

SG1 – Child Safeguarding Policy

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1. Document Control

1.1 Document History

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V4.1	15/09/2024	David Brown	Amended responsibilities
V4.2	01/04/2025	Marie Bewley	Internal Review – no changes
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V5	01/09/2026	Karyn Worthington	Internal Review - addition of online safeguarding

1.2 Document Approval

Name & Title:	Authorising Signature:
Karyn Worthington Head of People	

1.3 Distribution

This document will be made available on IUCSF’s DAN’s Platform as well as the organisational Onedrive.

Controlled copies will be produced, distributed and maintained in accordance with IUCSF’s Quality Standards.

1.4 Master Copy

The master electronic copy of this document is held by

Name	Role	Contact Details
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1.5 Document Review

Version	Review Date	Reviewer	Notes
5	01/09/2027	Karyn Worthington	To be reviewed every 1 year

1.6 Referencing

The below Policies referred to within this Policy are to be reviewed simultaneously

Policy/Procedure	Notes

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CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. Introduction & Purpose

The welfare of children and young people (up to 18 years of age) is a key concern of If U Care Share Foundation (IUCSF) which aims to provide an environment within which children and young people are safe and secure.

2. Children's Safeguarding Policy Statement

IUCSF seeks to:

- Safeguard and protect children and young people from all forms of abuse and neglect
- Ensure that proper and prompt action is taken on discovering any form of abuse or neglect
- Acknowledge that Charity members have a duty to ensure that they do not place themselves or others in vulnerable situations

The local area Safeguarding Children Board is responsible for agreeing the arrangements for professionals from all organisations in the area working with children in accordance with Government guidelines and regulations.

This Children Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures identify the working practices for IUCS to address issues of child protection within the Charity and should be read in conjunction with the local Safeguarding Children Board policies and procedures in each area.

3. Background Information

Everybody who works or has contact with children, parents, and other adults in contact with children should be able to recognise, and know how to act upon, evidence that a child's health or development is or may be being impaired and especially when they are suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm.

These procedures apply to children and young people up to the age of 18 years. They apply if a child or young person is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect. This includes children and young people who are abused and neglected within their families, including those harmed directly or indirectly in the context of domestic abuse

- are abused outside their families by adults known to them
- are abused and neglected by professional carers within an institution or anywhere else
- are abused by strangers
- are abused by other young people
- abuse other young people
- are involved in prostitution
- misuse drugs and alcohol

This Policy and associated procedures aim to:

- ensure a rigorous co-ordinated response to all children where there are concerns and to ensure an appropriate investigation
- endeavour that the response prevents further abuse
- provide a common framework for all IUCS members to understand their roles and responsibilities
- ensure that IUCS services are provided to meet the needs of children and young people
- minimise the impact of investigations upon families and prevent multiple interviews/examinations
- ensure that all interventions are compatible with legislation, guidance and best practice

4. Definitions & Concepts

4.1 Children

Under the Children Act 1989 a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

4.2 Children in Need

Children who are defined as being ‘in need’ under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, are those whose vulnerability is such that they are unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health and development will be significantly impaired, without the provision of service(s). A child with a disability is a child in need. The critical factors to be taken into account in deciding whether a child is in need under the Children Act 1989 are:

- What will happen to a child’s health or development without services being provided; and
- The likely effect the services will have on the child’s standard of health and development.

4.3 Children with Additional Needs

Children with additional needs are those children at risk of poor outcomes or who require extra support from Safeguarding & Specialist Services, Health, or other services.

4.4 Online Safety and Digital Safeguarding

Recognising that children and young people increasingly use digital technology, social media, messaging applications, online communities, gaming platforms and internet-based services as part of their daily lives. While these technologies provide opportunities for communication, learning, support and participation, they may also expose children and young people to significant safeguarding risks.

4.4.1 Online Safeguarding Risks

Online risks may include, but are not limited to:

- Online grooming and child sexual exploitation.

- Cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation.
- Coercion, manipulation and sextortion.
- The creation, sharing or possession of inappropriate or indecent images.
- Exposure to harmful, violent, extremist or discriminatory content.
- Radicalisation and extremist influence.
- Exposure to content relating to suicide, self-harm or eating disorders.
- Online fraud, scams and identity theft.
- Unwanted contact from adults or peers.
- Misuse of artificial intelligence, deepfakes or digitally manipulated content.
- Excessive use of technology resulting in emotional, psychological or social harm.

