), including the time, date and place of incident(s), persons present and what was said.
- Sign and date the written record.
- Immediately report the matter to Registered Manager/Head Teacher, Deputy Manager/Senior Teacher, Assistant Directors, or Chief Executive Officer (depending on the situation and according to the guidance given above in the section titled, “Procedures for responding to a disclosure or allegation of abuse”).

When informed of a concern or allegation, the Registered Manager/Head Teacher, Deputy Manager/Senior Teacher, Assistant Director, or Chief Executive Officer should not investigate the matter or interview the adult against whom the allegation or concern has been raised, the child concerned, or potential witnesses. Instead, they must:

- Obtain written details of the concern/allegation, signed and dated by the person receiving (not the child/adult making the allegation)
- Countersign and date the written details
- Record any information about times, dates and location of incident(s) and names of any potential witnesses
- Record discussions about the child and/or employee, any decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions.

If the allegation or concern is regarding the actions of an adult towards a child, the Registered Manager/Head Teacher, Deputy Manager/Senior Teacher, Assistant Directors, or Chief Executive Officer (i.e. whichever is designated to deal with the situation) should report it to the Local Authority Designated Officer within one working day. Referral should not be delayed in order to gather information and a failure to report an allegation or concern in accordance with procedures is a potential disciplinary matter.

If an allegation requires immediate attention, but is received outside normal office hours, Brighton & Hove Social Care Emergency Duty Team should be contacted and/or consulted, or the local Police, and inform the L.A.D.O.

without delay at the start of the next working day.

2. The Legal Framework

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 sets out a child-centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding in which the two key principles for effective safeguarding arrangements are defined as;

1. Safeguarding Children is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective, each professional and organisation should play their full part
2. A Child-Centred Approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

The Government has defined the term Safeguarding Children in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 as, "the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm". It is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy and procedure as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

3. Recognition Of Abuse And Neglect: The Concept Of Significant Harm

The Children Act 1989 provides the legal framework for defining the situations in which a local authority has a duty to make enquiries about what, if any, action to take to safeguard or promote a child's welfare.

Section 47 of the Act requires that if a local authority has "reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives or is found in their area is suffering or is likely to suffer Significant Harm, the authority shall make, or cause to be made, such enquiries as they consider necessary..."

In Section 31 Children Act 1989 as amended by the Adoption and Children Act 2002:

- 'Harm' means ill treatment, or the impairment of health or development, including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another
- 'Development' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development - 'Health' includes physical and mental health
- 'Ill treatment' includes Sexual Abuse and forms of ill treatment, which are not physical
- Where the question of whether harm suffered by the child is significant turns on the child's health and development, the child's health and development must be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child.

There are no absolute criteria on which to rely to determine what constitutes Significant Harm. It is often a compilation of significant events, both acute and longstanding, which impact on the child's physical and psychological development. The relevant external professionals (e.g. L.A.D.O., Social Worker, Police etc.) must consider all the circumstances when determining whether a referral about abuse and / or neglect to a child satisfies the criteria for a section 47 Enquiry.

4. Main Categories And Definitions Of Abuse And Neglect

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may cause or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family, or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2017) includes definitions of the four broad categories of abuse which are used for the purposes of recognition: The Lioncare Group has included a fifth category (Bullying);

- **Physical Abuse:** Actual physical injury or failure to prevent injury or suffering of the child - some acts of physical abuse may not be present as visible injuries.
- **Emotional Abuse:** A persistent attitude or pattern of behaviour by a carer towards a child that has severe adverse effects upon the child's social, psychological and/or intellectual development.
- **Sexual Abuse:** The involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not fully comprehend in which they are unable to give informed consent. The abuse occurs for the sexual gratification of the abuser.
- **Neglect:** The persistent or severe neglect or failure to protect a child from exposure to danger or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.
- **Bullying:** Deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical, verbal, and emotional.

These categories overlap, and an abused child does frequently suffer more than one type of abuse. The following provides definitions of these categories and information to help identify potential abuse and neglect and the required response.

4a. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child. This unusual and potentially dangerous form of abuse is described as fabricated or induced illness in a child.

