

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Insert Name of Practice

CONTENTS		
Section		Page
1	Introduction	2
2	Engagement	2
3	Impact Analyses	2
4	Scope	3
5	Policy Aim	3
6	Definitions	3
7	CONTEST and PREVENT	5
8	Roles and Responsibilities	6
9	Practice Arrangements	7
10	Implementation	9
11	Training and Awareness	9
12	Recognising child maltreatment or abuse	10
13	Responding to concerns about a child	10
14	Recording Information	11
15	Information Sharing	12
16	Safer Employment	13
17	Managing Allegations against Staff	13
18	Whistle Blowing	14
19	Professional Challenge	14
20	Monitoring and audit	14
21	Policy Review	14
22	References	15

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Children Act 1989 and 2004 and the associated statutory guidance, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (HM Government, 2018) and 'Promoting the Health and Well-being of Looked After Children' (DH, 2015) set out the principles for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. This policy outlines how **INSERT NAME OF PRACTICE** will fulfil their legal duties and statutory responsibilities effectively in accordance with safeguarding children procedures of safeguarding partnerships of **INSERT LOCALITY**
- 1.2 The majority of children and their families in the UK are registered with a GP and general practice remains the first point of contact for most health related issues. The Practice recognises that GPs and their practice teams have a key role not only in providing high-quality services for all children but also in identifying and responding to the needs of vulnerable children and their families, supporting victims of abuse and neglect and providing on-going care and assessment while contributing to case conferences and multi-agency plans. Identification of child abuse has been likened to putting together a complex multi-dimensional jigsaw. GPs and their teams, who hold knowledge of family circumstances and can interpret multiple observations accurately recorded over time, may be the only professionals holding vital pieces necessary to complete the picture.

2.0 Engagement

This policy was developed by the Named GPs for Safeguarding Children York and North Yorkshire and Nurse Consultant Safeguarding Adults and Children in Primary Care, for use within General Practices and has been shared with, and adapted by, the RCGP for use in all general practices across the UK.

3.0 Impact Analyses

3.1. Equality

- 3.1.1. In line with the **INSERT NAME OF PRACTICE** Equality and Diversity Policies and Sustainability impact assessment, this policy aims to safeguard all children and young people who may be at risk of abuse, irrespective of disability, race, religion/belief, colour, language, birth, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender or sexual orientation. Approaches to safeguarding children must be child centred, upholding the welfare of the child as paramount (Children Acts 1989 and 2004).
EMBED OR ATTACH AS APPENDICES PRACTICE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS.
- 3.1.2. All Practice Staff must respect the alleged victim's (and their family's/ carers) culture, religious beliefs, gender and sexuality. However, this must not prevent action to safeguard children and young people who are at risk of, or experiencing, abuse.
- 3.1.3. All reasonable endeavours should be used to establish the child, young person and families/carer's preferred method of communication, and to communicate in a way they can understand. This will include ensuring access to an interpretation service where people use languages (including signing) other than English. Every effort must

be made to respect the person's preferences regarding gender and background of the interpreter.

- 3.2. Bribery Act 2010
Due consideration has been given to the Bribery Act 2010 in the development of this policy and no specific risks were identified.

4.0 Scope

- 4.1. This policy applies to all staff employed by the **INSERT NAME OF PRACTICE** including; all employees (including those on fixed-term contracts), temporary staff, bank staff, locums, agency staff, contractors, volunteers (including celebrities), students and any other learners undertaking any type of work experience or work related activity.
- 4.2. All Practice staff have an individual responsibility for the protection and welfare of children and must know what to do if they are concerned that a child is being abused or neglected.