Children may experience abuse both online and offline, and abuse occurring online can have significant and lasting impacts on a child's safety and wellbeing.

4.4.2 Safe Communication with Children and Young People

All staff, volunteers and trustees must maintain professional boundaries when communicating with children and young people through digital platforms.

Staff and volunteers must:

- Use only approved organisational communication methods and platforms.
- Ensure communication is professional, appropriate and related to service delivery.
- Avoid using personal social media accounts, personal email accounts or private messaging services to communicate with children and young people.
- Not accept friend requests, follows or similar social media connections from children or young people using personal accounts.
- Avoid unnecessary one-to-one online communication.
- Ensure that, wherever possible, online communication is transparent, accountable and accessible to managers or colleagues.
- Record and report any inappropriate or concerning online interactions.

4.4.3 Social Media Use

IUCSF recognises the value of social media for awareness raising, engagement and communication. Where social media is used in connection with IUCSF activities:

- Platforms must be approved by the organisation.
- Appropriate privacy and security settings must be maintained.
- Staff and volunteers must act professionally at all times.
- Children and young people should be supported to understand safe and responsible online behaviour.
- Any safeguarding concerns arising from social media activity must be reported immediately in line with safeguarding procedures.

4.4.4 Online Activities and Virtual Delivery

Where services, meetings, support sessions or activities are delivered online:

- Approved platforms must be used.
- Access to meetings should be appropriately controlled.

- Suitable supervision and safeguarding arrangements must be in place.
- Participants should be informed of expected standards of behaviour.
- Recording of sessions should only take place where authorised and in accordance with data protection requirements.
- Any safeguarding concerns arising during online activities must be reported and managed in accordance with this policy.

4.4.5 Reporting Online Safety Concerns

Any concerns relating to a child's online safety, online behaviour, online contact or online content must be treated as safeguarding concerns.

Staff, volunteers and trustees must:

- Remain vigilant to signs of online harm.
- Listen to and take seriously any concerns raised by children, young people, parents or carers.
- Preserve relevant information where appropriate, such as screenshots, messages or URLs, whilst avoiding further sharing of harmful content.
- Report concerns without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Child Protection Officer.
- Escalate concerns to statutory agencies where required.

4.4.6 Promoting Online Safety

IUCSF will seek to promote online safety by:

- Encouraging safe and responsible digital behaviour.
- Providing appropriate guidance and awareness for children, young people, staff and volunteers.
- Maintaining clear expectations regarding the use of digital technologies.
- Reviewing emerging online risks and updating safeguarding practices accordingly.
- Working with parents, carers, schools and partner organisations where appropriate to support children's online safety and wellbeing.

4.5 Significant Harm

The concept of significant harm is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention into family life in the best interests of the child. There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. To understand and identify significant harm, it is necessary to consider:

- the nature of harm, in terms of maltreatment or failure to provide adequate care
- the impact on the child's health and development
- the child's development within the context of his/her family and wider environment
- any special needs, such as a medical condition, communication impairment or disability that may affect the child's development and care within the family
- the capacity of parents to adequately meet the child's needs
- the wider and environmental family context

4.6 Child Abuse & Neglect

Child abuse and neglect is a generic term encompassing all ill-treatment of children including serious physical and sexual assaults as well as cases where the standard of care does not adequately support the child's health or development. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child.

Somebody may abuse a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. The four broad categories of abuse which are used for the purposes of making a child subject of a Child Protection Plan are set out below;

4.6.1 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse 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.

4.6.2 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.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), 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.

4.6.3 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 penetrative (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of sexual images or 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.

4.6.4 Sexual Grooming

Section 15 of the sexual offences Act 2003 makes it an offence for a person, aged 18 or over to meet intentionally, or to travel with the intention of meeting a child under 16 and intends to commit a relevant offence against that child at the time of meeting or a subsequent occasion. An offence is not committed if it is believed that the child is over 16. This covers situations where an adult contacts a child and gains the child's trust in order to try and meet for the purpose of committing a relevant offence against the child. Communication need not be explicitly sexual; the offence will be complete when the perpetrator meets the child or travels to do so to commit the offence. The intended offence does not have to take place.

