

Safeguarding children at risk

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Key point summary

- All children (defined as under 18 years old) have the right to be safe from harm or abuse.
- There are three key principles within the policy:
 - The welfare of the child is the paramount consideration.
 - All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religious belief or sexual identity have a right to protection from harm.
 - All situations should be viewed as objectively as possible without the influence of any preconceptions about different family units or child rearing practices.

Signs of abuse

- Child abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional or through neglect.
- You may witness violent or inappropriate behaviour by an adult or young person towards a child, or the home conditions are such that it is clear that the child is not being afforded the care, nurture and protection to which they are entitled. Signs of abuse could be (this list is not exhaustive):
 - Injuries, particularly when it appears they have not received medical attention.
 - Obvious neglect and malnourishment.
 - Drug and alcohol misuse by carers of children.
 - Children being left home alone, particularly in hazardous circumstances such as with dogs or unattended fires.
 - A filthy home environment.
 - Domestic violence in the home.
 - Inappropriate bed sharing arrangements.

Reporting procedures

- All London Fire Brigade (LFB) staff have a duty to act on any concern or suspicion that a child is/has or may be at risk of being abused, neglected or exploited. **If in doubt refer.**
- In the event of immediate risk:
 - Act in the best interests of the child at risk.
 - Contact the police straight away on 999 as well as following LFB internal reporting procedures.
 - Two members of staff should stay with the child and preserve the scene until police arrive.
- All safeguarding concerns must be reported within 4 hours of the concern arising where there is an immediate risk to the child and within 24 hours for all other concerns.
- A LFB safeguarding referral **must** be made even if a partner agency, such as the police, have made a referral, or when a referral has been raised previously for the same individual/s.
- If possible, the following information should be gathered:
 - Name
 - Address
 - Telephone number
 - Gender
 - Date of birth
 - Special considerations i.e. disability, language/communication issues, risky behaviours etc
 - The details of any other children (under 18) living in the home.
 - Does the child/parent/carer know about the referral?
 - Where possible, you should let the person know (or their parent/carer) that you are making a referral, but this isn't always possible or appropriate. Not telling the person about your intent should not prevent you from making a referral).
 - Has the child/parent/carer given their consent?

- Making a safeguarding referral is **not** dependant on consent being given. There will be some instances where consent should not be sought i.e. where it may place the child at increased risk of significant harm, where it may hamper the prevention or investigation of a serious crime and/or where it may lead to an unjustified delay in making a referral.
- You may worry that you could be mistaken about the cause of injuries or disturbing behaviour. If you are unsure please discuss with your line manager, operational manager, or with the Officer Of the Day through the reporting system in order to obtain another perspective. You will not be at fault for reporting a concern of this nature. **If in doubt refer** and all reported concerns will be treated in confidence.
- Refer to the appendices below for guidance on reporting child safeguarding concerns within the times stated in the table below:
 - Appendix 1 – Flowchart for reporting a child safeguarding concern
 - Appendix 5 – Person at Risk (PAR) Form

SAFEGUARDING REFERRAL PROCESS TO FOLLOW	
<u>08:00 – 17.00</u> <u>MON-FRI</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safeguarding concerns should be raised with the Base Station Commander using the Person at Risk Form (PAR) 2. If the Base SC cannot be reached, the next port of call should be one of the other SCs in the Borough, or the local Borough Commander 3. If none of the Borough SCs or BC can be reached, the Officer Of the Day should be called and the OOD1/2 will contact another BC or SC in that Area initially, or another Area, if none are available and pass the Safeguarding concern across to them to be referred. The OOD1/2 will refer if no Borough based SC/BC is available, to meet the referral time requirement 4. Whichever Officer reviews the referral, they will make the decision to refer/not refer this to the Local Authority. They will justify and confirm their decision in the PAR form.
<u>ANY OTHER</u> <u>TIME</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact the OOD to check availability of Borough based SC or BC for borough concerned. If none are available, another SC or BC in that Area or another area will be contacted and the Safeguarding concern passed cross to them to be referred 2. The OOD1/2 will refer if no Borough based SC/BC is available, to meet the referral time requirement 3. Whichever Officer reviews the referral, they will make the decision to refer/not refer this to the Local Authority. They will justify and confirm their decision in the PAR form.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy establishes the roles and responsibilities of LFB staff in relation to the safeguarding of children. This includes staff who either work with or come into contact with children in the course of their duties, e.g. firefighters, schools' officers etc.
- 1.2 All paid and volunteer staff need to be aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, how they should respond to child protection concerns and procedures to follow when making a referral to local authorities or the police if necessary.
- 1.3 These instructions set out the actions, which **must** be taken where there are concerns relating to the safeguarding of children from harm or abuse. The instructions apply to all personnel and any individual working for or on behalf of the Brigade. Any failure by personnel to comply with these instructions may be subject to action under the Brigade disciplinary procedures and in certain circumstances could lead to disciplinary action resulting in dismissal.
- 1.4 All children have a right to be safe from harm or abuse. You may see, hear or be told something in the course of your work that makes you concerned about a child. If you are concerned that a child may be at risk from harm or abuse, is being or has been abused you must raise a child safeguarding concern following the procedure in appendix 1 – Flowchart for raising a child safeguarding concern.
- 1.5 If a member of staff believes that a child is at immediate risk, e.g. a child home alone, the police should be notified immediately.
- 1.6 Remember that if you have concerns **DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION** in safeguarding children!

