



PONY PARTNERSHIPS



Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Name of Organisation: Pony Partnerships CIC
 Venue/address for which policy applies: All venues
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Introduction

This document outlines Pony Partnership's child protection / safeguarding policy. It applies to all adults, including volunteers working in or on behalf of the company.

A child centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners will make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they will consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical 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.

Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

Everyone working with Pony Partnerships shares an objective to help keep children and young people safe by contributing to:

- Providing a safe environment for children and young people to learn and develop in education and therapeutic settings;
- Identifying children who may need extra help, or are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and taking the appropriate action, working with other services as needed.

We will ensure that parents and our partner agencies are aware of our child protection policy by ensuring that it is displayed at our sites, by raising awareness at initial meetings with new clients and ensuring that it is on the Pony Partnerships website.

Policy Aims

The aim of this policy is to outline how Pony Partnerships will:

- Promote a positive ethos where children can learn, develop, feel secure and be safe.
- Prevent unsuitable people working with children and young people.
- Promote safe practice and challenge poor and unsafe practice.
- Identify instances in which there are grounds for concern about a child's welfare and initiate or take appropriate action to keep them safe.
- Contribute to effective partnership working between parents and all those involved with providing services for children and young people.

The policy will be reviewed annually, unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an earlier date of review.

Context

This policy enables Pony Partnerships to carry out our functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children under sections 175 and 157 of the Education Act (2002). The policy is in line with the following legislation and guidance:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)
- Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents, and carers (2015)
- Protection of Freedoms Act (2012)

The policy is consistent with Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children web-based procedures which can be located on www.derbyscb.org.uk. Pony Partnerships will adhere to the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children procedures (will a young person come from another local authority then the first point of call would be to contact the duty social care team or local safeguarding board for direction/guidance – see appendix 6).

Safeguarding the welfare of children is more than purely child protection; it will permeate all activity and functions. This policy therefore complements and supports a range of other company policies, such as, but not exclusively;

- Health and safety
- Behaviour Policy
- Providing first aid (see Health and Safety policy)
- Safer recruitment and selection, including single central record
- Staff behaviour (code of conduct)
- Complaints procedure
- Information sharing

Principles

Safeguarding arrangements within Pony Partnerships are underpinned by two key principles:

- Everyone who comes in to contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children.
- All staff, trainees and volunteers have a responsibility and role to play to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Staff members will maintain an attitude of “it could happen here” where safeguarding is concerned.
- When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff will always act in the best interests of the child.
- Pony Partnerships operates a client centred approach considering client’s views and voices.
- The client’s wishes and feelings will be considered when determining what action to take and services to provide to protect individuals children through ensuring there are

systems in place for clients to express their views and give feedback.

Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities of Staff

All adults working in, or on behalf of Pony Partnerships have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This includes:

- Responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.
- To identify children who may need extra help or who are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm. All staff then have a responsibility to take appropriate action, working with services as needed.

Staff induction will include organisation vision, aspirations, and expectation of all staff as well as what is considered acceptable and what is not. They will also receive information about systems within Pony Partnerships which support safeguarding. This includes the child protection/safeguarding policy, staff behaviour policy (code of conduct) and the role of the DSL at Pony Partnerships and the organisations we are working with.

All staff will:

- Read and sign to say that they have read and understood Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) for School and College Staff (part one) (2023).
- Receive safeguarding training which is regularly updated so they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to keep children safe. This will include:
 - PREVENT
 - KCSIE updates
 - Child protection updates
 - Safeguarding level 2/3
 - First aid
- Staff will also have access to Educare where they can complete additional training as required to support their role.

We will engender the principle that safeguarding is 'everyone's responsibility'.

Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees

The Trustees have the responsibility to ensure that Pony Partnerships complies with safeguarding duties under legislation. Safeguarding is a standing item at all management and staff meetings.

The Trustees will ensure that:

- Pony Partnerships contributes to inter-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Pony Partnership's safeguarding arrangements consider procedures and practice of the local authority (LA).
- The Trustees will liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (also known as Designated Officer) and partner agencies in event of any allegations of abuse made against the Management.
- There is an effective child protection policy which is consistent with LA procedures, along with a staff behaviour policy (code of conduct). This will be provided to all staff on

induction, will be updated annually and available on Pony Partnerships' website.