4b. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse involves the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of Emotional Abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

4c. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the Internet). Sexual Abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of Sexual Abuse, as can their children.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 introduced a range of new sexual offences designed to address all inappropriate activity with children. Child Sexual Abuse includes:

- Rape: vaginal, anal or oral penetration committed by a male on a female or male without consent (this is the only sexual offence that can be committed exclusively by a man, as the penetration must be by a penis)
- Sexual assault by penetration: penetration of the vagina or anus with a part of the body or anything else (this is a new offence that replaces indecent assault and recognises the seriousness of penetration)

- Sexual assault: touching a person sexually without consent (this also replaces the offence of indecent assault and covers non-penetrative touching of a victim and would include fondling, masturbation, digital penetration and oral genital contact)
- Sexual activity with a child: a person 18 or over intentionally sexually touching a child under 16 (this offence replaces the offences of indecent assault and unlawful sexual intercourse - a separate offence deals with the situation where both persons involved are under 18 and reduces the penalty); these offences include situations where there is consent between the parties; where this consent exists, and the parties are of a similar age, it is not anticipated that any criminal proceedings will take place
- Causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity: a person aged 18 or over making a child under 16 commit a sexual act on another person (including making a child touch the offender)
- Other forms of sexual activity e.g. taking indecent photographs of children or exposing children to abusive images of children

In law, children under 16 years of age cannot consent to any sexual activity occurring, although in practice children and young people may be involved in sexual contact to which, as individuals, they may have agreed. Children under 13 years cannot in law under any circumstances consent to sexual activity and specific offences, including rape, exist for child victims under this age.

4d. Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once the child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food and clothing, shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers
- Ensure access appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Severe neglect of young children is associated with major impairment of growth and intellectual development. Persistent neglect can lead to serious impairment of health and development, long-term difficulties with social functioning, relationships and educational progress. Neglect can also result, in extreme cases, in death.

5. Risk Indicators

The factors described in this section are frequently found in cases of child abuse. Their presence is not proof that abuse has occurred, but:

- Must be regarded as indicators of possible Significant Harm;
- Must prompt the professional to seek further information;
- Justify the need for careful assessment and discussion with designated / named / lead person, manager, (or in the absence of all those individuals, an experienced colleague);
- May require consultation with and/or referral to Children's Social Care - see the Making a Referral Procedure.

In an abusive relationship the child may:

- Appear frightened of the parent(s);
- Act in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development (though full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups).

The parent or carer may:

- Persistently avoid child health services and treatment of the child's illnesses;
- Have unrealistic expectations of the child;
- Frequently complain about / to the child and fail to provide attention or praise (a high criticism / low warmth

environment);

- Be absent;
- Be misusing substances;
- Persistently refuse to allow access on home visits;
- Be involved in domestic violence;
- Be socially isolated.

Consideration must be given to the impact on the care of the child of any issues / problems affecting the parents e.g. substance misuse, mental health problems, learning disabilities, childhood experiences of severe neglect.

All adults employed by The Lioncare Group should be aware of the potential risk to children when individuals, previously known or suspected to have abused children, are reintroduced to the child e.g. through new contact arrangements or have or have potential opportunity to have substantial access to the child e.g. if a child begins to have unsupervised contact with another family member or overnight stays with a family member or friend of the family. In such situations there must be robust and effective multi-agency risk management in place, in relation to known offenders and those who pose a risk to the child.

It should be recognised that those who pose a risk to children often will not be honest with others. Adults employed by The Lioncare Group should be mindful of this. Of particular note are carers who present a risk due to either fabricating or inducing illnesses within the children they are responsible for.

6. Recognising Physical Abuse

This section provides information about the sites and characteristics of physical injuries that may be observed in abused children. It is intended primarily to assist those caring for the children placed with The Lioncare Group in the recognition of bruises, burns and bites which require medical assessment and/or that should be referred to external professionals (e.g. the police, L.A.D.O., and/or Social Worker). The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury
- Several different explanations provided for an injury
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment
- Parents / carers who are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury
- Parents who are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (which may represent a 'cry for help' and if ignored could lead to a more serious injury) or may represent fabricated or induced illness
- Family use of different doctors and A&E departments
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries

Bruising

Children can have accidental bruising, but the following must be considered as highly suspicious of a non-accidental injury unless there is an adequate explanation provided and experienced medical opinion sought:

- Any bruising or other soft tissue injury to a pre-crawling/pre-walking infant or non-mobile disabled child
- Bruising in or around the mouth, particularly in small babies which may indicate force feeding
- 2 simultaneous bruised eyes, without bruising to the forehead, (rarely accidental, though a single bruised eye can be accidental or abusive)
- Repeated or multiple bruising on the head, or on sites unlikely to be injured accidentally;
- The outline of an object used e.g. belt marks, hand prints or a hair brush (a pinch causes small double bruises, a punch or kick causes an irregular bruise with a paler centre, gripping causes ovals from fingertips or lines between fingers);

