**SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

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## Policy Statement:

This document describes the policy of Silver Line Homes (SLH)-Purley on Safeguarding Children, for whom the service might have some responsibility. It should be linked to the policies and procedures of the local Safeguarding Children’s Board, which will reflect a commitment to the Government’s strategy as described in its current [*Working Together to Safeguard Children*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2) guidance; and **Children’s Homes (England) 2015 Regulation 34***: Policies for the protection of children* and Regulation 40 (Notification of Serious Event), this policy expresses the specific responsibilities to ensuring safeguarding needs are met of all children or young people placed with SLH-Purley.

## Principles

This document is based on the conviction that:

* the children we encounter in the course of providing services may be at risk of abuse or harm in various forms
* abuse may be committed by the staff of external agencies providing support or by others who could be in a trusting relationship with a child
* SLH-Purley has a duty to do everything possible to prevent abuse, but also to report and address it wherever we meet it.

## Procedures

## Recognising abuse

It is the duty of all members of staff to be vigilant regarding the welfare of all children with whom we have contact in the course of providing support. Staff likely to be in contact with all children and their families will be trained to recognise the signs of abuse when they occur and to respond in accordance with national and local child protection policies and procedures.

## Categories of abuse

The following are brief definitions from NSPCC, more detail can be found at: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/>;

## Bullying and Cyberbullying

Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere; at school, home and/or online. It is usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically or emotionally.

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying in the real world, online bullying can follow the young person wherever they go, via social networks, gaming and mobile phone.

## Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of [***sexual abuse***](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-sexual-abuse/). When a young person is exploited, they are given things like gifts, drugs, money, status and affection, in exchange for performing sexual activities. Children and Young Persons are often tricked into believing they are in a loving and consensual relationship. This is called [***grooming***](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/grooming/). They may trust their abuser and not understand that they are being abused.

Anybody can be a perpetrator of CSE, no matter their age, gender or race. The relationship can be framed as friendship, someone to look up to or romantic. Children who are exploited may also be used to ‘find’ or ‘coerce’ others to join groups.

## Child Criminal Exploitation

Criminal exploitation is child abuse where children are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes.

## Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. It can seriously harm children and witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse. It's important to remember domestic abuse:

* can happen inside and outside the home;
* can happen over the phone, on the internet and on social networking sites;
* can happen in any relationship and can continue even after the relationship has ended; and
* both men and women can be abused or abusers.

## Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It is sometimes called psychological abuse. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore a child.

**Female genital mutilation (FGM)**

FGM is when a female’s genitals are deliberately altered or removed for non-medical reasons. It is also known as ‘female circumcision’ or ‘cutting’ but has many other names.

**Grooming**

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them.

Children who are groomed can be ***sexually abused***, ***exploited*** or ***trafficked***.

Anybody can be a groomer, no matter their age, gender or race. Grooming can take place over a short or long period of time; from weeks to years. Groomers may also build a relationship with the child’s family or friends to make them seem trustworthy or authoritative.

**Neglect**

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child’s basic needs and the most common form of child abuse[*2*](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/neglect/#pageref39749). A child might be left hungry or dirty, or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision or health care. This can put children in danger, and it can also have long term effects on their physical and mental wellbeing.

**Non-recent abuse**

Non-recent child abuse, sometimes called historical abuse, is when an adult was abused as a child under the age of 18. Sometimes adults who were abused in childhood blame themselves or are made to feel that it is their fault, but this is never the case: **there is no excuse for abuse**.

**Online abuse**

Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen across any device that is connected to the web, like computers, table and mobile phones and can happen anywhere online, including:

* social media;
* text messages and messages apps;
* emails;
* online chats;
* online gaming; and
* live-streaming sites.

Children can be at risk of online abuse from people they know or from strangers. It might be part of other abuse which is taking place offline, like bullying or grooming, or the abuse might only happen online.

**Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is when someone hurts or harms a child on purpose. It includes:

* hitting hands or objects
* slapping and punching
* kicking
* shaking
* throwing
* poisoning
* burning and scalding
* biting and scratching
* breaking bones
* drowning

It is important to remember that physical abuse is any way of intentionally causing physical harm to a child. It also includes making up the symptoms of an illness or causing a child to become unwell.

**Sexual abuse**

When a child is sexually abused, they are forced or tricked into sexual activities. They might not understand that what’s happening is abuse or that it is wrong and maybe afraid to tell someone. Sexual abuse can happen anywhere; it can happen in person or online.

It is never a child’s fault when they are sexually abused, it is important to make sure children/young people know this.