5.0 Policy Aim

- 5.1. The Practice adopts a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and neglect.
- 5.2. This policy outlines how the Practice will fulfil its statutory responsibilities and ensure that there are in place robust structures, systems and quality standards for safeguarding children, and for promoting the health and welfare of Looked After Children which are in line with the multi-agency safeguarding children partnerships of **INSERT LOCALITY AREA**

6.0 Definitions

- 6.1. Definitions in relation to the following terms used within this document are taken from statutory guidance (HM Government, 2018):
- 6.1.1. "Child" or "young person", as in the Children Act 1989 and 2004, is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection. Where 'child' or 'children' is used in this document, this refers to children and young people.
- 6.1.2. "Safeguarding" and "promoting the welfare of children" is defined as:
- protecting children from maltreatment
 - preventing impairment of children's health or development
 - ensuring that 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
- 6.1.3 "Child In Need" is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health and development will be significantly impaired, without the provision of services; or a child

who is disabled. In such circumstances assessments by a social worker are carried out under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 with parental consent.

- 6.1.4. “Child Protection” is one element of safeguarding and promoting children’s welfare. Child protection refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.
- 6.1.5. “Significant Harm” is the concept introduced by the Children Act 1989 as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children. It gives Local Authorities a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.
- 6.1.6. “Abuse” – this is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by 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 others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.
- 6.1.7. Statutory guidance defines abuse as (HM Government, 2018):

Physical abuse: “A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical 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.”

NB: Female genital mutilation is considered to be a form of physical abuse.

Emotional abuse: 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 a child 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 a 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.

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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline

abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Child Sexual Exploitation: This is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Neglect: This 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);
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment;
- Neglect may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

7.0 CONTEST and PREVENT (Radicalisation of vulnerable people)

- 7.1. Contest is the Government's Counter Terrorism Strategy, which aims to reduce the risk from international terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence.
- 7.2. Contest has four strands which encompass;
- PREVENT; to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism.
 - PURSUE; to stop terrorist attacks through disruption, investigation and detection.
 - PREPARE; where an attack cannot be stopped, to mitigate its impact.
 - PROTECT; to strengthen against terrorist attack, including borders, utilities, transport infrastructure and crowded places.
- 7.3. Prevent focuses on preventing people becoming involved in terrorism, supporting extreme violence or becoming susceptible to radicalisation. Alongside other agencies, such as education services, local authorities and the police, healthcare services have been identified as a key strategic partner in supporting this strategy.
- 7.4. Healthcare professionals may meet and treat children and young people who are vulnerable to radicalisation because they may have a heightened susceptibility to being influenced by others.
- 7.5. The key challenge for the health sector is to be vigilant for signs that someone has been or is being drawn into terrorism. GPs and their staff are the first point of contact for most people and are in a prime position to safeguard those people they feel may be at risk of radicalisation.

- 7.6 Practice staff who have concerns that someone may be becoming radicalised should seek advice and support from the Safeguarding Lead and dedicated Prevent Lead.
- 7.7. The Designated Professional for Adult Safeguarding acts as the Prevent lead for General Practice and advises on concerns following the referral pathway in line with the policy and procedure. Advice can also be obtained from the Named GP, Nurse Consultant or Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children.

The Practice Prevent Lead is:

INSERT NAME AND CONTACT

The Prevent Lead for General Practice in **INSERT LOCALITY** is:

INSERT NAME AND CONTACT

- 7.8. **It is important to note that Prevent operates within the pre-criminal space and is aligned to the multi-agency safeguarding agenda.**
- **Notice:** if you have a cause for concern about someone, perhaps their altered attitude or change in behaviour
 - **Check:** discuss concern with appropriate other (Safeguarding Lead)
 - **Share:** appropriate, proportionate information (Safeguarding Lead/ Prevent Lead)

8.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- 8.1. The safeguarding partnerships of **INSERT LOCALITY** are responsible for developing local procedures and ensuring multi-agency training is available. The safeguarding partnerships have a role in scrutinising the safeguarding arrangements of statutory agencies and promoting effective joint working.
- 8.2 It is the responsibility of Children's Social Care (CSC) to investigate allegations of child abuse in conjunction, and with the participation of, other agencies. They also lead the Child in Need process.
- 8.3 CSC work with all health services, including Primary Care, education, police, prison and probation services, district councils and other organisations such as the NSPCC, domestic violence forums, youth services and armed forces, all of whom contribute and work together to share responsibility for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.
- 8.4 Clinical Commissioning Groups are required to employ a Named GP to advise and support GP Safeguarding Practice Leads. GPs should have a lead and deputy lead for safeguarding, who should work closely with the Named GP based in the clinical commissioning group. (HM Government 2018)
- 8.5 The practice team are not responsible for investigating child abuse and neglect but they do have a responsibility for sharing information, acting on concerns and contributing to the 'child in need', 'child protection', and 'looked after children' processes.

