

# RSPCA Cornwall Branch Child & Adult Safeguarding Policy & Procedure



Policy Review Date: 19th January 2027

## Contents

### 1.0 Introduction:

*1.1 Policy Statement of Intent 1.2 Scope 1.3 Equality Statement 1.4 Relevant Policy, Guidelines and Legislation 4 1.5 Questions about this policy*

### 2.0 Roles and Responsibilities

*2.1 Key Safeguarding Team Contacts 2.2 Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities*

### 3.0 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

### 4.0 Recognising Abuse and Taking Action

*4.1 General principles 4.2 Raising a Safeguarding Concern: 4.3 Handling Disclosures*

### 5.0 E-Safety

### 6.0 Concerns About a Staff Member or Volunteer

### 7.0 Whistleblowing

### 8.0 Safer Recruitment

### 9.0 Induction and Training

### 10.0 Monitoring Systems

### 11.0 Additional Resources and Information

### 12.0 Policy Review Date

*Appendices Appendix 1: Categories of Abuse Appendix 2: Adults with support and care needs Appendix 3: Accidental vs. Likely Abusive Injuries Appendix 4: Relevant Legislation*

# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Policy Statement of Intent

The RSPCA Cornwall Branch (Charity Number 1024808) upholds the belief that the welfare of all children, young people and adults with support and care needs is of paramount importance, as legislated in England and Wales. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures to be followed by all those who work or volunteer for or with the branch and organisations working with the branch. This is to ensure the safety of all children, young people and adults with support and care needs, when they attend, access or have contact with any of the services and activities offered by the branch.

All those who work or volunteer for or with our charity have an obligation for safeguarding children, young people and adults with support and care needs in their area of work and it is important that these groups are listened to and any concerns in relation to their welfare are acted upon promptly.

The branch is committed to ensuring that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and will actively promote the welfare of all children, young people and adults with support and care needs by working to the appropriate safeguarding standards across all its services, activities and assets.

Our branch is subject to charity law and regulated by the Charity Commission for England and Wales. The charity's Trustees (Board of Trustees) are responsible for ensuring that those benefiting from or working with the branch, are not harmed in any way through contact with it. We have a zero-tolerance policy for any abusive or harassing behaviour across all activities.

All those who work or volunteer for us will have a clear understanding of what is required by this policy and supporting documentation and of what to do if they have any concerns.

No representative of the branch will prejudice their own position or standing with the branch by responsibly reporting potential or suspected abuse.

We will work with all relevant regulatory bodies, including Local Authorities, the Charity Commission and other local and national bodies to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are robust, current and fit for purpose. The branch will cooperate with all inspection and scrutiny of its safeguarding arrangements as appropriate.

All those who work or volunteer for or with the branch will be given access to this policy.

## **Definition of Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults with support and care needs**

- *Children and Young People*

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is:

- 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; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

- *Adults with support and care needs*

The aims of adult safeguarding are to:

- Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs
- Stop abuse or neglect where possible (including self-neglect)
- Safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live
- Promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults concerned
- Raise public awareness so that communities as a whole, alongside professionals, play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect

### **1.2 Scope**

This policy applies to;

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Trustees
- Placements e.g., internships, work experience, community schemes
- Contractors
- Consultants

### **1.3 Equality Statement**

The branch is committed to all children, young people and adults with support and care needs having the right to the same protection regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We also recognise the additional needs of children, young people and adults with support and care needs from minority ethnic groups and with disabilities and the barriers that they may face, especially around communication. All of the charity's practices will be inclusive of such characteristics and in no way discriminate against them under any circumstance.

### **1.4 Relevant Policy, Guidelines and Legislation**

The policy is in line with the following branch's policies/guidance

- Grievance & Disciplinary

- Disclosures in the Public Interest
- Recruitment Policies - Employee version and Volunteer version

This policy is developed in line with the underpinning key legislation, government and statutory guidance for England and Wales where the branch operates. Details of all such legislation is included in **Appendix 5**.

### 1.5 Questions about this policy

This policy is not intended to cover every situation, and the branch recognises that people may have questions relating to safeguarding. It is our policy to encourage open discussions to ensure that questions can be resolved as quickly as possible.

We recommend that individuals first raise any issues with their Line Manager/Volunteer Coordinator.

For the purposes of governance and review, the named Safeguarding Lead (Trustee or employed Senior Manager) is the 'owner' of this policy.