**Online Bullying and Grooming**

All children and young people placed with SLH-Purley are informed of the acceptable behaviour within their Children’s guide. Staff must ensure that all children are informed through Key working and workshops of the signs of bullying and grooming as well as supporting them to be able to report bullying and grooming.

Where it has been identified that there are concerns to online bullying or grooming, staff must inform management and relevant individuals working with the child.

To support prevention of online bullying and grooming and promote online safety internet connections within the accommodation have age restricted access coupled with the use of computers solely for educational and developmental purposes or supervised use.

**Reporting concerns of abuse**

The general principle is that **all safeguarding concerns and any disclosures\*** must be reported.

All children must be listened to and enabled to report any abuse or neglect at the earliest opportunity and should be supported by staff to understand what abuse is. They should be given information about how to report abuse or how to share any concerns about possible abuse. This should include being able to access in private, relevant websites or help lines such as Childline (<https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/>) to seek advice and help.

The following actions should be taken when there is any concern or, disclosure about the welfare of a child. This includes non-recent or historical abuse that may have occurred at some time in the past and may not have been previously reported or investigated.

Harm can be perpetrated by any person, including:

* Another child or young person (including serious or persistent bullying);
* A member of staff, or manager, see additional procedures;
* A visitor or person in the community;
* A teacher, social worker or other professional;
* A parent or other family member.

***\**** *Disclosures made as part of a therapeutic intervention or counselling session should also be reported, unless there is clear, written evidence in the child's file that the matter has been formally dealt with.*

**Online Safety**

Staff will work with the young person to comply with the basic SMART rules of online safety.

* **S = Safe**. Keep safe by being careful not to give out personal information — such as your name, e-mail, phone number, home address, or school/college name — to people who you do not know online.
* **M = Meeting**. Meeting someone you have only been in touch with online can be dangerous. Staff will discourage any young person from meeting strangers they have met online and explain the dangers of doing so.
* **A = Accepting**. Accepting e-mails, instant messenger messages or opening files from people you don’t know or trust can be dangerous; they might contain viruses or nasty messages.
* **R = Reliable**. Someone online might be lying about who they are; and information you find on the Internet might not be reliable.
* **T = Tell**. Tell staff, social worker, your parent or a trusted adult if someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable or worried.

Where staff considers that these above rules are not being followed or are being abuse they should discuss the issue with the Manager, who will report any concerns to the Safeguarding Lead, who will attempt to address any issues that could compromise the child’s safety and wellbeing.

Any staff member who encourages or colludes with a child to engage in illegal or inappropriate internet usage and/or puts the child at risk of harm as a result of their lack of supervision or collusion will face disciplinary action, which could lead to dismissal and referral to the current disclosure and barring service as someone who might not be suitable to be employed to work with vulnerable children.

### Filtering and monitoring

Putting in place effective filtering and monitoring systems are a way SLH-Purley can help safeguard children from harmful online material and provide a safe environment. Filtering restricts access to online content, while monitoring allows user activity to be reviewed.

In England, the Department for Education’s (DfE’s) [filtering and monitoring standards](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/filtering-and-monitoring-standards-for-schools-and-colleges) for schools and colleges provides further detail about the systems schools should have in place, including:

* a filtering system that blocks internet access to inappropriate and harmful content. The system should not excessively restrict the day-to-day needs of the school or stop students learning how to recognise risk themselves
* an effective monitoring strategy that allows incidents to be quickly recognised and recorded
* clearly identified roles and responsibilities for staff and third parties. This should include assigning a member of the senior leadership team and a governor to be responsible for ensuring the standards are met
* regular reviews (at least annually) of the filtering and monitoring provision to check that systems are working as expected

**Recording**

Staff should firstly make their report to the home's Registered Manager or Designated Safeguarding Officer and ensure that the child is not asked questions which are misleading. Staff must ensure that all written reports of disclosure have the following included:

* Discussion with the child (in their words)
* Discussion with parents (if relevant)
* Discussions with management
* Information provided by placing authority and the Police
* Decisions taken.
* Times, dates clearly noted and signed

A copy of the written report should be securely kept and filed in a password protected file/folder.

**Keeping Records**

All details associated with allegations of abuse will be recorded clearly and accurately. The record will be securely kept and the agency’s rules on confidentiality carefully followed. Reports will be made available as required to LADO.

**Notifying Relevant Individuals**

In accordance with Regulation 40 a specified list of individuals working with the child must be notified of serious events.