8.6 There is an expectation that the practice team contribute to the 'early help' agenda. Children and their families who receive coordinated early help are less likely to develop difficulties that require intervention through a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989. An Early Intervention assessment can be completed with the agreement of parents so that local agencies can work with the family to identify what help the child and family might need to reduce an escalation of needs that could require statutory intervention.

9.0 **Practice Arrangements**

9.1 **INSERT NAME OF PRACTICE** has clearly identified lines of accountability within the practice to promote the work of safeguarding children within the practice. Safeguarding responsibilities will be clearly defined in all job descriptions and there are nominated leads for safeguarding children.

9.2. The Practice Lead for Safeguarding Children is:

INSERT NAME AND CONTACT

The Deputy Practice Lead for Safeguarding Children is:

INSERT NAME AND CONTACT

The Administration Lead for managing Safeguarding data is:

INSERT NAME AND CONTACT

9.3. The responsibilities of **Practice Leads** for Safeguarding Children are to:

- Act as a focus for external contacts on child protection matters, particularly with other health colleagues to ensure concerns regarding a child are identified and shared in a timely manner to reduce further risk to the child.
- Establish links and seeks appropriate advice and support from the Named GP for Safeguarding Children, the Nurse Consultant Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults in Primary Care and the Designated Doctors and Nurses.
- Ensure partners and staff have access to the Practice's Safeguarding Children Policy and Safeguarding Partnership Procedures.
- Ensure that the Practice meets contractual and clinical governance guidance concerning safeguarding children.
- Promote appropriate recording of child protection issues.
- Support arrangements to ensure continued accuracy of information where children's records are flagged to identify they are subject to a child protection plan or are a Looked after Child.
- Promote relevant child protection training for partners and staff.
- Promote the provision of GP information to child protection conferences through either attendance or completion of child protection reports within a timely manner.
- Encourage regular discussion of child protection issues, including any relevant learning from serious case reviews at Practice team meetings.
- Act as a point of contact for Practice partners and staff to bring any concerns that they have and record this along with any subsequent action taken as a result.
- Ensures that practice members receive adequate support when dealing with safeguarding children concerns. Understanding it is not the role of the Practice to decide whether or not a child has been abused or neglected and signposts

- colleagues to sources of advice and understand the referral process to Children's Social Care.
- Ensures safe recruitment procedures.
 - Ensures and supports robust reporting and complaints procedures.
 - Leads on analysis of relevant significant events/root cause.
 - Makes recommendations for change or improvements in practice.
- 9.4. The **Practice Manager** should ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are clearly defined in all job descriptions. For employees of the practice, failure to adhere to this policy and procedures could lead to dismissal and/or constitute gross misconduct.
- 9.5. All **GPs** have a critical role to play in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Identification of child abuse has been likened to putting together a complex multi-dimensional jigsaw. GPs hold knowledge of family circumstances and can interpret multiple observations accurately recorded over time, and may be the only professionals holding vital pieces necessary to complete the picture. GPs should aim to contribute to the Child Protection process including child protection conferences and strategy meetings, and meetings such as Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and other such multi-agency assessments, so that decisions about children can be made with as much relevant information as possible.
- 9.6. MARACs are risk management meetings where professionals share information on high risk cases of domestic violence and abuse and put in place a risk management plan for victims and their families. Information from General Practice may provide vital information to the risk assessment process in such cases and assist GPs in contributing to this process and promoting the welfare of their patients.
- 9.7. The GP may have relevant information to share with conferences and multi-agency meetings, even if the children and parents do not attend surgery often. This includes information about both children and their parents/carers.
- 9.8. It will not always be possible for a GP to attend all case conferences, MARACs or other such meetings and if this is the case they should do the following:
- contact the Independent Conference Chair or chair of the conference or meeting and give apologies for attendance
 - complete and send a case conference report (within procedural timeframes) or other relevant document enabling the sharing of appropriate information as required
- 9.9. **Practice nurses** have a responsibility to ensure that a child's welfare is promoted and treated as paramount. The Nursing and Midwifery Council's Code of Conduct states that Nurses should raise concerns immediately if they believe a person is vulnerable or at risk and needs extra support and protection.