- Linear pink marks, haemorrhages or pale scars may be caused by ligature, especially at wrists, ankles, neck, male genitalia;
- Bruising or tears around, or behind, the earlobe(s) indicating injury by pulling or twisting;
- Bruising around the face;
- Broken teeth and mouth injuries (a torn frenulum - the flap of tissue in the midline under the upper lip - is highly suspicious);
- Grasp marks on small children;
- Bruising on the arms, buttocks and thighs may be an indicator of Sexual Abuse.

Bruises are difficult to age accurately because they change colour at differing rates.

Bite Marks

- Bite marks can leave clear impressions of the teeth. Human bite marks are oval or crescent shaped. Those over 3 cm in diameter are more likely to have been caused by an adult or older child.

A medical opinion from a forensic dentist or orthodontist should be sought where there is any doubt over the origin of the bite.

Burns and Scalds

It can be difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns and scalds, and will always require experienced medical opinion. Any burn with a clear outline may be suspicious e.g.:

- Circular burns from cigarettes are characteristically punched out lesions 0.6 - 0.7 cm in diameter, and healing, usually leaves a scar;
- Friction burns resulting from being dragged;
- Linear burns from hot metal rods or electrical fire elements;
- Burns of uniform depth over a large area;
- Scalds that have a line indicating immersion or poured liquid (a child getting into hot water of her/his own accord will struggle to get out and cause splash marks);
- Old scars indicating previous burns / scalds which did not have appropriate treatment or adequate explanation.

Scalds to the buttocks of a small child, particularly in the absence of burns to the feet, are indicative of dipping into a hot liquid or bath.

Fractures

Fractures may cause pain, swelling and discolouration over a bone or joint. Non-mobile children rarely sustain fractures. There are grounds for concern if:

- The history provided is vague, non-existent or inconsistent with the fracture type;
- There are multiple fractures or old fractures (in the absence of major trauma, birth injury or underlying bone disease);
- Medical attention is sought after a period of delay when a fracture has caused symptoms e.g. swelling, pain or loss of movement;
- There is an unexplained fracture in the first year of life.

Scars

A large number of scars or scars of different sizes or ages, or on different parts of the body, may suggest abuse.

Shaken Baby Syndrome

Shaking a baby often results in no visible injury. Nevertheless, significant internal injuries may be caused, e.g. intra-cranial bleeding, brain injury, small fractures to the ends of the long bones, other fractures (such as ribs and neck) and retinal haemorrhages. Signs and symptoms can be non-specific, which may result in a delay in seeking advice. The infant can present with:

- Lethargy
- Poor feeding
- Vomiting
- Stops in breathing
- Pallor
- Variable consciousness
- Irritability
- Convulsions

In suspected cases it is essential that an ophthalmological examination and skeletal survey are carried out.

Self-Harming and Siblings

Caution must be used when interpreting an explanation by parents/carers that an injury or series of injuries was self-inflicted or caused by a sibling. This is especially important in young or disabled children not able to offer a reliable explanation themselves. Due consideration must be given to the possibility that the injury may:

- a. Be non-accidental, particularly if the explanation appears discrepant for the nature of the injury;
- b. Possibly have occurred in circumstances where neglect is a consideration.

In these circumstances a referral to the L.A.D.O. should be made in accordance with the recognised procedures.

7. Recognising Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse may be difficult to recognise, as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. Indicators of Emotional Abuse are also often associated with other forms of abuse. Recognition of Emotional Abuse is usually based on observations over time and the following offer some associated indicators:

Parent / Carer and Child Relationship Factors

- Abnormal attachment between a child and parent / carer e.g. anxious, indiscriminate or failure to attach;
- Persistent negative comments about the child or 'scape-goating' within the family;
- Inappropriate or inconsistent expectations of the child e.g. over-protection or limited exploration.

Child Presentation Concerns

- Delay in achieving developmental, cognitive and / or other educational milestones;
- Failure to thrive / faltering growth;
- Behavioural problems e.g. aggression, attention seeking;
- Frozen watchfulness, particularly in preschool children;
- Low self-esteem, lack of confidence, fearful, distressed, anxious;
- Poor relationships with peers, including withdrawn or isolated behaviour.