Examples of incidents that are to be shared with relative individuals are those that are likely to affect the welfare of the child. The manager must assess each case individually. The manager must ensure the following are notified (where relevant):

* The Local Authority Children's Social Care Services in whose area the home is located (LADO);
* The social worker;
* Police;
* Ofsted (Notification of Serious Event – Reg 40)
* Any other relevant person

In an emergency, where there is an immediate risk to the child, staff must take necessary action. This may involve asking for Police assistance or seeking emergency medical assistance e.g., taking the child to hospital or contacting the emergency services via 999. If the child is taken to hospital or the Police are called, staff must inform them that there is a suspicion of abuse or harm. Thereafter staff must notify the manager (or another agency) as described above.

Once notified, the Registered Manager will be responsible for following Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and making a referral to the Local Authority Children's Social Care Services.

**Receiving concerns in relation to Abuse or Harm**

When a staff member sees, hears or is told anything that causes them to become concerned that a child or young person is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, they must report it immediately - as described above.

Children will sometimes disclose abuse to an adult who they have come to feel they can trust. If a child discloses abuse it is important that staff respond appropriately by remaining calm and receptive; listening without interrupting; only asking questions for clarification and acknowledging the child's courage in telling.

It is not the staff member’s responsibility to investigate or in any way make judgements about what is reported to them. Investigations, if necessary, must be undertaken by the Police; Children’s Social Care and OFSTED.

If a disclosure or allegation of abuse or harm has been made, staff should discuss with the child or other person who has made the complaint what steps they would like taken to protect them and their wishes should be shared and, if not in conflict with procedures, followed.

Where the allegation or disclosure is of a non-recent or historical nature, e.g., relating to abuse or harm that may have been perpetrated in another placement or by family members, allegations must be taken seriously and must be reported in the same way as any other allegation.

Staff must not give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to those who report possible abuse or harm, but they should guarantee that they will take steps to ensure that appropriate action is taken, and the child or young person protected.

If an allegation or any suspicion is about the behaviour, past or present of another member of staff, including managers, which may in any way put children at risk, staff must follow the Allegation Against Staff and Volunteers’ Policy & Procedure.

Staff **must** make a written record as soon as possible of what they have been told, any questions they asked, and the replies given and the actions taken and by whom. They must then give the report to the Registered Manager/Safeguarding Lead.

This information should be placed on the child’s record except where a colleague is implicated or there is any risk to the child as a result, in which case notes/records should be given to the manager dealing with the matter.

Staff should not discuss the matter with others, including other staff, parents etc. unless asked to do so by those responsible for dealing any subsequent investigation or enquiry.

**Allegations Made Against Staff**

Where a member of the staffing team is alleged to have harmed a child, it is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to deal with the coordination which includes liaising with LADO within 24 hours of being notified to ascertain how the allegation will be managed in relation to a Child Protection Investigation. Children should be made to feel that their allegation is being treated seriously and informed on how it will be managed.

[**Please refer to the Allegations against Staff and Volunteer Policy**].

**Action in emergency situations**

If the situation is an emergency, with a child in immediate danger, support staff should take urgent action to intervene and call for assistance as soon as possible. They should give any necessary first aid and contact appropriate emergency services if necessary. If the abuser remains present, staff should seek to calm the situation. Staff has a right to avoid putting themselves at risk of violence or other harm.

**Immediate action to be taken by managers**

When the Registered Manager receives a report of suspected, imminent or actual abuse of a child, an internal investigation should be opened as soon as possible but care should be taken not to prejudice any action to be taken by police or social services. If the suspected abuser is a member of staff, the Manager should initiate appropriate steps under the Disciplinary Procedure. Staff will take all possible steps to co-operate with further investigations by LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer); Social Services or the Police.

**Referral to Children’s Services/Local Safeguarding Children Board**

Alongside any internal enquiry and action, the situation should be reported without delay to the local authority designated officer (LADO) and/or Safeguarding Children Board (or where in operation, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH))/OFSTED, which will carry out its own investigation under local procedures, involving other agencies as necessary.

**Reporting to the police**

If it is suspected that a criminal act might have been committed, the situation should be reported to the police. Every effort should be made not to interfere with possible evidence.

**Accidents and Injuries**

Where an accident has occurred or an injury has been sustained, the first point of action is to ensure that the environment is safe for the children and staff. Where first aiders can administer support, they must. However, staff must identify whether emergency medical attention is required and seek for relevant support. All accidents and injuries must be recorded in the Accident and Injuries book which is stored in the office. Where injuries are potentially sustained through alleged abuse this must be documents where possible. All accidents and injuries must be reported to the relevant individuals as stated in Notifying Relevant Individuals section of policy.