2 Safeguarding children at risk policy statement

- 2.1 The LFB recognises that the safeguarding of children and young people (hereafter referred to as children) is everyone's responsibility. This policy, the related procedural instructions and guidance, establishes the roles and responsibilities of LFB staff in relation to the safeguarding of children with whom they come into contact through their work.
- 2.2 A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18.
- 2.3 If children are to be safe from harm it is essential that the Brigade contributes appropriately to the work of those mandated by law to actively protect children. The instructions have been derived from the London Child Protection Procedures. The Brigade will receive updated versions of this document as they become available.
- 2.4 There are three key principles within the policy:
 - The welfare of the child is the paramount consideration.
 - All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religious belief or sexual identity have a right to protection from harm.
 - All situations should be viewed as objectively as possible without the influence of any preconceptions about different family units or child rearing practices.
- 2.5 Attached guidance has been developed to support you when working with children. This will not only help to safeguard children but will also help staff to identify any practices which could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse. Good practice will also protect the Brigade through reducing the possibility of anyone using their role within the Brigade to gain access to children in order to abuse them.

- 2.6 All staff involved in working with children will receive appropriate training or briefing. Their role and degree of access to children will determine the level of this training or briefing required. Those staff and volunteers who undertake activities which involve 'substantial access' to children will undertake refresher training at no less than three yearly intervals.
- 2.7 For the purposes of this policy 'substantial access' applies to situations where:
- An individual has regular contact over a period of time with the same children during an activity or series of activities.
 - The opportunity exists to develop a relationship with a child over a period of time.
- 2.8 Single visits to different school classes, groups of children or children making single visits to a fire station would not be referred to as affording substantial access to children. However, in these situations the guidance in this document must still be adhered to.
- 2.9 It is acknowledged that reporting concerns regarding the possibility of abuse can be difficult. Saying or doing nothing is not an option. The Brigade will support anyone who, in good faith, reports concerns that a child is being abused or is at risk of abuse, even if those concerns are proved to be unfounded. For further information please see Policy number 569 – confidential reporting ("whistleblowing") policy.
- 2.10 LFB staff who may be emotionally impacted through working with vulnerable children in distressing circumstances should speak to their line manager and explore options for support from counselling and trauma services.
- 2.11 A copy of this policy may be made available to carers of children who take part in Brigade activities where substantial access to children occurs. This guidance will explain our commitment to safeguarding children and the nature and extent of the activities that will be undertaken.

3 Recognising harm to children¹

- 3.1 Child abuse and neglect is a general term for all ill treatment of children including serious physical and sexual assaults as well as cases where a standard of care does not adequately support the child's health or development. Please also see appendix 2 - Signs of child abuse.
- 3.2 Children may be abused or neglected through the infliction of harm, or through failure to act to prevent harm. Abuse can occur in a family, an institution or in the wider community. The abuser may or may not be known to the child.
- **Working together to safeguard children** sets out how organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The guidance sets out definitions and examples of four broad categories of abuse. These are:
 - Neglect
 - Physical abuse
 - Sexual abuse
 - Emotional abuse
- 3.3 These categories overlap and an abused child frequently suffers more than one type of abuse.

Neglect

- Neglect involves 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 and development.

¹ Taken from the London Child Protection Procedures (London Children Safeguarding Board) 5th edition 2013

- This may involve failure to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failure to protect from physical harm and/or danger or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may include the neglect of a child's basic emotional needs. Leaving a child unsupervised at home may constitute neglect.
- The law does not specify an age at which a child may be left at home alone. However, it is an offence to do so if it places them at risk. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) says:
 - Children under 12 are rarely mature enough to be left alone for a long period of time.
 - Children under 16 shouldn't be left alone overnight.
 - Babies, toddlers and very young children should never be left alone.
- Parents can be prosecuted if they leave a child unsupervised 'in a manner likely to cause unnecessary suffering or injury to health'.

Physical abuse

- Physical abuse may take many forms e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.
- It may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child. This unusual and potentially dangerous form of abuse is described as fabricated or induced illness in a child.

Sexual abuse

- Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening and includes penetrative (i.e. vaginal, oral or anal rape or buggery) and non-penetrative acts.
- It may also include non-contact activities such as involving children looking at, or in production of pornographic materials, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Emotional abuse

- Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development and may involve:
 - Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
 - Imposing developmentally inappropriate expectations.
 - Causing children to feel frightened or in danger.
 - Witnessing domestic violence.
 - Exploitation or corruption of children.
- Some level of emotional abuse is involved in most types of ill-treatment of children, though emotional abuse may occur alone.

Signs and symptoms

- 3.4 There are many signs and symptoms of abuse but none of them are unique to a particular type of abuse and **could** be explained as non-abusive. The following behavioural signs may or may not be indications that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.
- 3.5 The following gives an indication of the main types of abuse. The behavioural signs listed here may or may not be indications that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered. Please also refer to: Signs of child abuse (appendix 1) for further detail.