Parent / Carer Related Issues

- Dysfunctional family relationships including domestic violence;
- Parental problems that may lead to lack of awareness of child's needs e.g. mental illness, substance misuse, learning difficulties;
- Parent or carer emotionally or psychologically distant from the child;
- Contextual factors may include:
 - Child left unsupervised / unattended;
 - Child left with multiple carers;
 - Child regularly late attending, or, not being collected from school;

- Child repeatedly reported lost / missing;
- Parent/carer regularly unaware of child's whereabouts;
- Child regularly not available for meetings with childcare workers.

8. Recognising Sexual Abuse

Boys and girls of all ages may be sexually abused and are frequently scared to say anything due to guilt and/or fear. This is particularly difficult for a child to talk about and full account should be taken of the cultural sensitivities of any individual child / family.

Recognition can be difficult, unless the child discloses and is believed. There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional / behavioural. Evidence of neglect is built up over a period of time and can cover different aspects of parenting.

Where there are any concerns about the neglect of a child in a household, consideration must be given to the possibility that other children in the household may also be at risk of neglect or abuse.

Behavioural Indicators

- Inappropriate sexualised conduct;
- Sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate to the child's age;
- Continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation;
- Self-harm (including eating disorder), self-mutilation and suicide attempts;
- Involvement in prostitution or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners;
- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes for - e.g. sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties);
- Running away.

Physical Indicators

- Pain or itching of genital area;
- Vaginal discharge;
- Sexually transmitted infections;
- Blood on underclothes;
- Pregnancy;
- Physical symptoms e.g. injuries to genital or anal area, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted infection, presence of semen on vagina, anus, external genitalia or clothing.

9. Recognising Neglect

Evidence of neglect is built up over a period of time and can cover different aspects of parenting.

Child Related Indicators

- An unkempt, inadequately clothed, dirty or smelly child;
- A child who is perceived to be frequently hungry;
- A child who is observed to be listless, apathetic and unresponsive with no apparent medical cause; displaying anxious attachment; aggression or indiscriminate friendliness;
- Failure of a child to grow or develop within normal expected patterns with an accompanying weight loss or speech / language delay;
- Recurrent / untreated infections or skin conditions e.g. severe nappy rash, eczema or persistent head lice / scabies;
- Unmanaged / untreated health / medical conditions including poor dental health;
- Frequent accidents or injuries;
- A child frequently absent from or late at school;
- Poor self-esteem;
- A child who thrives away from the home environment.

Indicators in the Care Provided

- Failure by parents or carers to meet basic essential needs e.g. adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene, sleep;
- Failure by parents or carers to meet the child's health and medical needs e.g. poor dental health, failure to attend or keep appointments with health visitor, GP or hospital, lack of GP registration, failure to seek or comply with appropriate medical treatment;
- A dangerous or hazardous home environment including failure to use home safety equipment, risk from animals;
- Poor state of home environment e.g. unhygienic facilities, lack of appropriate sleeping arrangements, inadequate ventilation (including passive smoking) and lack of adequate heating
- A lack of opportunities for child to play and learn;
- Child left with adults who are intoxicated or violent;
- Child abandoned or left alone for excessive periods;
- Neglect of pets.

Where there are any concerns about the neglect of a child in a household, consideration must be given to the possibility that other children in the household may also be at risk of neglect or abuse.

10. Obesity

Obesity in children is an increasingly common problem in the general population and differentiating when there is a Safeguarding issue can be difficult and complex. Neglect can result in poor supervision of food intake, or an inappropriate diet being offered to the child with resultant excessive weight gain. A sedentary lifestyle with limited opportunity for physical activity, when combined with an inappropriate diet, can result in excessive weight gain. It is important to take into account:

- a. The impact of the obesity on the child, particularly evidence that the child is developing medical complications (e.g. undue breathlessness), restrictions in day-to-day activities or social/emotional difficulties as a result of their obesity;
- b. The context / is there other evidence of emotional harm or neglect.

Excessive calorie intake is the cause of most childhood obesity. In a very small proportion of obese children there is an underlying medical cause. The parent/carer is responsible for monitoring their child's diet and seeking appropriate advice/support if the child or adolescent is overweight or obese. The management of obesity in children therefore requires parental engagement to enable and support their child to adopt healthy eating patterns, participate in age-appropriate levels of physical activity and attend medical and dietetic appointments as necessary. Parental failure to engage with an appropriate management plan in a child who is severely obese and/or is developing serious complications of obesity should be considered a safeguarding issue.