**Admission Criteria including Emergency Referrals**

Prior to placing of any child, a risk assessment will be undertaken as to ensure that relevant risks pertaining to safeguarding issues can be identified and do not place safeguarding concerns on children or young people who are already placed within the accommodation. It is required that risk assessments are carried out for all potential children or young people being placed with SLH-Purley including emergency referrals. [**Please refer to Admission and Referral Policy for a full breakdown of the admissions process**].

In the case of emergency referrals, it will be a requirement for arrangements for potential imminent safeguarding concerns and support in place until a placement planning meeting is held with must be within 72 hours of the child being placed.

**Contact details**

The contact details of relevant organisation’s are as follows:

1. Silver Line Homes - Purley Child Protection Safeguarding Lead:

**tbc**. Email: tbc

1. Local Authority Designated Officer (Croydon): [lado@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:lado@croydon.gov.uk) |

Steve Hall (LADO) 020 8726 6000 ext. 24334 | Mobile: 07825 830328

Jane Parr (LADO)  020 8726 6000 ext. 24817 | Mobile: 07716 092630

**Action to be taken in the absence of further evidence**

In instances where an investigation by the local children’s safeguarding services, police or others against a member of staff of this service is inconclusive, the appropriate manager should nevertheless proceed with an internal investigation within the disciplinary policy, should take any necessary steps to safeguard the child as far as possible, and should keep the situation under review in case it becomes possible or necessary to take further action.

**Safe Spaces and Use of CCTV**

As part of The Protection Standard and to support the development of semi-independent skills all accommodations are fitted with CCTV. CCTV has been strategically placed to ensure that children and young people remain safe whilst keeping privacy and dignity. This means that all cameras are only placed in communal areas. CCTV will not be positioned within services users safe spaces, e.g. bedrooms and bathrooms.

Instances where alleged abuse committed within the home has been disclosed, CCTV will also provide strong evidence towards potential investigations.

Please refer to CCTV policy regarding the sharing of CCTV footage with third parties.

CCTV is only accessible by the Manager and Responsible individual.

**Recruitment**

The service takes great care in the safe recruitment of staff, carries out all possible checks on recruits to ensure that they are of a high standard and will co-operate in all government initiatives regarding the sharing of information on staff who are found to be unsuitable to be involved in work which brings them into contact with children. All staff who have been recruited are subject to the following prior to commencing permanent employment:

* Enhanced DBS
* Signed up with DBS Update service
* 2 x Satisfactory references (one being the most recent employer)
* Checks on registers such as being barred from working with children.
* Induction Training Programme
* Fortnightly supervisions during probation period

Interviews for all staff is conducted by two members of staff coupled with questions to ensure that hires are of a quality standard.

[**Please refer to Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy**]

**Professional Boundaries**

Professional Boundaries help maintain the necessary relationships whilst working with children and young people. SLH-Purley aims to support all staff to demonstrate professional boundaries by adopting the following practices:

* **Personal Information –** There must not be sharing of personal information between staff and the children or young people such as personal phone numbers and social media.
* **Person Centered Support –** The child or young persons’ needs should always be at the forefront of any decisions.
* **Focused Relationships** – ensuring that the children/young people and staffing team do not have any additional relationships outside of the service.

**Guidance around physical contact**

There should be **no physical contact** between staff and children / young people unless to provide first aid or other health and safety reasons.

All staff are informed of the expected standard in relation to professional boundaries in their employers’ handbook as well as training within their induction.

[**Please refer to Professional Boundaries Policy**].

### Government guidance

SLH-Purley is committed to working within current government guidance on multi-agency policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

## Training

All staff are subject to undertaking induction training which includes Safeguarding and identifying signs of abuse. It is expected that each member of staff to have completed all relevant induction training within a three-month period. All staff will be trained in child protection and safeguarding and in carrying out their responsibilities under this policy this includes job specific training in areas such as Child Criminal/Sexual Exploitation and Missing. tbc will be responsibility for training – which will be updated as and when required.

Safeguarding and child protection related training will be undertaken by staff every two years and refresher training delivered annually.

## Reviewing and Monitoring

To ensure that child protection policies are working effectively they must be reviewed and updated annually or if there are changes such as legislation or organisational procedures. This is the responsibility of the Responsible Individual and Manager. All policies and procedures reflect when they were updated and the next planned review.

**Staff Signed**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Dated**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Manager signed**:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_