Signs of possible physical abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries which occur to the body in places that are not normally exposed to falls etc.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention.
- Neglect – under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care etc.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains.
- Bruises, burns, bites, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation.
- Cuts/scratches/substance misuse.

Signs of possible sexual abuse

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse.
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play.
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home.
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.
- Eating disorders – anorexia, bulimia.

Signs of possible emotional abuse

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy. Also, depression/aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness.
- Obsessions or phobias.
- Sudden under achievement or lack of concentration.
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults.
- Attention-seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness.
- Running away/stealing/lying.
- Firesetting.
- Deliberate self-harm including eating disorders.

4 Roles and responsibilities of LFB staff

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of every manager within the Brigade to make sure that all staff for whom they are responsible are aware of and understand the importance of this policy and the related documents. They must also make sure that any contractors, agents or other representatives whom they engage to undertake duties on their behalf, which may involve them in contact with children, understand and comply with them, as appropriate.
- 4.2 In posts that involve 'substantial access to children', personnel will be required to undergo an enhanced disclosure and barring service (DBS) check. Regardless of this, staff should work with another adult present or with a minimum of two children at all times (please refer to appendix 3 - Guidance for all staff working with children or working on youth engagement programmes and appendix 4- Parental consent form).

What to do if a child tells you they are being abused

- 4.3 Children will occasionally disclose abuse to an adult they have come to feel they can trust. This happens for many reasons and it is important to remember that if they do tell you they are usually doing it because they want it to stop **even if they ask you to do nothing with the information**. Tell them that in order for you to ensure that they are safe you will have to inform others to help them. **Never make promises to keep information a secret.**
- 4.4 They may feel that they are betraying someone who they are close to and whom they love. It is not unusual for a child to love the abuser but want the abuse to stop, especially when that person is a parent or carer. Equally it may be someone they fear. Either way, it takes great courage for a child to talk to an adult and your response can be crucial.
- 4.5 If a child discloses abuse to you in the course of your work it is important to react appropriately, as follows.
- LISTEN to the child, allow them to talk freely.
 - ASK 'Tell me **who** it was?' **When** did it happen? **Where** did this happen? If they won't answer, don't push them or offer suggestions.
 - STOP don't ask any more questions, we are here to gather information in order to make a referral, and not to investigate.
 - TAKE SERIOUSLY what the child has said. We should not make judgments about the information given.
 - TELL the child you must tell other people who can help. Tell your line manager immediately who will refer the issue to the BC/duty DAC.
 - PUT IN WRITING using the Person At Risk (PAR) form (see appendix 5 - Person at Risk (PAR) form) what the child said using their words if possible, as soon as it is practicable and ensure a child safeguarding referral is raised within FOUR hours if there is an immediate risk or within 24 hours if there are not immediate risks.
- 4.6 Children with a disability may also have to overcome additional barriers before disclosing abuse. They may well rely on the abuser for their daily care and have no knowledge of alternative sources. They may have come to believe they are of little worth so simply comply with the instruction of adults.

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused

- 4.7 This section gives LFB staff guidance about what to do if there are concerns that a child may be at risk of abuse, is being, or had been abused either by:
- A member of staff.
 - A member of their family.
 - Any other person, including another child.
- 4.8 Guidance for senior officers on making referrals concerning children at risk is available at appendix 6.
- 4.9 The designated safeguarding team (DST) is comprised of the local borough station commander (SC), another SC in the borough and the borough commander (BC).
- 4.10 During working hours (between 08:00 and 17:00), where there is an immediate risk to the individual, all concerns should be raised with the local base station commander OR another station commander in the borough OR the local borough commander in writing within 4 hours, and within 24 hours for all other concerns.
- 4.11 In the event that there is no DST member available, the concern will be passed to the OOD. As the local SC/BC will not be the first port of call for making referrals, it is the responsibility of the other DST members/ the OOD to update the local DC/BC with details of any concerns raised.

- 4.12 Outside working hours (between 17:00 and 08:00) concerns should be reported to the Officer Of the Day (OOD) who will check the availability of senior officers in order of above. If no senior officer is available, the OOD will assume this role. In all cases, **the referral process should be started, and actions taken, immediately.**

The referrer needs to complete the PAR form with as much relevant detail as possible. The PAR form can be accessed via the safeguarding hotwire page or the start menu. Guidance on completing the PAR is available on the Safeguarding Hotwire page.