## 2.0 Roles and Responsibilities

### 2.1 Key Safeguarding Team Contacts

#### Role Name Contact

|                       |                |                                     |
|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Safeguard Lead        | Bec Bayliss    | bec.bayliss@rspcacornwall.org.uk    |
| Deputy Safeguard Lead | Rebecca Wilton | rebecca.wilton@rspcacornwall.org.uk |

### 2.2 Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <b>Role</b> | <p><b>Safeguarding Responsibilities</b></p> <p>Within RSPCA Cornwall Branch, safeguarding leadership is structured to ensure clear operational accountability alongside appropriate senior oversight.</p> <p>The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for the day-to-day operational management of safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people and adults with care and support needs within the Branch. This includes receiving and responding to concerns, making referrals to external agencies where appropriate, maintaining safeguarding records, and acting as the main point of contact for safeguarding matters within their area of responsibility.</p> <p>The Deputy Safeguarding Lead provides senior oversight, support, and escalation, including governance reporting, complex case decision-making, and cover in the absence of the Safeguarding Lead.</p> |
|-------------|--|

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <p><b>The Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead may seek advice and support from suitably experienced colleagues to inform safeguarding practice, while retaining clear accountability for safeguarding decisions.</b></p>   |
| Safeguard Lead  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Acting as the main point of contact for safeguarding concerns relating to children, young people, and adults with care and support needs within the Branch’s services, activities, and programmes.</li> <li>● Receiving, considering, and responding to safeguarding concerns in line with this policy and relevant statutory guidance, ensuring appropriate action is taken in a timely manner.</li> <li>● Making referrals to external agencies, including Children’s Social Care, Adult Social Care, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), or the Police, where thresholds are met, and seeking advice where appropriate.</li> <li>● Ensuring safeguarding concerns are accurately recorded, stored securely, and managed in accordance with data protection and confidentiality requirements.</li> <li>● Providing advice and guidance to staff and volunteers on safeguarding matters, and promoting a culture of vigilance, early identification, and reporting of concerns.</li> <li>● Ensuring safeguarding practice is embedded across the Branch’s work, including risk assessment, safe working practices, and appropriate supervision of activities involving vulnerable individuals.</li> <li>● Liaising with the Deputy Safeguarding Lead on complex cases, serious concerns, or where escalation, senior oversight, or governance input is required.</li> <li>● Drawing on specialist safeguarding expertise within the organisation, where available, to inform safeguarding practice, training, and decision-making, while retaining clear accountability for safeguarding decisions.</li> <li>● Contributing to safeguarding reviews, audits, learning, and external scrutiny processes as required.</li> </ul> |
| All those who line manage and/or recruit staff and volunteers will: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● keep up to date with their Safeguarding duties</li> <li>● recruit and manage staff and volunteers in line with this policy</li> <li>● ensure that they and staff and volunteers adhere to this policy at all times</li> </ul>  |
| All personnel including   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● understand and comply with this policy at all times</li> </ul>   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Trustees, staff, volunteers, contractors and consultants will: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• undertake training offered by the branch</li><li>• report all safeguarding concerns to their Line Manager or branch Safeguard Lead.</li></ul> |
|--|---|



### 3.0 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The branch is mindful of its legal duties under the Data Protection Act 2018. Personal information about children, young people, adults with support and care needs and their families will usually be confidential and should not be disclosed to a third party without the consent of the subject. However, the law allows for the disclosure of confidential information where this is necessary to safeguard a child, young person or adult at risk; or if a crime has, may have been or may be committed, or it is in the public interest. Disclosure of confidential information must be justifiable, according to the particular facts of the case and must be limited to those people who need to know in order to take appropriate action. Staff, volunteers and trustees must never guarantee absolute confidentiality to a child or young person making a disclosure of abuse or neglect.

When making a referral for a child or young person, the parents or carers of the individual should normally be informed. However, their agreement is not required where, either by delay or the behaviour response that it may provoke, it is likely to place a child or young person at increased risk of suffering significant harm. Where a parent or carer declines to agree to a referral, this does not preclude one being made if it is considered to be necessary for protecting a child from harm.

When obtaining the consent of an adult at risk for a referral or alert to social care services it is important to consider the mental capacity of an adult and their ability to give their informed consent to a referral being made. Mental capacity is significant, but not the only factor in deciding what action to take. External professional advice can be sought from [Mind](#) when needed. The test of capacity in this case is to establish if the person at risk has the mental capacity to make a specific informed decision about:

- a safeguarding alert or referral
- actions which may be taken under multi-agency policy and procedures
- their own safety or that of others, including an understanding of longer-term harm as well as immediate effects
- their ability to take action to protect themselves from future harm.

When raising an alert or referral when the adult does not want any action, it is important to consider:

- If the adult has capacity and does not consent to a referral and there are no public or vital interest considerations, they should be given information about where to get help if they change their mind, or if the abuse or neglect continues and they subsequently want support to promote their safety.
- the referrer must assure themselves that the decision to withhold consent is not made under undue influence, coercion or intimidation.
- the adult will need to be informed that an alert will still need to be raised and as a minimum a record must be made of the concern, as well as the adult's decisions with reasons.
- a record should also be made of what information the person at risk was given.

