

# CARESCO



## Safeguarding Children Policy

Signed

.....Tina Campbell  
(Chair of **CARESCO Ltd**)

Policy agreed on

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Date of next review

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# Safeguarding Children Policy

## Introduction

CARESCO believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people. We are fully accountable for ensuring appropriate actions are taken by us in order to safeguard any children who come into contact with one of our services. This may also include ensuring our partner agencies have taken appropriate actions.

CARESCO abides by the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and is committed to safeguarding practice that reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice requirements.

- We recognise the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation has an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

## Purpose

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of CARESCO, including trustees, paid staff and volunteers. Failure to comply with the policy and related procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal / exclusion from the organisation.

CARESCO will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- adopting safeguarding and child protection guidelines
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training

It is essential that all staff, trustees and volunteers are aware of their duties concerning safeguarding and ensure that:

- the safety and wellbeing of the child is promoted
- the law and statutory guidance concerning child protection and safeguarding is complied with
- staff and volunteers never promising not to report concerns or to 'keep secrets'
- all staff and volunteers comply with the child protection and safeguarding policy.

**It is not the role or responsibility of CARESCO to investigate allegations of harm or risk of harm.**

## **Definitions:**

### **Child**

The Children Act 1989 definition of a child is: anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, even if they are living independently, are a member of the armed forces or is in hospital.

For any concerns relating to a young person aged 18 years old or above, please refer to our Safeguarding Adults Policy.

### **Adult at Risk**

An adult who has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),

- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

### **Child and Adult Abuse**

Children and adults may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their daily lives.

## **Legal Framework:**

The Children Act 1989 and 2004 provides the overall framework for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The child's welfare is to be the paramount consideration in all decision-making.

The Government's guidance on safeguarding children in England is called *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018* (often shortened to Working Together). Working Together acknowledges the need for all providers of children's services, including those in the voluntary sector, to work in collaboration and to agreed local standards. Safeguarding should be child-centred - that is that the child's needs are paramount, and the needs and wishes of each child, be they a baby or infant, or an older child, should be put first, so that every child receives the support they need before a problem escalates.

## **Recognition and Reporting**

It is essential that those who work with children and families should be alert to the signs of child abuse. There are four main categories of abuse:

**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.

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

**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

- not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate
- age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children
- 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
- seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- 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 (Working Together 2018).

As highlighted above, Domestic Abuse is generally treated as falling under emotional abuse. The cross-government definition (2014) of domestic violence and abuse is as follows:

*“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.”*

CARESCO considers that domestic abuse is a child protection issue and that if children witness or hear domestic abuse, this must be treated as a child protection matter, even if they are not directly involved in the incidents. The Adoption and Children Act 2002 states that impairment can be caused by seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.

**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.
- 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 (Working Together 2018)

#### **Other Safeguarding Concerns:**

***In addition to the above concerns, children self-harming or expressing suicidal ideas must be treated as safeguarding and child protection issues.***

**Child Criminal Exploitation** - As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and / or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and / or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

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

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

**County Lines** - As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, county lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

**Extremism and PREVENT Duty** - Any concerns about radicalisation and extremist views or behaviours in children and young people must be reported as a safeguarding concern. CARESCO works in line with Prevent Duty 2015 guidance and will consult with local Prevent Coordinators where necessary.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** - Concerns that a child has been, or may be about to be, subjected to FGM, fall under this policy and must also be reported as a safeguarding concern.

**Forced Marriage** - In forced marriage, one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage and some element of duress is involved. Duress includes both physical and emotional pressure and abuse. Forced marriage is primarily, but not exclusively, an issue of violence against females.

**'So-called' Honour-Based Violence** - The term "honour crime" or "honour-based violence" embraces a variety of crimes of violence (mainly but not exclusively against women), including assault, imprisonment and murder where their family or their community is punishing the person. They are being punished for (actually or allegedly) undermining what the family or community believes to be the correct code of behaviour. In transgressing this correct code of behaviour, the person shows that they have not been properly controlled to conform by their family and this is to the "shame" or "dishonour" of the family.

### **Contextual Safeguarding**

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse.

***For safeguarding advice / guidance and reporting, staff and volunteers should contact their Line Manager in the first instance. In cases when they are not available, they should contact the General Manager.***

At CARESCO, the person designated as the safeguarding lead is the General Manager.

### **Confidentiality and Information Sharing:**

CARESCO expects all staff, volunteers and trustees to maintain confidentiality. Information will only be shared in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection.

However, information should be shared with the Local Authority if a child is deemed to be at risk of harm or **contact the police if they are in immediate danger**, or a crime has been committed. For further guidance on information sharing and safeguarding (see CARESCO's Data Protection policy).

### **Safe Recruitment & Selection:**

CARESCO is committed to safe employment and safe recruitment practices that reduce the risk of harm to children from people unsuitable to work with them or have contact with them.

CARESCO has policies and procedures that cover the recruitment of all trustees, staff and volunteers.

### **Training and Awareness:**

CARESCO will ensure an appropriate level of safeguarding training is available to its trustees, staff, and volunteers.

For all employees who are working or volunteering with children, this requires them as a minimum to have awareness training that enables them to:

- Understand what safeguarding is and their role in safeguarding children.
- Recognise a child potentially in need of safeguarding and take action.

- Understand how to report a safeguarding Alert.
- Understand dignity and respect when working with children.
- Have knowledge of the Safeguarding Children Policy.

Similarly, employees and volunteers may encounter concerns about the safety and wellbeing of an adult at risk of abuse. For more information about adults safeguarding, refer to CARESCO's Safeguarding Adults Policy.

### **Recording and Record Keeping:**

A written record must be kept about any concern regarding a child with safeguarding needs using the Logging a Safeguarding Concern form. This must include details of the person involved, the nature of the concern and the actions taken, decision made and why they were made.

All records must be signed and dated. All records must be securely and confidentially stored in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (see CARESCO's Data Protection policy).

### **Social Media:**

All employees and volunteers should be aware of CARESCO's social media policy and procedures and the code of conduct for behaviour towards the children we support.

### **Use of Mobile Phones and other Digital Technology:**

All employees, trustees and volunteers should be aware of CARESCO's policy and procedures regarding the use of mobile phones and any digital technology and understand that it is unlawful to photograph children and young people without the explicit consent of the person with parental responsibilities.

### **Whistleblowing:**

It is important that people within CARESCO have the confidence to come forward to speak or act if they are unhappy with anything. Whistle blowing occurs when a person raises a concern about dangerous or illegal activity, or any wrong- doing within their organisation. This includes concerns about another employee or volunteer. There is also a requirement by CARESCO to protect whistleblowers. Please see the CARESCO Whistleblowing Policy.

### **Serious Incident**

The Charity Commission requires charities to report serious incidents. If a serious incident takes place within your charity, it is important that there is prompt, full and frank disclosure to the Commission.

## **Sources of Information and Support**

### **Cambridgeshire County Council**

Any professional who becomes aware of concerns of abuse must report those concerns as soon as possible (within one working day). Make a referral for a child or young person in need, or where there is reason to suspect they are likely to suffer significant harm because of abuse or neglect. You can report a safeguarding concern from the Joint Peterborough and Cambridgeshire Safeguarding website <https://safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/concerned/> and use the online form on this page to make a referral. There is also full supporting guidance, risk assessment tools and threshold information.

### **Police**

Emergency – 999

Non-emergency – 101

### **NSPCC Helpline**

0808 800 5000

### **Childline**

0800 1111