- 4.13 It is the responsibility of the DST senior officer/OOD to update the BC of the borough where the incident has happened with the details and outcome of the referral.
- 4.14 If a member of staff believes that a child is at immediate risk, e.g. a child home alone the police should be notified immediately. Two members of staff should stay with the child and preserve the scene until police arrive.
- 4.15 A LFB safeguarding referral **must** be made even if a partner agency, such as the police, has already made a referral. Likewise, where LFB have previously raised a concern for the child at risk, staff are still required to raise a new referral.
- 4.16 If a child raises a question or divulges information that causes concern about their safety or welfare through a school related activity undertaken in the course of your work it will be necessary to discuss and record these concerns with the headteacher before leaving the school and will also contact the DST senior officer as soon as possible. In the absence of an available manager you may contact the OOD (via the CORE Team).
- 4.17 The responsibility for deciding whether to refer the matter to the safeguarding adults team within the local Social Services Department (SSD) lies with the DST/ OOD. On receipt of a referral the DST senior officer/OOD will liaise, if necessary, with the relevant SSD for guidance on whether a concern needs to be raised. The DST senior officer/OOD must be the only point of contact with the Children's Services department of the relevant Borough Council Social Services department (SSD) in respect of safeguarding referrals.
- 4.18 All correspondence that sits outside the PAR form, meaning sent before and/or after raising an official referral using the PAR form, should be marked "OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE PERSONAL DATA" in the subject title of the email and copied to the Social Issues Mailbox. Policy number 619 - LFB security classifications system applies.
- 4.19 By using the 'attach file' function in the PAR form, the referrer and DST/OOD have the ability to attach additional documents/emails to the PAR form when making a referral, or to add retrospectively to the referral e.g. further information/correspondence received from external agencies etc. Note that attachments cannot be accessed by external agencies. However, this information may be of significant importance for both internal and external auditing, and potential Safeguarding Reviews.

Welfare concerns

- 4.20 In cases where persons under the age of 18 are involved, the matter would automatically become a child protection issue.
- 4.21 There may be instances where a child safeguarding referral would need to be raised but there are also concerns about the adult(s) responsible for the care of the child(ren) in the home – see appendix 7 - Safeguarding and Welfare Concern flowchart. Where such a situation arises, a welfare or safeguarding referral would also need to be raised for the adult(s) alongside the referral for the child(ren).

Suspensions or accusations against a member of staff

- 4.22 In the case where a member of staff is suspected or accused of abuse, the issue must be reported to the OOD who will report the matter to the duty deputy assistant commissioner (DAC). The individual will normally be suspended from any activity allowing access to children and a decision will be taken about whether or not to suspend the individual from work in consultation with the relevant head of service and the duty DAC pending an investigation.

Keeping safe – avoiding false allegations – a code of conduct

- 4.23 This code has been developed to provide you with guidance, which will help to protect children and also help you and your colleagues identify any practices that could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse. Good practice will also protect the Brigade through reducing the possibility of anyone using their role within the Brigade to gain access to children in order to abuse them.
- 4.24 Good practice begins with the recruitment and selection of staff, ensuring where appropriate that the necessary 'statutory' checks are carried out and references taken which refer to the candidates' suitability to work/have contact with children, e.g. DBS checks.
- 4.25 Once staff are in place there is much they can do to avoid situations, that may give, rise to misinterpretation. This will also work to protect children. Wherever possible you should be guided by the following advice. If it is necessary to carry out practices contrary to it you should where possible discuss with and gain the approval of your BC for operational staff/line manager for non-operational staff. In emergency situations this discussion may occur after the incident.
- (a) Try to avoid unobserved one to one contact with a child wherever possible.
 - (b) In the event of any injury to a child, accidental or otherwise, ensure that it is recorded and the statement witnessed by another adult.
 - (c) There are times when you may engage with a child alone. Likely situations will include a child needing time out from an activity due to challenging behaviour or a request for you to speak to them about something they are worried about. Do not make it usual practice and do not initiate such contact yourself. Always inform a colleague when these situations arise and make sure you can be seen by others during this engagement. Consider other options such as asking the child to include a colleague in any discussion.
 - (d) Keep records on any allegations a child makes against you or another employee. This should include everything from "you're always picking on me" to "you hit me" or comments such as "don't touch me". Ensure that the DST senior officer/OOD are aware of any such allegations.
 - (e) If a child touches you in an inappropriate place, record what happened and ensure that another adult also knows. As it could be a totally innocent touch, do not make the child feel like a criminal. However, remember that ignoring this or allowing it to continue may place you in a vulnerable position. Neither is it a good idea for the child to go on as the next person might take advantage and then say that the child instigated it.
 - (f) Don't place yourself in a situation where you are spending excessive amounts of time alone with one child, away from other people. If privacy is required, ensure that the door to the room is open and someone knows where you are, who you are with and why.
 - (g) Never transport or offer to transport children alone in a vehicle. When a minibus is used to transport children at least two members of staff should be present.
 - (h) Avoid lifting children in and out of appliances, use ramps or stairs where available. However, assistance should be given if not doing so would cause harm to a child e.g. they may fall from the appliance.