- All policies and procedure adopted by the Trustees, particularly concerning referrals of suspected abuse and neglect, are followed by staff.
- A member of the Management team is appointed to the role of DSL; this will be explicit in the role holder's job description, have the appropriate authority and given time, funding, training, resources, and support to fulfil their role effectively.
- The DSL will undergo training at a minimum every two years. The Management and other staff will undergo child protection training regularly.
- People who pose a risk of harm are prevented from working with children.
- There are procedures in place to handle allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers. There are also procedures in place to handle allegations against other children.
- There are systems in place for children to express their views and feedback. Staff will not agree confidentiality and will always act in the best interests of the child.
- Any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to safeguarding arrangements that are brought to their attention are addressed without delay.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Manager

The Manager will ensure that:

- The policies and procedures adopted by the Trustees are fully implemented and followed by all staff.
- Sufficient time and resources are allocated to enable the DSL and other staff to discharge their responsibilities.
- All staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice with regard to children, and concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner.
- The child's safety and welfare is addressed through the therapeutic work.
- They undertake appropriate training to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities effectively and keep this up to date.
- They ensure that all staff undertake appropriate training to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities effectively and keep this up to date.

The Roles and Responsibilities of the DSL (see appendix 2)

The DSL is a senior member of staff who co-ordinates Pony Partnerships safeguarding and child protection arrangements by providing advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters, to take part in strategy meetings and inter-agency meetings – and /or to support other staff to do so - and to contribute to the assessment of children.

The DSL liaises with the local authority and works with other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018). Where there are serious/complex needs or child protection concerns, this includes referrals to Children's Social Care. In exceptional circumstances, i.e., in an emergency or concern that appropriate action hasn't been taken, staff members can speak directly to Children's Social Care.

Roles and Responsibilities of other Pony Partnerships Staff

Any concerns must be discussed with the DSL.

If staff members are unsure, they will always speak to the DSL to clarify the situation and agree if any action is needed. Staff have a responsibility to record all concerns (appendix 5) and forward this to the DSL or their deputy. All staff will work with the DSL and where appropriate support Social Workers to take decisions about individual children.

All staff, including volunteers and temporary staff must understand how Pony Partnerships safeguards and promotes the welfare of children, including the Pony Partnerships child protection policy, their role, and responsibilities in this and how to report any concerns.

Pony Partnerships staff with specific safeguarding responsibilities

- Name of DSL: Danielle Mills, Director, and Manager
(info@ponypartnerships.com/07505951793)
- Name of Deputy DSL: Kenton Mills, Director
(akisame_mills@hotmail.com/07874043653)

Ensuring a safe environment for all children

Pony Partnerships adopts an open and accepting attitude towards children as part of our responsibility. Children, parents, and staff will be free to talk about any concerns and will see Pony Partnerships as a safe place when there are difficulties. Children's and clients worries and fears will be taken seriously, and children and clients are encouraged to seek help from staff.

Pony Partnerships will therefore ensure that:

- An ethos where children and clients feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are listened too, taken seriously, and responded to appropriately is established and maintained.
- Children and clients are involved in the decision-making which affects them.
- Children and clients know that there are staff that they can approach if they are worried or have difficulties and Pony Partnerships has well developed listening systems.
- Posters are displayed which detail contact numbers for appropriate support services and child protection helplines i.e., DSCB and Childline.
- There is a clear written statement of the standards of behaviour and the boundaries of appropriate behaviour expected of staff and clients (see behaviour policy/code of conduct) that is understood and endorsed by all.
- Positive and safe behaviour is encouraged among clients and staff are alert to changes in child's or client's behaviour and recognise that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse.
- Effective working relationships are established with parents and colleagues from partner agencies.
There is an awareness that personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some children lead to an increased risk of neglect and or abuse.
- Staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding according to their roles and responsibilities, have regular opportunities for safeguarding briefings and records

are kept of all training undertaken.