The Code states that Nurses must:

- take all reasonable steps to protect people who are vulnerable or at risk from harm, neglect or abuse
- share information if you believe someone may be at risk of harm, in line with the laws relating to the disclosure of information, and
- have knowledge of and keep to the relevant laws and policies about protecting and caring for vulnerable people

- 9.10. **Other Practice Staff** - All staff, employees, volunteers, students and others working within the practice will keep up to date with national developments relating to preventing harm, exploitation, coercion, abuse and the welfare of children and young people. All practice staff uphold the general practice rules which include;
- Challenging any unacceptable behaviour by any other Practice staff.
 - Never promise to keep a secret about any sensitive information disclosed to you but follow the Practice's guidance on confidentiality and sharing information. Remembering the welfare of the child is paramount.
 - Respect a young person's right to personal privacy and encourage children, young people and adults to feel comfortable to point out attitudes or behaviours they do not like.
- 9.11. It is not the role of any person within the practice to begin any form of investigation relating to an allegation, report or disclosure of harm, exploitation, coercion and/or abuse. All allegations, reports or disclosures/concerns about a child suffering or likely to suffer significant harm should be referred to Children's Social Care Practice Arrangements.

10.0 Implementation

- 10.1. Practice staff will be advised of the policy through Practice meetings. The Safeguarding Children Policy will be available via the **INSERT PER PRACTICE**
- 10.2. Breaches of this policy may be investigated and may result in the matter being treated as a disciplinary offence under the Practice disciplinary procedure.

11.0 Training and Awareness

- 11.1. The Practice's induction for partners and employees will include a briefing on the Safeguarding Children Policy by the Practice Manager or Practice Clinical Lead for Safeguarding. Partners and employees will be given information about who to inform if they have concerns about a child's safety or welfare and how to access the Safeguarding Partnership procedures.
- 11.2. All Practice staff must be competent to be alert to potential indicators of abuse and neglect in children, know how to act on their concerns and fulfil their responsibilities in line with Safeguarding Partnership procedures and the '[Safeguarding Children and Young People Competencies for Health Care Staff Intercollegiate Document](#)' (RCN, 2019).

The RCGP has produced a [supplementary guide to primary care safeguarding training requirements](#) for both child and adult safeguarding.

- 11.3. All Practice staff will complete the level of training commensurate with their role and responsibilities.
- 11.4. The Practice will keep a training database detailing the uptake of all staff training so that the Practice Manager and Safeguarding Leads can be alerted to unmet training needs.

11.5 All GPs and Practice staff should keep a learning log for their appraisals and or personal development plans (a template can be found in the Intercollegiate Document: [Safeguarding Children and Young People: Competencies for Health Care Staff](#), RCN, 2019).

12.0 **Recognising child maltreatment or abuse**

12.1. Refer to the [RCGP Child Safeguarding Toolkit](#)

12.2. Refer to [NICE Guidance: 'When to suspect child maltreatment'](#)

13.0 **Responding to concerns about a child**

13.1. To seek further information/ share concerns contact as applicable:

- Midwife (link): **Insert name and contact details**
- Health Visitor (link): **Insert name and contact details**
- School Nurse (link): **Insert name and contact details**

13.2 To seek further advice contact: **(AMEND AS PER LOCALITY)**

- Nurse Consultant Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Primary Care: **Insert name and contact details**
- Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children **Insert name and contact details**
- Named GP **Insert name and contact details**
- Consultant Paediatrician on call – Daytime: **Contact details**
- Consultant Paediatrician on call - Out of Hours: **Contact details**