- *Note: Not all adult safeguarding concerns will result in a safeguarding process and an adult may just request signposting to another service.*

## 4.0 Recognising Abuse and Taking Action

### 4.1 General principles

When there are safeguarding concerns about a child, young person or adult at risk the branch staff, volunteer and / or Trustee with the concern will immediately assess if the person is currently safe. In an emergency or, if it is felt someone is in immediate danger, 999 should always be dialled.



Trustees, staff, and volunteers must follow the procedures set out below in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults. Information on recognising the signs of abuse and neglect can be found in **Appendices 1, 2 and 3**.

All personnel within the branch have a role and responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of members of the public, colleagues and visitors.

| Assessment   | Communication  | Recording   | Reporting                   |
|--|--|---|-----------------------------|
| Be holistic and thorough, considering the individuals emotional, social, psychological and physical state. | Listen carefully, remain calm, try not to show shock or disbelief and acknowledge what is being said   | Make a legible, factual, timely and accurate record of what has happened and what you have been told. | Contact the lead or deputy. |
| Is immediate protection required? Has a crime been committed? Are others at risk? If so take action        | Don't ask probing or leading questions<br><br>Be open and honest but don't promise to keep a secret<br><br>Seek consent to share information |   |                             |

#### 4.2 Raising a Safeguarding Concern:

All safeguarding concerns should be raised with the branch's Safeguard Lead (or Deputy if the concern relates to the Safeguard Lead).

#### 4.3 Handling Disclosures:

When there are safeguarding concerns about a child, young person or adult at risk the branch staff member, volunteer and / or Trustee with the concern will immediately assess if the person is currently safe. **In an emergency or, if it is felt someone is in immediate danger, 999 should always be dialled.**

The table below shows the process that should be followed if a child, young person or adult at risk discloses abuse or neglect to you.

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| <b>1</b> | A disclosure may be made in words and/or behaviour by a child, young person or an adult at risk and it is important for everyone to remember the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Keep calm</li> <li>● Reassure the child/young person/adult at risk</li> <li>● Consider who else can hear</li> <li>● Listen carefully</li> <li>● Do not ask leading questions or promise confidentiality</li> <li>● Avoid criticising the alleged perpetrator – this may be somebody known to the young person or adult and so break their trust in you</li> <li>● Record the child/adult's words as accurately</li> </ul> |
| <b>2</b> | Contact your branch Safeguard Lead for support   |
| <b>3</b> | Safeguard Lead to contact appropriate agency to report safeguarding concern - EG LADO, NSPCC, Local Authority Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board   |
| <b>4</b> | Factually record your concerns in writing as soon as possible, on the same day. Including your role within the branch and time, date & sign the written record.  |
| <b>5</b> | Maintain confidentiality at all times, including avoiding discussion with colleagues, family and friends   |

Important: The reliance the Courts will place upon the information obtained from the people involved (particularly from a child) may be reduced if it is known that someone has discussed the issues with the child /adult outside the normal investigation process

**REMEMBER:**

- Do not delay
- Do not investigate the allegation/concern
- Remember, you are responsible for what you do, or choose not to do and should record your decisions accordingly

## **5.0 E-Safety**

All online safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with this policy, particularly in terms of referral and recording procedures.

**Staff and volunteers may become concerned about children, young people and adults with support and care needs if they are:**

- accessing illegal websites or inappropriate "lifestyle" websites for their age and ability
- receiving an unwanted or upsetting text, e-mail, messages or images
- being "groomed" by a responsible adult with a view to meeting the child, young person or adult at risk for their own illegal purposes including sex, drugs, radicalisation or crime
- viewing or receiving socially unacceptable material such as inciting hatred or violence
- sending or receiving bullying messages or posting malicious details about others
- scamming for financial gain
- ignoring copyright law by downloading music or videos
- becoming secretive about where they are going or who they are meeting
- secretive about what they are accessing online
- using a phone or device in a closed area, away from other people
- accessing the web or using a hand-held device for long periods and at all hours
- constantly clearing their browsing history
- receiving unexpected money or gifts from people they meet online
- "sexting", sending sexually inappropriate images of themselves to others

**Staff and volunteers may become concerned about a member of staff, volunteer or Trustee who:**

- befriends or communicates with members of the public who they work with; especially children, young people and adults with support and care needs, using their personal phone or making contact online etc.
- is secretive about what they are doing and who they are meeting
- takes images of branch activities with their personal phone or device without permission of their Line Manager/Coordinator
- does not seek parental permission for taking images of children and young people under 16 years of age
- constantly clearing their browser history
- is viewing adult pornography at work
- is viewing child sexual abuse images at any time
- is promoting discrimination, illegal acts or racial or religious hatred of any kind

- sharing confidential or sensitive information
- is circulating or messaging any information which may be offensive

## **6.0 Concerns About a Staff Member or Volunteer**

The branch will make clear distinctions between a workplace allegation regarding a particular individual, a general complaint about the quality of care or practice, or a safeguarding concern (which specifically relates to children, young persons or adult with support and care needs). Grievance and disciplinary policies are in place, to ensure that all concerns about staff conduct are reported and acted upon in a fair and timely manner. Complaints about volunteers are addressed via the Complaints Procedure.