- Safer recruitment procedures are used to make sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff (and volunteers) who work with children.
- Volunteers are appropriately supervised.
- Any groups using Pony Partnerships' premises for the provision of services to children have their own safeguarding policies, or adopt Pony Partnerships' policy, and have satisfactorily completed all appropriate checks.

Working with parents and carers

We recognise the importance of working with together with parents/carers to educate as well as safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Pony Partnerships will ensure that:

- We work with parents positively, openly, and honestly.
- Parents are encouraged to discuss their issues or concerns about safety and welfare of children, and they will be listened to and taken seriously.
- We will provide parents with information about the support available to keep children safe.
- Up to date and accurate information is kept about clients.
- Information about clients given to us by children themselves, their parents, or carers or by other agencies will remain confidential. Staff will be given relevant information on a 'need to know' basis in order to support the child.
- It is made clear to parents and carers that Pony Partnerships has a duty to share information when there are any safeguarding concerns. Also, that there is a duty to keep records which relate to safeguarding work by Pony Partnerships, or partner agencies. These will be kept securely, kept apart from the main client record and only accessible to key members of staff. Copies of these records will be deleted once they have been securely sent to the referring Pony Partnerships' DSL.
- Where we have reason to be concerned about the welfare of a child, we will always seek to discuss this with the child's parents or carers first, however there may be occasions where we are not able to do this.

Acting on Concerns:

If Pony Partnerships staff have a concern about a child or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the referral process as set out in Appendix 3 guidance. As is always the case, if Pony Partnerships staff are in any doubt as to what to do, they will speak to the DLA

See Appendix 3 for a flow chart setting out the process for Pony Partnerships staff when they have concerns about a child.

If Pony Partnerships staff have a concern, they will follow Pony Partnerships child protection policy and speak to the DSL (or deputy).

Options will then include:

- managing any support for the child internally via our support processes;
- an early help assessment
- a referral for statutory services, for example as the child might be in need, is in

need or suffering or likely to suffer harm.

The DSL or a deputy will always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns. If in exceptional circumstances, the DSL (or deputy) is not available, this will not delay appropriate action being taken. Pony Partnerships staff will consider taking advice from local children's social care. In these circumstances, any action taken will be shared with the DSL (or deputy) as soon as is practically possible.

Pony Partnerships staff will not assume a colleague, or another professional will act and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. Early information sharing is vital for effective identification, assessment, and allocation of appropriate service provision.

Action following referral

The DSL or other appropriate member of staff will:

- Follow up the referral in writing.
- Maintain contact with the allocated Social Worker.
- Contribute to the strategy discussion or meetings.
- Provide a report for, attend, and contribute to any initial and review child protection conference.
- Share the content of this report with the parent and if appropriate the child, prior to the meeting.
- Attend core group meetings for any child subject to a child protection plan or child in need meeting for any child subject to a child in need plan.
- If the child's situation does not appear to be improving the DSL will press for re-consideration.

What will the local authority do?

The local authority will decide, within one working day of a referral being made, about the type of response that is required and will let the referrer know the outcome. This will include determining whether:

- the child requires immediate protection and urgent action is required;
- whether the child is in need, and will be assessed under section 17;
- there is reasonable cause to suspect the child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, and whether enquiries must be made, and the child assessed under section 47;
- any services are required by the child and family and what type of services;
- further specialist assessments are required in order to help the local authority to decide further action to take.

Pony Partnerships will follow up if this information is not forthcoming.

If social workers decide to carry out a statutory assessment, Pony Partnerships staff will do everything they can to support that assessment (supported by the DSL (or deputy) as required).

If, after a referral, the child's situation does not appear to be improving, Pony Partnerships will

follow local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves.

Record keeping

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, will be recorded in writing using the Safeguarding Report form (Appendix 5).

Key points to remember for acting are;

- In an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, for example, call 999.
- Report your concern to the DSL or their deputy as soon as you can and by the end of the day at the latest.
- If the DSL or their deputy is not around, ensure the information is shared with the most senior person in the Pony Partnerships that day and ensure action is taken to report complex/serious or child protection concerns to Children's Social Care.
- Do not start your own investigation.
- Share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends, or family.
- Complete a record of the concerns (see Appendix 5).
- Seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

All staff will follow the LA Procedures (see appendix 3, 6, 7, 8)

It is not the responsibility of Pony Partnerships staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation; this is the responsibility of Children's Social Care. All staff however have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind. Accordingly, all concerns regarding the welfare of clients will be recorded and discussed with the DSL (or another senior member of staff in the absence of the designated lead) prior to any discussion with parents.