4.6.5 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 and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment
- failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers
- the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- it may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs

4.6.6 Managing Risk

Children from all cultures are subject to abuse and neglect. All children have a right to grow up safe from harm. It is important that professionals are sensitive to differing family patterns and lifestyles and to child rearing patterns that vary across families. They must be clear that child abuse cannot be condoned for any religious or cultural reasons.

4.6.7 Prevent – Support Individuals vulnerable to violent extremism

- Contest- Government strategy for reducing risk to the UK and its interests overseas from international radicalisation and terrorism.
- Prevent- Aims to stop people becoming terrorists or support violent extremism.

4.6.8 Discriminatory

Including race, gender, sexuality, religion, age, a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment

4.6.9 Modern Slavery

Modern slavery can also include children being used in modern slavery. If the victim of human trafficking is an adult who needs care or support the response will be under the adults safeguarding adults process, including organisations dealing with victims of human trafficking. This includes police, health trusts and other relevant support services. Modern slavery also includes children and therefore includes a different procedure using the children safeguarding process.

4.7 Recognising Abuse

Recognising abuse is not easy and may need professional guidance. Even the list below is not comprehensive

Physical abuse signs

- A history of unexplained falls or minor injuries
- Bruising in well protected areas or clustered from repeated striking
- Finger marks
- Burns of unusual location or type
- Injuries found at different states of healing
- Injury shape similar to an object
- Injuries to head/face/scalp
- History of GP or agency hopping or reluctance to seek help
- Ulcers, bed sores and being left in wet clothing

Sexual abuse signs

- Medical problems, e.g. genital infection
- Behaviour of others towards the child
- Grooming a child
- Producing sexual images to children or making them watch sexual activities

Neglect signs

- Physical condition poor
- Clothing in poor condition
- Inadequate diet of the child
- Untreated injuries or medical problems
- Failure to get the child medical care
- Poor hygiene
- Failure to provide school recourses

5. Roles & Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Trustees	- To ensure this policy and associated procedures are reviewed annually - To ensure adequate supervision for employees and volunteers working with children at risk
Senior Management or Managers	- To ensure that volunteers and employees are aware of this policy and their responsibilities through training and supervision - To establish good communication with agencies working in the field of Child Protection - To promptly investigate and refer appropriately any allegations or suspicions of abuse of children at risk - To maintain appropriate links with the safeguarding boards in each area - To be familiar with current legislation and guidelines on Safeguarding Children - To understand and implement relevant Child Protection procedures - To ensure appropriate recruitment and vetting of staff and volunteers
Volunteers and staff	- To adhere to the principles of this policy - To carry out associated procedures or processes in line with the agreed documentation - To undertake appropriate training relating to this policy and associated procedures - To inform and support the Child Protection Officer with any concerns or worries regarding the safety and well-being Children at Risk - To follow agreed procedures for reporting any causes for concern or Disclosure made by a child at risk
IUCSF Child Protection Officers	While all trustees, staff and volunteers must work co-operatively to comply with this policy and associated procedures, a coordinating responsibility rests with Dean Smith (dean@ifucareshare.co.uk – 01913875661) and Matthew Smith (matthew@ifucareshare.co.uk – 01913875661) as the Child Protection Officers for IUCSF. Specifically their duties are: - To ensure that all trustees, staff and volunteers are aware of the requirements to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the designated person - To report all cases of suspected child abuse to Social Care Services or the Police

6. Related Procedures Linked to this Policy

The following processes and related procedures have been developed and should be used by IUCS members to comply with this Children's Safeguarding Policy;

1. Child Protection Procedure including the process for Responding to Disclosure and completing a Cause for Concern Report
2. DBS Disclosure Procedure

If a trustee, member of IUCS staff or volunteer is working at an alternative venue, for example in a school, that organisations Child Protection Policy and procedures should be adhered to and the responsible person for Child Protection identified and consulted if required.

7. Appropriate Training to Ensure Compliance with this Policy

All trustees, staff and volunteers will receive training so that they are better able to recognise signs of abuse and are clear about what action they must take if abuse or neglect is suspected. The IUCS Child Protection Officers will receive training to assist in managing the Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures.

8. Policy Signature & Review Arrangements

This policy document and the associated procedures listed in section 6 above have been developed to satisfy the requirements and minimum standards of Children's Safeguarding guidelines as set out in the local area's Safeguarding Children's Board policies and procedures.

Policy control and review arrangements are provided on the front cover of this policy.