- (i) Never do something of a personal nature for children, which they can do themselves. This includes any activity that could be misconstrued. This may include taking a child into a toilet.
- (j) In organized Brigade events or activities, you should avoid entering a room where a child may be changing their clothes or partially dressed, for example an activity where a child is required to change into safety equipment. In emergency situations the safety and rescue of the child would be paramount as there may be occasions when you need to intervene where a child is partially clothed, e.g. a call out to a swimming pool.
- (k) Be careful when initiating physical contact with a child. Be mindful of how and where you touch children. Avoid touching their chest, bottom and genital area where possible.
- (l) Do not engage in or allow any sexually provocative games involving or observed by children, whether based on talking or touching.
- (m) Never make suggestive remarks or discriminatory comments to a child.
- (n) Do not engage in or tolerate any bullying of a child either by adults or other children.
- (o) Avoid favouritism and singling-out troublemakers.
- (p) Do not engage in or tolerate physical activity such as 'rough and tumble' play/behaviour involving children.
- (q) Photographs or video footage of young people under the age of 18 years (where parental consent has been obtained) should only be taken in sight of other persons and only at formal Brigade events for official purposes.
- (r) Where it is intended to use young people under the age of 18 for any promotional or publicity purposes on behalf of the Brigade then prior permission must be obtained in writing from the parent or guardian. This could be done through the school or place of education if there is an understanding that the school will obtain the necessary permission from the parent or guardian.
- (s) When taking children on an outing, think of how it would appear to the public when dealing with children.
- (t) Respect children at all times, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, disability or sexual identity.
- (u) Never let allegations by a child go unreported, including any made against you.
- (v) Never trivialize child abuse.
- (w) As a general rule you should be mindful of not putting yourself at risk by being in a situation that would increase the chances of having allegations made against you.
- (x) LFB staff should only engage in contact with a child in matters directly involving a Brigade activity using authorised Brigade social media accounts only. If a child initiates personal contact unrelated to any Brigade activity such contact must be reported to a line manager or youth engagement scheme leader who will note it and discuss with the child/young person where appropriate.
- (y) A member of staff working on a youth engagement scheme should notify the appropriate manager on the scheme if any of the children on the scheme are already known to them e.g. sibling or family friend.
- (z) Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is unlawful for anyone in a position of trust to have a sexual relationship with any person under the age of 18 years.

Sharing information with others

- 4.26 Information sharing is vital to safeguarding. The data protection laws (GDPR) and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately. The Data Protection Law enables the sharing of information amongst practitioners working with children and their families **without consent**. In many cases it is only when information from a range of sources is put together that a child can be seen to be in need or at risk of harm.
- 4.27 The Data Protection Law is very clear that 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' is one of conditions that allows practitioners to share information with others without consent:
- Information can be shared legally without consent, if a practitioner is unable to/cannot be reasonably expected to gain consent from the individual, or if to gain consent could place a child at risk;
 - Relevant personal information can also be shared lawfully if it is to keep a child or individual at risk safe from neglect or physical, emotional or mental harm, or if it is protecting their physical, mental, or emotional well-being.
- 4.28 A decision whether to disclose information may be particularly difficult if you think it may damage the trust between you and the carer or child. Wherever possible you should discuss your concerns with the child or parent, seek agreement for information to be shared and explain the reasons if you decide to act against a parent's or child's wishes.
- 4.29 All issues raised and information shared must and will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. However, there may be a need to share information with the appropriate agencies/bodies in the interests of safeguarding children from risk.
- 4.30 London Child Protection Procedures 2019 sets out how effective sharing of information between professionals and local agencies is essential for effective service provision.
- 4.31 If consent to share information is refused you need to decide whether the circumstances justify overriding the right to confidence, taking into account what is being disclosed, for what purposes and to whom.
- 4.32 While transparency is the best approach, it is not always the case that formal consent can be gained in safeguarding situations and information may need to be shared without formal consent. The GDPR sets a high standard for consent and where this is not possible, the LFB can look for a different lawful basis for the information sharing. Public authorities, employers and other organisations in a position of power over individuals should avoid relying on consent unless they are confident they can demonstrate it is freely given.
- 4.33 Before any information is shared, all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that the information being shared is necessary for the purpose for which it is being shared, is 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.
- 4.34 The decision about what information is shared and with whom will be taken on a case by case basis will be made/approved by a senior officer (either an assistant commissioner (AC) , DAC, BC, SC) in conjunction with advice from the Information Access Team. A record will be made of what is shared, with whom and for what purpose.
- 4.35 In most cases, the legal basis for sharing information about safeguarding issues will be the LFB's public task to take action in the event, or situation that one or more individuals may die, be injured or become ill (Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004; Section 11). The LFB have further obligations to support safeguarding laws.

- 4.36 The above process describes what should happen on a case by case basis, given the circumstance of one or more individuals. If information about vulnerable people is to be shared on a regular basis with the same trusted organisation, then a data sharing agreement is recommended. A data sharing agreement sets out the purpose of the data sharing, covers what is to happen to the data at each stage, sets standards and helps all parties to be clear about their respective roles. It helps you to demonstrate your accountability under the GDPR/Data Protection Law. Any data sharing agreement is to be run past the Brigade's Information Access Team (IAT) to ensure it meets all requirements under data protection law.