There will be occasions when you suspect that a child may be at risk, but you have no 'real' evidence. The child's behaviour and or appearance may have changed, their attendance in therapy may have reduced, their ability to concentrate and focus may have altered, or you may have noticed other physical but inconclusive signs. In these circumstances, you will try to give the child the opportunity to talk. The signs you have noticed may be due to a variety of factors and it is fine to ask the child if they are alright or if you can help in any way.

Ensure you record these early concerns using the Safeguarding form (Appendix 5).

If information is disclosed to you: It takes a lot of courage for a child, parent, carer, or other significant adult to disclose that they are worried or have concerns. They may feel ashamed, the abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults, or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault.

If a child or adult talks to you about any risks to a child's safety or wellbeing you will need to let them know that you must pass the information on – you are not allowed to keep secrets.

The point at which you do this is a matter for professional judgement. If you jump in

immediately the child or adult may think that you do not want to listen, if you leave it till the very end of the conversation, they may feel that you have misled them into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

During your conversation with the child or adult:

- Allow them to speak freely, listen to what is being said without interruption and without asking leading questions.
- Keep questions to a minimum and of an open nature i.e., 'can you tell me what happened?' rather than 'did x hit you?'
- Remain calm and do not overreact – the child or adult may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting you.
- Give reassuring nods or words of comfort – 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'I want to help', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me'.
- Do not be afraid of silences – remember how hard this must be for the child or adult.
- Under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what do other family members think about all this.
- At an appropriate time tell the child or adult that in order to help them you must pass the information on.
- Do not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort; it may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused.
- Avoid admonishing the child or adult for not disclosing earlier. Saying 'I do wish you had told me about this when it started' or 'I can't believe what I'm hearing' maybe your way of being supportive but they may interpret it that they have done something wrong.
- Tell the child or adult what will happen next. The child or adult may agree to go with you to see the DSL. Otherwise let them know that someone will come to see or contact them before the end of the day.
- Report verbally to the DSL.
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible and hand it to the DSL.
- Seek support if you feel distressed.

If you are unsure, you will always have a discussion with the DSL to agree the best way forward. Staff must always immediately inform the DSL if there is:

- Any suspicion that a child is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play.
- Any explanation given which appears inconsistent or suspicious.
- Any behaviours which give rise to suspicions that a child may have suffered harm.
- Any concerns that a child may be suffering from inadequate care, ill treatment, or emotional maltreatment.
- Any concerns that a child is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect.
- Any significant changes in a child's presentation, including non-attendance.
- Any hint or disclosure of abuse about or by a child / young person.
- Any concerns regarding person(s) who may pose a risk to children e.g., living in a household with children present.
- Information which indicates that the child is living with someone who does not have parental responsibility for them (private fostering).
- Any concerns that a child is at risk of forced marriage, honour-based violence, or female genital mutilation (FGM).

Role of the DSL following identification of needs or concerns:

The DSL will:

- Assess any urgent medical needs of the child.
- Consider whether the child has low level, emerging needs, or complex/serious needs or if there are child protection concerns.
- Check whether the child is currently subject to a child protection plan, or has previously been subject to a plan, is looked after, has child in need plan or an early help assessment (EHA) or is open to a Multi-Agency Team (MAT) or known to another agency.
- Confirm whether any previous concerns have been raised by staff.
- Consider whether the matter will be discussed with the child's parents or carers or whether to do so may put the child a further risk of harm (see below).

If unsure that a child protection referral will be made, seek advice from Children's Social Care.

Multi-Agency Working

Pony Partnerships CIC has a pivotal role to play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The Trustees will ensure that Pony Partnerships CIC contributes to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Information sharing

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect. As part of meeting a child's needs, the Trustees recognise the importance of information sharing between practitioners and local agencies. Staff will be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess, and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to the local authority children's social care.

The Trustees are aware that among other obligations, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure.