We will evidence that these procedures are being used appropriately to improve outcomes and that complaints are fully investigated and recorded accurately.

When there is a safeguarding concern, complaint or allegation that a member of staff, volunteer or Trustee has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child or adult at risk
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or adult at risk; or
- behaved towards a child or adult at risk in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to vulnerable groups

In all cases where there have been safeguarding concerns, complaints or allegations raised against a member of staff, volunteer or a trustee, the Safeguard Lead will contact

- For children: The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO, England Only), the children's social care services (Wales) or the Police on 101
- For adults: adult social care services or the Police on 101.

**In the case of an emergency, if it is felt someone is in immediate danger, the police will be contacted on 999**

The appointed Safeguard Lead will:

- ensure the person with the direct concern has factually record their concerns in writing on the same day and include their role within the branch and added the time, date and signed this record
- maintain an accurate and contemporaneous chronology of all discussions held and actions taken
- reports the matter to the Charity Commission as a notifiable incident without delay
- attend possible strategy discussions with the local authority Officers.
- co-operate with any Police investigation
- adhere to the LADO's or social care services' advice regarding implementation of the disciplinary and grievance procedures; media management; communication with other staff and volunteers; safeguarding risk assessments; possible suspension of the member of staff, volunteer or Trustee; for those in regulated activity, referrals to the relevant regulators, including the Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS). Please note, for the latter a referral must be made within 5 days of the closure of the case and be made regardless of whether the staff member, volunteer or Trustee

voluntarily ceases to work with the branch before a formal decision to dismiss or remove from regulated activity.

- ensure that, when advised by the LADO or social care services, the personnel involved are given details of sources of support and made aware of their rights under employment legislation and any internal disciplinary procedures (if applicable).
- ensure the branch complies with any press reporting restrictions
- inform any other interested parties/regulators where needed

The possible outcomes are that allegations are:

- substantiated
- malicious
- false
- unsubstantiated
- unfounded

**IMPORTANT: Personnel files (branch employee/volunteer):** Details of allegations that are found to have been malicious should be removed from personnel records. However, for all other allegations, a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation, details of how this was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken and decisions reached, is kept on the confidential personnel file of the accused, and a copy provided to the person concerned.

The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future request for a reference, where appropriate. It will provide clarification in cases where future DBS checks reveal information from the Police about an allegation that did not result in a criminal conviction and it will help to prevent unnecessary re-investigation if, as sometimes happens, an allegation re-surfaces after a period of time. The record should be retained at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation, whichever is longer.

## 7.0 Whistleblowing

All personnel will know how to whistleblow externally if they have concerns that the branch is not addressing safeguarding issues appropriately and can be in relation to an issue in the past, happening now or something that the whistleblower is concerned may happen in the near future. Whistleblowers may feel unable to raise the matter internally and will never be penalised by the branch for doing so externally.

They can do this by using the RSPCA Cornwall branch Whistleblowing policy or referring directly to social care services or the Police if a crime has or may have been committed.

The Safeguarding Lead will monitor and evidence that the whistleblowing procedures are being used appropriately to improve outcomes and that issues raised by staff and volunteers are fully investigated and recorded accurately.

## 8.0 Safer Recruitment

A growing number of posts within the branch, involve directly supervising or working with children, young people or adults with support and care needs, and many posts involve contact with the general public and give opportunity for staff/volunteers to nurture relationships with vulnerable groups. In order to recognise those at risk and act to protect them all branch staff, volunteers and Trustees will:

- be recruited as safely as possible, proportionate to their job role and contact with vulnerable groups
- receive safeguarding information at the point of induction (within two weeks of appointment), detailing this policy and procedures
- treat all children, young people, adults with support and care needs, their families and carers with respect
- do everything they can to ensure their services are delivered safely and with care
- respond to any safeguarding concerns and allegations appropriately
- understand how to “whistleblow” to external agencies if worried that a safeguarding concern has not been managed appropriately in line with this Policy
- If appropriate to their role, attend child and adult safeguarding training every two years

The branch will meet key safeguarding standards for recruitment with all managers/recruiters understanding and following these standards, focussing upon safeguarding competence as appropriate to job role throughout the process of recruitment and beyond, by:

- strictly adhering to the [DBS Code of Practice](#) and [DBS Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-offenders](#)
- maintaining a central personnel tracking record detailing name, date of birth, address, next of kin, job role, application date, interview dates, references taken up and dates, right to work in the UK checks, documents seen, issue numbers and dates, DBS checks and dates, relevant essential qualifications, health checks (where relevant to role), induction delivered and date, ongoing training records and supervision or appraisal dates as relevant
- carrying out an annual robust analysis of all roles to assess eligibility for DBS checks at standard and enhanced level. The latter is for “regulated activity” and/or “work with children” or “work with adults” and may or may not, include checks against the Children's and Adults' Barred Lists. Additionally, requesting certificates of good conduct from foreign nationals coming to work in the UK and International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) for those who have lived in the UK, and are looking to work or undertake voluntary work abroad. Refer to [NACRO](#) for more detail.
- requesting declarations from applicants for senior charity roles such as Trustees and Branch Managers, that applicants are not disqualified under the Charities Acts from holding such posts. Refer to the [Charity Commission guidance](#) for more detail.
- issuing full and detailed job descriptions including any responsibility for safeguarding as appropriate to job role
- ensuring all advertisements include a statement which confirms the branch's commitment to safeguarding and safer employment
- only using application forms (CVs are not acceptable) including a specific question for posts that are regulated which will need a criminal record check as to whether the applicant has been subject to any investigation or complaint

- requesting written declarations for DBS posts, non-DBS and also those with military experience, and those working abroad or foreign nationals. For staff, working to a template outline for interviewing to cover any gaps in employment, discrepancies of information, rechecking if the applicant wishes to declare anything in the light of the requirement of a criminal records check (where relevant) and to assess if the applicant has capacity to safeguard vulnerable groups if relevant to job role
- For paid roles, carrying out interviews with a minimum of two interviewers and recording notes against the template interview outline
- For all personnel, requesting a minimum of two written references and following up any discrepancies verbally and recording what was said. Where relevant, referees should be asked if they have any concerns or knowledge about the applicant's suitability with vulnerable groups, including any safeguarding investigations and / or disciplinary issues. For paid employment roles, one reference should be direct from the last employer, and another who can comment about the applicant's suitability for the post. When employing agency staff, always taking up references from the last place of employment or seeking assurance from the agency that this has been done
- in accordance with the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, checking the eligibility of all applicants to work in the UK. All applicants are asked to bring along to interview a document to evidence this. This is in the form of either a passport confirming that they are a British citizen or European Economic Area National or a United Kingdom Residence permit. Only original documents must be seen for any check, carefully compared against the application form for discrepancies and the essential details of unique numbers, provider and date of issue should be recorded on the single central staff tracking record
- carrying out criminal records checks as appropriate to the job role and check that applicants for restricted positions such as a charity trustee or relevant charity senior staff are not automatically disqualified.
- not allowing newly appointed staff to start work without a criminal record check in regulated activity without risk assessment and full supervision unless there is documented evidence of an acceptable check
- When a risk is identified on a criminal records check, the branch Safeguarding Lead will ensure the branch's policy for the recruitment of ex-offenders is followed.
- risk assessing any positive information disclosed on a criminal records check, and seeking expert advice from adult or child social care services (the LADO in England for relevant child information) where an applicant has been barred from working with vulnerable groups or there is a concern that s/he may be unsuitable to working directly with vulnerable groups
- ensuring that, in cases where low level information is received on the criminal records check but where the manager nevertheless wishes to appoint, there must be a clear, recorded risk assessment approved by a senior manager
- pursuing any failure to receive an outcome from a checking process and reviewing the employee's position at regular intervals
- making all offers of employment subject to having satisfactory references and any other relevant checks completed within a fair timescale, as appropriate
- ensuring that, in cases where staff goes from work where criminal records checks are not needed into a post which does, a criminal records check is carried out before the member of staff begins work in the new post.

Recruitment- ex-offenders:

- There are many job roles within the branch which are suitable for the engagement of ex-offenders. In all cases the branch is mindful to make fair and accurate risk assessments of the specific offences in relation to the vacant job role in line with the [DBS policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders](#). External professional advice will be sought from UNLOCK or NACRO when needed. Special attention is given to young offenders volunteering in detail here.

Post-recruitment:

- Induction and probationary periods for all staff facilitate the development of understanding and grounding in the safeguarding policies, ethos and culture of the branch
- Both the newly appointed personnel and his/her Line Manager/Coordinator or will make a signed record that this part of the induction process has been completed satisfactorily. The record is kept on the central personnel tracking record
- All personnel receive supervision on a regular basis
- All personnel are offered support with professional issues via one to one meetings with their Line Manager/coordinator as appropriate.

## 9.0 Induction and Training

The branch is clear that all personnel are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and creating an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role.