5 Guidance on handling safeguarding data

- 5.1 The gathering, processing, storing and destruction of personal data is governed by the Data Protection Law. All LFB staff must follow the advice and guidance set out in Policy number 351 - Data Protection and Privacy Policy, when handling personal data, including safeguarding information.
- 5.2 All staff must comply with Policy number 619 - LFB security classifications system. All concerns, emails and correspondence should be marked 'OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE PERSONAL DATA' in the subject title of the email.
- 5.3 In some circumstances staff may have access to or be given highly sensitive or private information. It is important that these details are appropriately secured at all times and only shared when it is in interests of the adult at risk to do so. If there is any doubt or uncertainty seek guidance from the Information Access Team and copy in the Social Issues mailbox.
- 5.4 All staff must comply with the Policy number 485 - ICT Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), the safeguarding policy and the Data Protection Law at all times when using LFB's computers and data. When gathering, processing, storing and destruction of safeguarding data you must always be mindful that an adult at risk might suffer harm if safeguarding data is compromised.
- 5.5 You are responsible for:
- Ensuring you are aware of your information security responsibilities, relevant to your job or function.
 - Operating within the scope of your job function.
 - Only accessing the systems you are authorised to use.
 - Safeguarding the hardware, software and information in your care.
 - Preventing the introduction of malicious software to LFB's information systems by following the best practice advice issued in the AUP.
 - Complying with the AUP at all times when using LFB's computers and data.
- 5.6 Access to LFB's safeguarding databases are strictly limited to the deputy assistant commissioner (Prevention and Protection) with responsibility for prevention and authorised staff.
- 5.7 Officers responsible for sharing safeguarding data with partner agencies must ensure that approved facilities are used for transmitting the data using a secure, encrypted solution (the London Fire Brigade uses Egress Switch for email security).
- 5.8 Officers transmitting safeguarding information to external partner agencies must copy in the Social Issues (SI) mailbox and attach a record of the communication to the PAR form record. This provides an audit trail and quality assurance tool to oversee all safeguarding/welfare concerns from the initial concern through to the decision making that may or may not prompt (further) actions. Local databases should not be kept within boroughs. Access to safeguarding data is restricted to designated staff as it is used to hold all personal data as per Policy number 442 - Information security policy.

- 5.9 Officers transmitting safeguarding data must double check the correctness of recipient email addresses before sending.
- 5.10 All parties will comply with their obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Law, ensuring that it processes Personal Data fairly and lawfully in accordance with data protection law.
- 5.11 Any events that are believed to have led to a breach of an individual's personal data, under data protection law must be reported to the LFB's Data Protection Officer (DPO) without undue delay via dataprotectionofficer@london-fire.gov.uk (as described in policy number 351 - Data protection and privacy).

6 Youth engagement programme leaders

- 6.1 Each Youth Engagement Programme within the Brigade will have a person responsible for providing guidance to staff with safeguarding children concerns. This person will be identified during your induction period and contact details will be given. They will usually be the manager responsible for the initiative or the team leader. Please see appendix 5 - Guidance for all staff coming into contact with children or working on youth engagement programmes and appendix 6 - Photo consent form.
- 6.2 This individual will:
- Provide advice to Youth Engagement staff and determine appropriate follow-up action.
 - Be the official contact with the DST senior officer/OOD in the event of a referral as detailed in paragraphs 4.4 to 4.19 of this policy.
 - Ensure that relevant information is gathered, recorded and shared appropriately.
 - Ensure that any paperwork required by the DST senior officer /OOD for the referral is completed using the [PAR](#) form..
 - Liaise with the DST senior officer/OOD or, at their request, with the relevant statutory agency to ensure that any agreed action required by the Brigade is carried out and the outcome of any intervention recorded and/or attached appropriately in the PAR form. The Social Issues Mailbox is available to provide advice and guidance as and when necessary.
 - Instigate any internal actions that may be necessary following a referral.
- 6.3 It is the responsibility of managers to make sure that all staff for which they are responsible are aware of the responsible person, their contact details and the process of contact.

7 Disclosure and barring service

- 7.1 The new disclosure and barring service (DBS) was established in 2012 and its aim is to protect both children and adults at risk by preventing those who were known to pose a risk of harm accessing these groups through their work.
- 7.2 The DBS guidance states that employers must refer someone to the DBS if they:
- Dismissed them because they harmed a child or adult.
 - Dismissed them or removed them from working in regulated activity because they might have harmed a child or adult otherwise.
- OR
- Were planning to dismiss them for either of these reasons, but the person resigned first.
- 7.3 To comply with the requirements of the DBS, LFB staff in roles which involve working or volunteering with children or adults at risk in regulated activities will be subject to a DBS check (previously criminal records bureau check) at enhanced level.