The Trustees will ensure relevant staff have due regard to the relevant data protection principles, which allow them to share (and withhold) personal information, as provided for in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR. This includes:

- being confident of the processing conditions which allow them to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information, which is sensitive and personal, and should be treated as 'special category personal data'.
- understanding that 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' is a processing condition that allows practitioners to share special category personal data. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent where there is good reason to do so, and that the sharing of information will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner, but it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent

would place a child at risk.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

Notifying parents

Pony Partnerships will normally seek to discuss any needs or concerns about a child with their parents or carers. This must be handled sensitively. Where an early help assessment would benefit the child and their family the most appropriate member of staff will approach the parent/carer to take this forward. In situations where there are serious/complex needs or child protection concerns the DSL will contact the parent or carer.

However, if Pony Partnerships believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, then advice will first be sought from Children's Social Care.

Confidentiality, sharing information and record keeping

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

Pony Partnerships will operate with regard to HM Government Information Sharing; Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (2015) and Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Boards' Information Sharing Agreement and Guidance for Practitioners (2015) (will a young person come from another local authority then the first point of call would be to contact the duty social care team or local safeguarding board for direction/guidance – see appendix 6, 7, 8). All staff will be mindful of the seven golden rules to sharing information (please see Appendix 1).

Staff will only discuss concerns with the DSL, Manager or Trustees (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Wherever possible consent will be sought to share information however where there are safeguarding concerns about a child, information will be shared with the appropriate organisations such as Children's Social Care. In most cases concerns will be discussed with parents and carers prior to the referral taking place unless by doing so would increase risk.

Pony Partnership's policy on confidentiality and information-sharing is available to parents and children on request.

Record keeping

Records of concerns documentation and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant

individuals.

Safeguarding information will be stored separately from the client's therapy file and the therapy file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held.

Copies of these records will be securely sent to any referring Pony Partnerships and a confirmation of receipt obtained. Support for those involved in a safeguarding/child protection issue:

- Child neglect and abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved. We will support the children and their families and staff by:
 - Taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously.
 - Nominating a link person who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact.
 - Where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a child, a separate link person will be nominated to avoid any conflict of interest.
 - Responding sympathetically to any request from a child or member of staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety.
 - Maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies.
 - Storing records securely.
 - Offering details of helplines, counselling, or other avenues of external support.
 - Following the procedures laid down in our whistle blowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures.
 - Co-operating fully with relevant statutory agencies.

Safer Recruitment and Selection of Pony Partnerships Staff

Pony Partnerships has adopted robust recruitment and selection procedures that minimise the risk of employing people who might abuse children or are otherwise unsuitable to work with them. We complete a full range of checks which are carried out to minimise the possibility of children and young people suffering harm from those they consider to be in positions of trust.

We ensure that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works at Pony Partnerships, including volunteers and staff employed by contractors. This is an essential part of creating a safe environment for children and young people.

Safer practice in recruitment means thinking about and including issues to do with child protection and safeguarding children at every stage of the process. This includes obtaining and scrutinising comprehensive information about applicants. For example, obtaining professional references, verifying academic or vocational qualifications, previous employment history, verifying health and physical capacity for the job as well as resolving any discrepancies or anomalies in references.

Everyone who works in the Pony Partnerships, including volunteers will have appropriate Disclosure and Barring (DBS) and where necessary, disqualification by association checks. See DBS policy statement.

Allegations against therapists and other staff (including volunteers)

Safe recruitment practices are vital whenever someone is recruited to work with children however this is not the end of the matter. Therapy settings are a safe environment for the majority of children and the majority of people who work with children have their safety and welfare at heart. Everyone at Pony Partnerships will be mindful that some individuals seek access to children in order to abuse them and that the nature of abuse means that children often don't disclose. It is crucial that everyone is aware of these issues, and the need to adopt ways of working and appropriate practice to help reduce allegations. It is also important that everyone is able to raise concerns about what seems to be poor or unsafe practice by colleagues.

These concerns and concerns expressed by children, parents and others are listened to and taken seriously. Where appropriate, action is taken in accordance with procedures for dealing with allegations against staff.