13.3 Making a child protection referral

- Clearly document concerns and collate any family information known to you.
- If you are unsure how to proceed, seek advice from one of the following: line manager, Practice Safeguarding Lead, Nurse Consultant Named GP or Designated Nurse or Children's Social Care Team; or duty Paediatrician at local hospital.
- If child protection referral is required, contact Children's Social Care via **INSERT AS PER LOCALITY**. Give all details/information regarding your concerns and confirm that you are making a child protection referral.
- Follow up verbal referral in writing within 24 hours. Retain a copy of your referral for your reference. (Referral forms available on **INSERT RELEVANT** websites)
- Wherever possible, share your intent to refer with parents/carers of child (exceptions outlined in Child Protection Procedures).
- Always follow Child Protection Procedures. If you believe that a child is at risk of immediate harm, call the Police/ Children's Social Care as an emergency.
- Further information and child protection procedures can be found on **INSERT RELEVANT SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP WEBSITES**

13.4. Children's Social Care contact numbers:
INSERT RELEVANT LOCAL NUMBERS

13.5. Safeguarding Partnership websites:
INSERT RELEVANT WEBSITES:

14.0 Recording Information

14.1 This Practice ensures that computer systems are used to identify those patients and families with risk factors or concerns as per the RCGP guidance:

**Processing and Storing of Safeguarding Information in Primary Care
and
Guidance on Recording of Domestic Violence and Abuse Information in
General Practice Medical Records**

available from the [RCGP Child Safeguarding Toolkit](#).

14.2 It is recognised that it is as important to be alert to the siblings and other members of the household as the child there are direct concerns about.

14.3 Key information about children and their family and carers includes;

- Details of any disability for the child
- Details of mental health issues for the child
- Information supplied by all members of the Primary Care Team, including the Health Visitor and School Nurse
- Conversations with and referrals to outside agencies
- Basic information is recorded for every child and checked for changes at every visit including who accompanies and their relationship.
- Historical details of the parents experience as a child if concerns known
- Details of any housing problems
- Details of significant illness or problems in the family
- Details of any parental substance misuse
- Details of any parental mental health issues
- Details of any parental learning disabilities
- History of domestic abuse in the household.

14.4 Information will be sought and entered from:

- The summarising of new patient health checks on all children, including enquiry about family, social and household circumstances.
- Any contact with a potential carer – 'seeing the child behind the adult' – so that a patient with a substance misuse problem is asked about any responsibility they may have for a child, and that child's record amended accordingly.
- Opportunistic consultations: Antenatal, Postnatal bookings, 6 week check
- Correspondence from outside agencies, such as ED /OOH reports and other primary and secondary care providers.
- Practice Team meetings which include contact with Health Visitors and School Nurses which are conducted to enable regular discussion of all practice children subject to child protection plans, or any other children in whom there may be

concerns. These meetings are recorded and children's records updated as appropriate.

- 14.5. The Practice has a dedicated Administration Team who are responsible for managing alerts and Child Protection information/ correspondence which is all held together within one health record.

15.0 Information Sharing

- 15.1 Keeping children and young people safe from harm requires professionals and others to share information about their health and development and exposure to possible harm. Often, it is only when information from a number of sources has been shared and pulled together that it becomes clear that there are concerns a child is in need of protection or services.
- 15.2 It is important to keep a balance between the need to maintain confidentiality and the need to share information to protect others. Decisions to share information must always be based on professional judgement about the safety and wellbeing of the individual and in accordance with legal, ethical and professional obligations.
- 15.3 Information sharing guidance: [Information Sharing. Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers](#) (July 2018).
- 15.4. This guidance is applicable to all professionals charged with the responsibility of sharing information, including in safeguarding adult's scenarios. The guidance outlines the seven golden rules to information sharing:
1. The Data Protection Act 2018, associated General Data Protection Regulations and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing, but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared.
 2. Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
 3. Seek advice from other practitioners, or your information governance lead, if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.
 4. Where possible, share information with consent, and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to having their information shared. Under the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 you may share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be clear of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you do not have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.
 5. Consider safety and wellbeing: base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and wellbeing of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.
 6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure: ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely (see principles).
 7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with

whom and for what purpose.