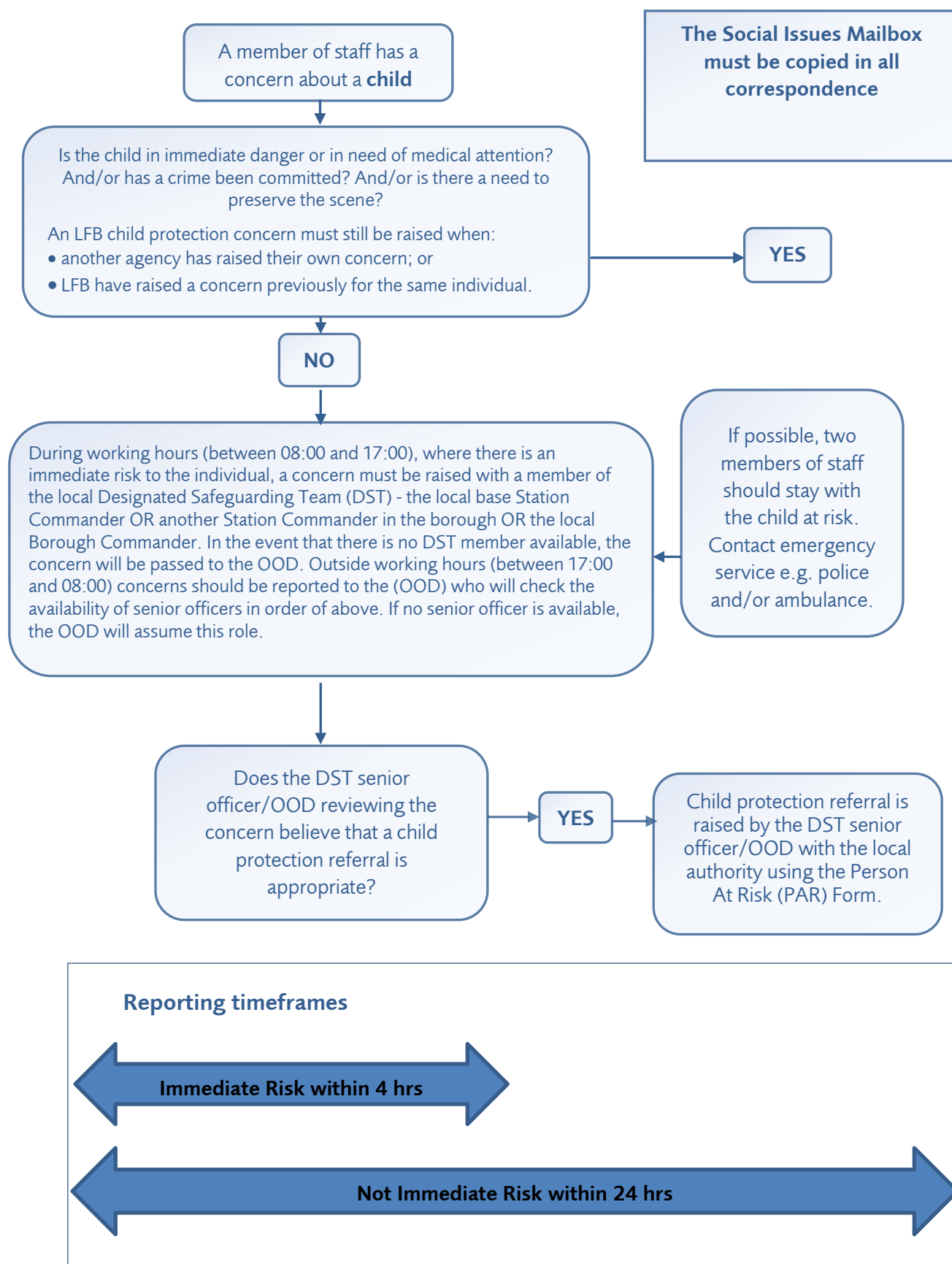
- 7.4 Policy number 726 – disclosure and barring policy provides details of the roles to which this policy applies. It also sets out the LFB's policy on DBS checks, the disclosure and barring scheme and the recruitment of ex-offenders, and provides information on the circumstances that will trigger a referral to the DBS.

8 Review

- 8.1 This policy will be subject to any necessary updates in line with changes to legislation, guidelines or best practice as issued by the appropriate agencies/bodies.

Appendix 1 - Flowchart for raising a child safeguarding concern

What to do if you have concerns about a child



Appendix 2 - Signs of child abuse

Signs of physical abuse

- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body;
- multiple bruises- in clusters, often on the upper arm, outside of the thigh;
- cigarette burns;
- human bite marks;
- broken bones;
- scalds, with upward splash marks;
- multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge.

Changes in behaviour that may also indicate physical abuse

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation;
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts;
- flinching when approached or touched;
- reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather;
- depression;
- withdrawn behaviour;
- running away from home.

Signs of neglect

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children;
- constantly dirty or 'smelly';
- loss of weight, or being constantly underweight;
- inappropriate clothing for the conditions.

Changes in behaviour that may also indicate neglect

- Complaining of being tired all the time;
- not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments;
- having few friends;
- mentioning being left alone or unsupervised.

Changes in behaviour which may indicate sexual abuse

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn;
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people;
- having nightmares;
- running away from home;
- sexual knowledge which is beyond their age, or developmental level;
- sexual drawings or language;
- bedwetting;
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia;
- self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts;
- saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about;
- substance or drug abuse;
- suddenly having unexplained sources of money;
- not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence);
- acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults.

Signs of emotional abuse

- Neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking;
- being unable to play;
- fear of making mistakes;
- sudden speech disorders;
- self-harm;
- fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour;
- developmental delay in terms of emotional progress.