It is essential that any allegation against a therapist or other member of staff, or volunteer is dealt with quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is subject to the allegation.

Where an allegation is made against a therapist or member of staff (including volunteers) that they have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

Pony Partnerships will always comply with the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Procedures for allegations against staff, carers, and volunteers. Please see the Allegations against staff, volunteers & carers referral to local authority designated officer (LADO) form (appendix 9).

If you have concerns about a colleague: Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a child are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount. All concerns of poor practice or concerns about a child's welfare brought about by the behaviour of colleagues will be reported.

Duty to refer to DBS: Pony Partnerships will uphold our legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult; where the harm test is satisfied in respect of that individual; where the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or if there is reason to believe that individual has committed a listed relevant offence; and that individual has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left.

Initial actions following an allegation

- The person who has received an allegation or witnessed an event will immediately inform the Manager (or the Trustees/DCSB) if the allegation is against the Manager) and make a record which will include time, date, place of incident, persons present, what was witnessed, what was said etc; this will then be signed and dated (see Appendix 5).
- The Manager where appropriate will take steps to secure the immediate safety of children and urgent medical needs.
- The member of staff will not be approached at this stage unless it is necessary to address the immediate safety of children.
- The Manager may need to clarify any information regarding the allegation; no person will be interviewed at this stage.

Some allegations will be so serious as to require immediate intervention by Children's Social Care and/or police.

- The Manager, or Trustees will immediately discuss the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). This will take place within one working day; see other key safeguarding contacts list on page 8. The discussion will consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action.
- The Manager will inform the Trustees of any allegation.
- Consideration will be given throughout to the support and information needs of clients, parents, and staff.
- If consideration needs to be given to the individual's employment, advice will be sought.

Whistleblowing: All Pony Partnerships staff and volunteers will feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in Pony Partnerships' safeguarding regime and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the Trustees.

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them:

- general guidance on whistleblowing can be found via: Advice on Whistleblowing;
- the NSPCC's what you can do to report abuse dedicated helpline is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: <mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk>.
- Please also see the Allegations against staff, volunteers & carers referral to local authority designated officer (LADO) form (appendix 9).

Appendix 1 – Seven Golden Rules for Information Sharing

1. Remember that the Data Protection Act 1998 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.
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 for other practitioners if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
4. Share with informed consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is a good reason 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 certain of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.
5. Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being 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, it shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up to date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
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.

Taken from Information Sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents, and carers, (2015) HM Government

Appendix 2 – Role of the DSL

Trustees will ensure that Pony Partnerships designates an appropriate senior member of staff to take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety). This person will have the status and authority within Pony Partnerships to carry out the duties of the post including committing resources and, where appropriate, supporting and directing other staff.

Their additional responsibilities include providing advice and support to other staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and/or supporting other staff to do so, and contributing to the assessment of children.

Availability

During term time the DSL (or a deputy) should always be available (during school or college hours) for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

Manage referrals

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to refer cases:

- of suspected abuse and neglect to the local authority children's social care as required and support staff who make referrals to local authority children's social care
- to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required and support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme
- where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required, and
- where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.

Working with others

The DSL is expected to:

- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff
- act as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners
- liaise with the headteacher or principal to inform him or her of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This should include being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult.
- as required, liaise with the "case manager" (as per Part four) and the local authority designated officer(s) (LADO) for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member
- liaise with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and welfare (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies so that children's needs are considered holistically
- liaise with the mental health support team, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health
- promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances
- work relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children.

Information sharing and managing the child protection file

The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for ensuring that child protection files are kept up to date.

Information should be kept confidential and stored securely. It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child.

Records should include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

They should ensure the file is only accessed by those who need to see it and where the file or content within it is shared, this happens in line with information sharing advice as set out in Part one and Part two of KCSIE (2023) guidance.

Where children leave the provision, the designated safeguarding lead should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the provision soon as possible. This should be transferred separately from the other files, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained.

Lack of information about their circumstances can impact on the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. In addition to the child protection file, the designated safeguarding lead should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any additional information with the new provision in advance of a child leaving to help them put in place the right support to safeguard this child and to help the child thrive.