The branch:

- ensures everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities
- creates strong multi-agency partnerships that provide timely and effective prevention of and responses to abuse or neglect
- supports the development of a positive learning environment across these partnerships and at all levels within them to help break down cultures that are risk-averse and seek to scapegoat or blame practitioners
- facilitates mandatory training to give a sound understanding of key guidance and practices about safeguarding, updated regularly and embedded in performance management systems

The branch does this by ensuring:

- All staff and volunteers receive safeguarding information upon joining and mandatory training within two weeks of commencing their new role detailing this policy, procedures, clear codes of conduct and safe working practice guidelines.
- All employees and volunteers will receive child and adult safeguarding training where appropriate additional training will be delivered to people in higher risk areas of the branch.
- All personnel will be required to complete refresher child and adult safeguarding training every two years.
- Employees and volunteers will attend training relevant to their safeguarding role
- Evidence of training is recorded centrally.

## 10.0 Monitoring Systems

Monitoring systems and quality assurance are embedded in the branch's management processes at all levels to ensure that this policy is followed through into practice by:

- Formal safeguarding audits of sufficient quality and quantity being conducted annually, allowing ample time for improvements to be made post audit, with results recorded and reported effectively;
- Managers monitoring the day to day work environment;
- All personnel demonstrate, where relevant, their commitment to providing a protective environment for children, young people and adults with support and care needs, for example, they monitor the supervision of these groups and demonstrate good practice in relation to physical and /or face to face contact with vulnerable groups.
- Trustees oversee monitoring reports, allocating appropriate resources and ensuring action is taken where necessary.

## 11.0 Additional Resources and Information

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>NSPCC</b><br><a href="http://www.nspcc.org">www.nspcc.org</a> | <b>ChildLine</b><br>0800 1111  |
| <b>NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line:</b><br>0800 028 0285        | <b>Forced Marriage Unit</b><br>020 7008 0151<br><a href="mailto:fmufco.gov.uk">fmufco.gov.uk</a>                                   |
| <b>NSPCC FGM Line:</b><br>0800 028 3550                          | <b>UK Safer Internet Centre (UKSIC)</b><br><a href="http://www.saferinternet.org.uk">www.saferinternet.org.uk</a>                  |
| <b>NSPCC Gangs Line:</b><br>0808 800 500                         | <b>Contextual Safeguarding Network</b><br><a href="http://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk">www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk</a> |

### Useful contacts for Cornwall and Isles of Scilly

#### Early Help Hub

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/childrens-services/early-help/>

#### List of Early Help Services

Parents and/or professionals can request:

- **Child and Adolescent Mental Health**
- **Early Support - Supporting Change in Partnership (SCIP)**
- **Early Years Service**
- **Family Support**
- **Health advice**
- **Portage**
- **Targeted Youth Support**

#### Multi-Agency Referral Unit (MARU)

If you have immediate concerns or are worried about a child or young person's safety, please telephone the Multi Agency Referral Unit (MARU) on 0300 123 1116

The MARU provides a multi-disciplinary response to concerns about the welfare or safety of a child or young person in line with statutory guidance from Our Safeguarding Children Partnership for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

The multi-disciplinary team also provides advice and guidance to parents and professionals about the wide range of services available to children and families in Cornwall.

This Policy was agreed and disseminated on **20th January 2026** by the RSPCA Cornwall branch Committee of Trustees, and will be reviewed annually or when there are substantial organisational or statutory changes (if sooner).

**Signed:**

**(Branch CEO)**

**Date:**

**The next scheduled Policy review date is: 19<sup>th</sup> January 2027**

A separate record of personnel signatures should be maintained to evidence everyone has seen and understood this policy.

## **Appendices**

# Appendix 1: Categories of Abuse

## Children and Young People

**Physical Abuse:** Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing significant harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child (see **appendix 3** for accidental vs. likely abusive injuries).

**Emotional Abuse:** Emotional abuse is 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. 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 (including cyber 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; may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

**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 assault by 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 other children.

**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 or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and 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-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## Other Issues Include

- **Children under 16 years old living away from home** with someone who is not a close relative. If this happens for more than 28 days, their parent/carer (or anyone else if this has not been done, or not possible) need to register the private fostering arrangements with the local authority
- **Children going missing from home**, for whatever reason, as they may be exploited or trafficked
- **Young unaccompanied asylum seekers** who have no responsible adults with them
- **Peer abuse** including bullying as children can be abusers too
- **Radicalisation** - understand why people may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and

describe indicators which may suggest so and provide guidance on the support that can be provided to safeguard those at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