- 15.5. Ideally consent should be provided along with the request for patient information however there are times when the concerns/risks to the child are such that it is not appropriate to seek consent, principally as this may lead to the child being further abused. A lack of consent should not prevent a GP or other practitioner within the Practice from sharing information if there is sufficient need in the public interest to override the lack of consent. The welfare of the child is paramount and where there are child protection concerns this outweighs confidentiality. However where the practitioner is uncertain, advice about consent is available from the Safeguarding Practice Lead, Named GP, Nurse Consultant for Safeguarding in Primary Care, Designated Nurse, the GMC, LMC or medical defence organisation.

16.0 Safer Employment

- 16.1. The Disclosure and Barring service (DBS) enables organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to make safer recruitment decisions by identifying candidates who may be unsuitable for certain work, especially that involving children or vulnerable adults, and provides wider access to criminal record information through its disclosure service for England and Wales.
- 16.2. The Practice recruitment process recognises that it has a responsibility to ensure that it undertakes appropriate criminal record checks on applicants for any position within the practice that qualifies for either an enhanced or standard level check. Any requirement for a check and eligibility for the level of check is dependent on the roles and responsibilities of the job.
- 16.3. It is also recognised that the Practice has a legal duty to refer information to the DBS if an employee has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to vulnerable groups and where they have dismissed them or are considering dismissal. This includes situations where an employee has resigned before a decision to dismiss them has been made.
- 16.4. For further information, visit <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/dbs>
- 16.5. Safer employment extends beyond criminal record checks to other aspects of the recruitment process including:
- making clear statement in adverts and job descriptions regarding commitment to safeguarding
 - seeking proof of identity and qualifications
 - providing two references, one of which should be the most recent employer
 - evidence of the person's right to work in the UK is obtained

17.0 Managing Allegations against Staff

- 17.1. If an allegation is made against a member of practice staff and it relates to conduct towards a child, the Practice recognises that its Safeguarding Practice Lead or Practice Manager must ensure that the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) who is employed by the Local Authority (contact details available on the relevant Safeguarding Partnership website as referenced above), is informed. The LADO assumes oversight

of any subsequent investigation process from beginning to end and will give advice. They will also liaise with the police and social care if necessary.

17.2. After taking any immediate action in line with practice policy, the Practice Safeguarding Lead or Practice Manager should ensure that the LADO is informed if the staff member has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child, or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or
- behaved towards a child in a way that indicates unsuitability to work with children.

18.0 Whistle Blowing

18.1. The Practice recognises that it is important to build a culture that allows practice staff to feel comfortable about sharing information, in confidence and with a lead person, regarding concerns about quality of care or a colleague's behaviour. **DIRECT TO OR INSERT LINK TO THE PRACTICE WHISTLE BLOWING PROCEDURE.**

19.0 Professional Challenge

19.1. This Practice enables and encourages any practice member that disagrees with an action taken and still has concerns regarding a child to either contact the Safeguarding Practice Lead, Nurse Consultant Safeguarding Primary Care, or the Designated Nurse for independent reflection and support.

20.0 Monitoring and Audit

20.1. Audit of awareness of this safeguarding children policy and processes will be undertaken by the Practice Manager and Practice Safeguarding Lead.

21.0 Policy Review

21.1. This policy will be reviewed two years from the date of issue. Earlier review may be required in response to exceptional circumstances, organisational change or relevant changes in legislation/guidance, as instructed by the senior manager responsible for this policy.

22.0 References

- [RCGP Child Safeguarding Toolkit](#)
- [Children Act 1989](#)
- [Children Act 2004](#)
- [Department of Health \(2015\) Promoting the Health and Wellbeing of Looked After Children](#)
- [HM Government \(2018\) Information Sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers](#)
- [HM Government \(2018\) Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)
- [HM Government \(2015\) Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales](#)
- [NICE guidelines \(2009\) Child maltreatment: when to suspect maltreatment in under 16s \[CG89\]](#)
- [RCN Safeguarding Children and Young People: Roles and Competencies for Health Care Staff. Intercollegiate Document, Fourth Edition, January 2019](#)