Raising Awareness

The DSL should:

- ensure each member of staff has access to, and understands the child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part-time staff
- ensure the child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing bodies or proprietors regarding this
- ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents and referrers know that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made
- link with the safeguarding partner arrangements to make sure staff are aware of any training opportunities and the latest local policies on local safeguarding arrangements.

Training, knowledge, and skills

The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training should be updated at least every two years.

The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should also undertake Prevent awareness training. Training should provide designated safeguarding leads with a good understanding of their own role, how to identify, understand and respond to specific needs that can increase the vulnerability of children, as well as specific harms that can put children at risk, and the processes, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly local authority children's social care, so they:

- understand the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention,

including local criteria for action and local authority children's social care referral arrangements

- have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so
- understand the importance of the role the designated safeguarding lead has in providing information and support to local authority children social care in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have, including on children's behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and what is needed in responding to this in promoting outcomes
- are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those with relevant health conditions and young carers
- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and college, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners
- understand and support with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation
- can recognise the additional risks that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from bullying, grooming and radicalisation
- obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses, and
- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them.

In addition to the formal training set out above, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, and at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

Providing support to staff

Training should support the designated safeguarding lead in developing expertise, so they can support and advise staff and help them feel confident on welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters. This includes specifically to:

- ensure that staff are supported during the referrals processes, and
- support staff to consider how safeguarding, welfare and educational outcomes are linked, including to inform the provision of support.

Understanding the views of children

It is important that all children feel heard and understood. Therefore, designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) should be supported in developing knowledge and skills to:

- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, and in any measures put in place to protect them, and,
- understand the difficulties that children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and consider how to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication.

Holding and sharing information

The critical importance of recording, holding, using and sharing information effectively is set out in Parts one, two and five of this document, and therefore the designated safeguarding lead should be equipped to:

- understand the importance of information sharing with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners
- understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and
- be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals and understand the purpose of this record-keeping.

Taken from Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 pages 165-170

Appendix 3 – Referral Flow Chart

1. In cases which also involve a concern or an allegation of abuse against a staff member, see Part four of this guidance.
2. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. Where a child would benefit from co-ordinated early help, an early help inter-agency assessment should be arranged. Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) provides detailed guidance on the early help process.
3. Referrals should follow the process set out in the local threshold document and local protocol for assessment. Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).
4. Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, it has a duty to make enquiries to decide whether to take action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. Full details are in Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).
5. This could include applying for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO).

Appendix 4 - Child Referral Form to Children's Social Care

https://myaccount.derby.gov.uk/en/service/report_concerns_about_a_child

Appendix 5 Safeguarding Report

This form is the formal record of a safeguarding concern about a child or young person within Pony Partnerships and will be completed immediately and in full. Please pass to Designated Safeguarding Person on the same day as the incident (or as soon as possible).

Name of child:	Date of Birth:
Date of concern:	Time of concern:
Concern identified by:	Role/Position:
Name of alleged person(s) responsible for the harm:	How is this person known to the victim:
Witnesses:	Place of incident:

Concern/Incident/Disclosure:
(Why are you concerned about this child? What have you observed, when? What have you been told and when? Please provide a description of any incidents or anything you have been told by a child or another person. Remember to make clear what is fact and what is hearsay/opinion. Note the language/terminology used by the child, or adult, and be clear about who has said what.)

Has any action been taken in relations to this concern:
(This could be action taken by yourself or anybody else including other agencies, parents etc)

Any relevant historic information that will be considered:
(Include any known agencies involved relevant to the disclosure/concern. Include any information that may guide decision making i.e., is the child on the CP register, are they known to the CSE strategy, previous allegations made, and any other relevant information known to adds to this concern).

This section completed by:	Date & Time:
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Concern passed to/discussed with:	Date & Time:
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Was there a delay in passing on the concern:	YES / NO
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If yes, please comment on the reasons for the delay:

Action to be taken/recommendations from DSP:	
Who did you report this incident to DSP, Asst DSP?	What time was this reported?
(Highlight here the recommended actions to be taken) • XX	Actions completed – please evidence • xx
Signed:	Dated:

FOR COMPLETION BY (ASST) DSP ONLY

Have all requested actions been completed	YES/NO
Any action taken by the DSP:	
Has this been fed back to referrer	YES/NO
Signed by (ASST)DSP - (involved in the incident) SIGNATURE: PRINT NAME:	Signed by MANAGER or (ASST)DSP – (Clarification) SIGNATURE: PRINT NAME:

Appendix 6 Local safeguarding information: Derby/Derbyshire

Getting help

Derbyshire Police

If you believe that a child or an adult is at immediate risk of harm and in need of protection then you should call the Police - 999, straight away.