- **Violent extremism** is when groups or individuals who condone violence as a means to a political end is a particular risk for some children. Any concerns should be reported.
- **Sexual exploitation** - Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.
- **Female genital mutilation** - FGM is a criminal offence – it is child abuse and a form of violence against women and girls, and therefore should be treated as such. FGM is a procedure where the female genital organs are injured or changed and there is no medical reason for this. It is frequently a very traumatic and violent act for the victim and can cause harm in many ways. The practice can cause severe pain and there may be immediate and/or long-term health consequences, including mental health problems, difficulties in childbirth, causing danger to the child and mother; and/or death.
- **Forced marriage** - Forced marriage is a criminal offence – it is a form of child/ adult/ domestic abuse and has to be treated as such; ignoring the needs of victims should never be an option. Forced marriage affects people from many communities and cultures, so cases should always be addressed using all of your existing structures, policies and procedures designed to safeguard children, adults with support needs and victims of domestic abuse.
- **Concealed pregnancy** when a mother of any age does not seek medical help or support so the unborn baby may be at risk of harm as a result of not accessing maternity services
- **Child trafficking** - Children are trafficked for many reasons, including sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, labour, benefit fraud and involvement in criminal activity such as pick-pocketing, theft and working in cannabis farms. There are a number of cases of minors being exploited in the sex industry. Trafficked children may not only be deprived of their rights to health care and freedom from exploitation and abuse, but may also be denied access to education.
- **E-Safety** - when children, young people or adults with support and care needs may be targeted online for sexual abuse, financial gain, radicalisation and / or other crimes
- **Domestic violence** when an individual exercises control over another in an intimate or family relationship. It takes many forms and can include neglect, physical, sexual, financial, property and / or emotional abuse
- **Coercive behaviour** in the family or in a person's intimate relationships is a criminal offence. Controlling or coercive behaviour does not relate to a single incident, it is a purposeful pattern of behaviour which takes place over time in order for one individual to exert power, control or coercion over another. It is a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.
- **Modern slavery** - Modern slavery is a complex crime that takes a number of different forms. It encompasses slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking. Traffickers and slave drivers coerce, deceive and force individuals against their will into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment. Victims may be sexually exploited, forced to work for little or no pay or forced to commit criminal activities against their will. Victims are often pressured into debt-bondage and are likely to be fearful of those who exploit them, who will often threaten and abuse victims and their families. All of these factors make it very difficult for victims to escape.

- **Child abuse linked to faith or belief** which includes belief in concepts of witchcraft and spirit possession, demons or the devil acting through children or leading them astray. It includes neglect, physical, sexual and/or or emotional abuse.

## Appendix 2: Adults with support and care needs

Abuse is defined as a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. It may involve a single or repeated act or omission occurring within a personal or professional relationship whether there is an expectation of trust which causes harm to an adult at risk.

### Significant harm includes:

- ill-treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment that are not physical).
- the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health.
- the impairment of physical, emotional, social or behavioural development.
- Abuse may be by commission or omission that causes harm to an adult at risk.

### Behaviours Include:

**Physical Abuse:** Hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions (see **appendix 3** for accidental vs. likely abusive injuries).

**Sexual Abuse:** Rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

**Psychological Abuse:** Emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

**Financial or Material Abuse:** Theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits. It can be online, by phone or face to face.

**Neglect or Acts of Omission:** Ignoring medical or physical care needs, failing to provide access to appropriate health, social care, welfare benefits or educational services, withholding the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

**Discriminatory Abuse:** Racism, sexism or acts based on a person's disability, age or sexual orientation. It also includes other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment such as disability hate crime.

**Domestic Abuse:** Psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse, coercive behaviour in the family or intimate relationships, and so called 'honour' based violence.

**Organisational Abuse:** Neglect and poor care practice within a care setting such as a hospital or care home or in relation to care provided in someone's own home ranging from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be neglect or poor practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within a care setting.

**Modern Slavery:** Encompassing slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and

force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

**Self-Neglect:** Covers a wide range of behaviour including extreme neglect to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and is often linked to behaviour such as hoarding. Individual's may be unwilling to manage their personal affairs or seek help to access health and social care services to the point that it threatens their personal health and safety.

**Hate and "Mate" Crime:** A form of hate crime in which a vulnerable person is manipulated or abused by someone they believed to be their friend. This includes being taken advantage of for financial gain.

**Forced Marriage:** When one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage but are coerced into it. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. In cases of adults with support and care needs who lack the capacity to consent to marriage, coercion is not required for a marriage to be forced.