Alternatively, if you want advice from the Police and the child or adult is not in immediate need of protection, you can call the Police on the telephone number 101.

Children's Social Care in Derby and Derbyshire

If you are a practitioner and wish to talk to a Social Worker about ways to engage children and families in early help and/or whether thresholds for Social Care or Early Help have been met, please ring the area where the child lives:

- In Derbyshire - Starting Point Consultation and Advice Service for Professionals 01629 535353. The service operates Monday to Friday from 8am – 6pm.
- In Derby City - Children's Services Professional Consultation Line 07812 300329. The service operates Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm.

If you are concerned about a child's welfare or worried, they are being abused, you should make a referral to Children's Social Care in the area where the child lives.

- In Derbyshire via Starting Point Telephone contact to Starting Point 01629 533190 or via an [online referral](#).
- In Derby City:
 - Urgent referrals via Initial Response Team during normal working days between 9 am and 5 pm on 01332 641172. At all other times concerns can be discussed with Careline who can be contacted on 01332 956606. Remember: all telephone referrals should be followed up within 48 hours using the [Derby Children's Social Care Online Referral System](#).
 - Non-urgent concerns should be submitted via the [Derby Children's Social Care Online Referral System](#). Online referrals will only be checked during normal working days between 9am and 5pm, only urgent referrals made via 01332 956606 will be responded to out of hours, on weekends and bank holidays.

Please note that the link to the online referral system takes you to a 'My Account Register or login page'. To quickly access the referral form you can click on the continue without an account link, or if you prefer you can create an account prior to completing the referral form.

For more information see [Making a referral to Social Care procedure](#).

Please do not keep your worries to yourself

[The Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Procedures](#) set out in detail how concerns

about the welfare of children are looked into and gives information about local contacts, including where staff can get further advice and information. More information is available on the page.

[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused is national guidance for practitioners that sets](#) out the main steps to take to safeguard children.

Think Family

You may also be concerned about the welfare of an adult living in the same home.

If you are the victim of abuse, or you think you know someone who is being or has been abused, it is really important to get help and advice or make a referral:

- In Derbyshire this should be via Call Derbyshire 01629 533190 between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday, and between 9.30am and 4pm on Saturdays. Outside these times contact the out of hours service 01629 532600.
- In Derby City contact Adults, Health, and Housing, during normal working days between 9 am and 5 pm on 01332 640777. At all other times concerns can be discussed with Careline who can be contacted on 01332 956606.

More information about safeguarding adults at risk can be found on the [Derby Safeguarding Adult Board website](#) or [Derbyshire Safeguarding Adults Board website](#).

Appendix 7 Local safeguarding information: Nottingham/Nottinghamshire

If you are concerned about a child contact Children's Social Care tel: 0300 500 80 80

In an emergency outside of office hours please call our emergency duty team on tel: 0300 456 4546

If you work for Nottinghamshire County Council or one of our partner agencies see the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) page

In an emergency dial 999, if less urgent phone 101. Or visit:

If you are concerned about someone who works with children, contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) via 0115 977 3921.

If you are not sure whether a child is being abused you can discuss the circumstances with us or with someone else who works with children, such as a teacher, health visitor or the NSPCC. All professionals who work with children have a responsibility to safeguard them and will know how to help.

Appendix 8 Neighboring Authorities Access Points

These are the links to contact details for safeguarding and Early Help for the local authorities neighbouring Derby/Shire and Nottingham/Shire

Lincolnshire County Council Safeguarding: <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/safeguarding/report-concern>

Leicestershire County Council Safeguarding:
<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/community-safety/report-abuse-or-neglect-of-a-child>

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council <https://dscp.org.uk/report-concern>

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Safeguarding:
<https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/child-protection/worried-child>