### Appendix 3: Accidental vs. Likely Abusive Injuries

Head injuries tend to involve the parietal bone, occiput or forehead

Forehead

Nose

Chin

Palm of hand

Elbows

Knees

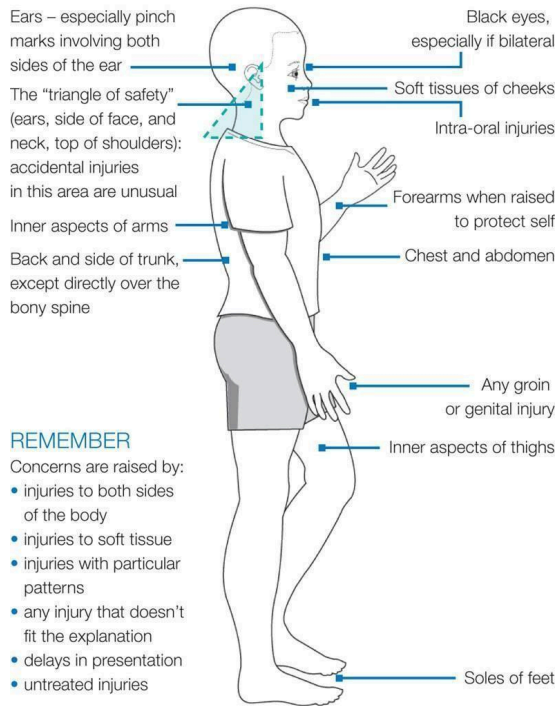
Shins

**REMEMBER**  
Accidental injuries typically:

- involve bony prominences
- match the history
- are in keeping with the development of the child

**Typical Accidental Injuries**

**Typical Abusive Injuries**



## Appendix 4: Relevant Legislation

| Criminal Records Checks  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| To make provision in connection with the protection of children and adults with support and care needs with regard to Disclosure and Barring   | <a href="#">Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006</a> | <a href="#">Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006</a> |
| Criminal Records Check Service   | <a href="#">Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)</a>    | <a href="#">Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)</a>    |
| Other relevant legislation:<br><a href="#">Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974</a><br><a href="#">Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) order 1975</a><br><a href="#">Police Act 1997</a><br><a href="#">Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) Regulations</a><br><a href="#">Protection of Freedoms Act 2012</a><br><a href="#">Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2013</a> |   |   |

| Safeguarding children and young people |         |       |
|--|---------|-------|
| Legislation                            |         |       |
| Description                            | England | Wales |
|  |         |       |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Job applicants to disclose “spent” convictions for eligible positions such as direct work with children  | <a href="#">Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974</a><br><a href="#">Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 - Guidance</a>                                   | <a href="#">Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974</a><br><a href="#">Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 - Guidance</a>  |
| Duty to undertake safe recruitment practice  | <a href="#">Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006</a>   | <a href="#">Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006</a>  |
| Overarching children legislation bringing together earlier acts including; duty to investigate, cooperation between agencies and the need for a plan to safeguard a child. The welfare of children is paramount. | <a href="#">Children Act 1989</a>   | <a href="#">Children Act 1989</a><br><a href="#">Part III replaced by Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014</a>  |
| The setting up of boards/ committees to ensure agencies work together to safeguarding of children, with up to date, relevant policies and procedures and training  | <a href="#">Children Act 2004 Section 11</a><br><a href="#">Children and Social Work Act 2017</a>   | <a href="#">Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014</a>  |
| Sexual exploitation and sexual offences  | <a href="#">Serious Crime Act 2015 Part 5 (all)</a><br><a href="#">Sexual Offences Act 2003</a><br><a href="#">The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003</a> | <a href="#">Serious Crime Act 2015 Part 5 (all)</a><br><a href="#">Sexual Offences Act 2003</a><br><a href="#">The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003</a>                                  |
| Protect individuals who make certain disclosures of information in the public interest; to allow such individuals to bring action in respect of victimisation; and for connected purposes. (Whistleblowing)      | <a href="#">Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998</a>   | <a href="#">Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998</a>  |
| <b>Guidance</b>  |   |  |
| How Agencies act and cooperate to safeguard children   | <a href="#">Statutory Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018</a>   | <a href="#">Working Together to Safeguard People Volume I – Introduction and Overview</a><br><a href="#">Statutory Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004</a> |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Duty to refer child abuse concerns and co-operate | <a href="#">What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2015 update)</a> | <a href="#">What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2015 update)</a> |
|---|--|--|

| <b>Adult Safeguarding</b>  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Legislation</b>   |   |  |
| <b>Description</b>   | <b>England</b>  | <b>Wales</b>   |
| To make provision about safeguarding adults from abuse or neglect  | <a href="#">Care Act 2014</a><br><a href="#">Care Act 2014 -0 Factsheet</a> | <a href="#">Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014</a><br><a href="#">Part 7 Safeguarding</a>                                   |
| To make provision for those who lack capacity to manage welfare, finance and health  | <a href="#">Mental Capacity Act 2005</a>                                    | <a href="#">Mental Capacity Act 2005</a>   |
| Protect individuals who make certain disclosures of information in the public interest; to allow such individuals to bring action in respect of victimisation; and for connected purposes. | <a href="#">Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998</a>                         | <a href="#">Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998</a>  |
| <b>Guidance</b>  |   |  |
| To improve safeguarding arrangements for adults who are at risk of harm from abuse, exploitation or neglect  | <a href="#">Care and support statutory guidance (2020 update)</a>           | <a href="#">Codes of Practice and Statutory Guidance issued under Section 145 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014</a> |