Source– NSPCC.org.uk/inform
Accessed: 08 November 2013

Contact – Central Safeguarding Team

Appendix 3 - Guidance for all staff² coming into contact with children or working on youth engagement programmes³

1. London Fire Brigade (LFB) staff must familiarise themselves with Policy number 305 - Safeguarding children - and associated guidance before participating in or running activities.
2. LFB Staff and volunteers who participate in activities which involve substantial access to children will undertake refresher safeguarding training at no less than 3 yearly intervals. Substantial access applies to situations where:
 - An individual has regular contact over a period of time with the same child/children during an activity or series of activities e.g. Cadets, Education team, Safety First, Firesetters Intervention Scheme (FIS).
 - The opportunity exists to develop a relationship with a child over a period of time.
3. Each Youth Engagement Programme within the Brigade will have a person responsible for providing guidance to staff with safeguarding children concerns. This person will be identified during your induction period and contact details will be given. They will usually be the manager responsible for the initiative or the team leader. This individual will:
 - Provide advice to Youth Engagement staff and determine appropriate follow-up action.
 - Be the official contact with the Designated Safeguarding Team (DST) senior officer/officer of the day (OOD) in the event of a referral as detailed in section 5 below.
 - Ensure that relevant information is gathered, recorded and shared appropriately.
 - Ensure that any paperwork required by the DST senior officer /OOD for the referral is completed.
 - Liaise with the DST senior officer/OOD or, at their request, with the relevant statutory agency to ensure that any agreed action required by the Brigade is carried out and the outcome of any intervention recorded and/or attached appropriately to the PAR form. The Social Issues Mailbox is available to provide advice and guidance as and when necessary.
 - Instigate any internal actions that may be necessary following a referral.
4. It is the responsibility of managers to make sure that all staff for which they are responsible are aware of the responsible person, their contact details and the process of contact.
5. Any member of staff who is concerned that a child may be at risk, is being or has been abused must:
 - Discuss, with the responsible manager as identified in section 3 above, who will liaise during working hours (between 08:00 and 17:00), with a member of the Designated Safeguarding Team (DST) of where the incident occurred – the DST consists of the local base station commander (SC) OR another SC in the borough OR the local borough commander (BC), where there is an immediate risk to the individual using the PAR form within 4 hours, and within 24 hours for all other concerns. In the event that there is no DST member available, the concern will be passed to the OOD. As the local SC/BC will not be the first port of call for making referrals, it is the responsibility of the other DST members/OOD to update the local SC/BC with details of any concerns raised.

² From this point forward all references to staff in this document describes both paid and unpaid staff (volunteers) unless specifically stated

³ Hereafter, all references to child or children should be read as child or children and young people under the age of 18

- Outside working hours (between 17:00 and 08:00) concerns should be reported to the OOD who will check the availability of the DST senior officers in order of above. If no DST senior officer is available, the OOD will assume this role. In all cases, the referral process should be started, and actions taken, immediately.
 - The referrer needs to complete the PAR form with as much relevant detail as possible. The PAR form can be accessed via the safeguarding hotwire page or the start menu. Guidance on completing the PAR is available on the Safeguarding Hotwire page.
 - The social issues mailbox must be copied into all correspondence.
 - All correspondence that sits outside the PAR form, meaning sent before and/or after raising an official referral using the PAR form, should be marked 'OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE PERSONAL DATA' in the subject title of the email and copied to the Social Issues Mailbox. Policy number 619 - LFB security classifications system applies.
6. LFB staff will treat all personal information acquired as confidential and take particular care with sensitive information. Any sharing of information must be carried out in accordance with agreed policy and procedures.
 7. LFB staff will treat each child with equal respect, without favouritism and ensure their safety and welfare at all times
 8. LFB staff are to be clear about what is appropriate or inappropriate physical contact with children, avoiding any contact that could be misunderstood. Practical examples are outlined in the keeping safe code of conduct on page 11 of this policy.
 9. LFB staff are to be careful in their use of language/terminology/behaviour and not to make unnecessary comments or actions which could be misinterpreted.
 10. LFB staff will plan all activities thoroughly so as to eliminate any times or situations where it may be possible for a child to be placed at risk:
 - Ensure risk assessment and appropriate control measures are put in place to cover each activity, including such times as when young people may be in contact with those not in an official capacity e.g. LIFE Passout visitors and guests.
 - Have a clearly specified role within each activity to be understood by both them and the young people in attendance.
 - Give clear instructions to children when carrying out such activities to avoid misunderstanding and will ensure they clarify their understanding.
 11. LFB staff are to avoid unobserved one to one contact with a child and should ensure that, at times of any lone engagement e.g. if a child wishes to speak on a one to one basis with a member of staff, this shall take place in a public place or in rooms designed so as to be open to view by others.
 12. LFB staff are to avoid entering a room where a child may be changing their clothes or partially dressed or taking a child to the toilet unaccompanied. Staff and children are to have separate male/female personal facilities e.g. toilets, changing facilities etc.
 13. Any member of staff working on a youth engagement scheme should notify the appropriate manager if any child is already known to them e.g. sibling or family friend. This is to avoid the closer relationship being misconstrued which may result in an accusation against a member of staff.
 14. LFB staff will never transport or offer to transport a child alone in a vehicle. When travelling with children and young people the adult to child ratio can vary depending on size of the group, the

age of the children and their behaviours and the size of the vehicle they are travelling in. There should always be more than one adult for any group. Ofsted recommends a minimum supervision of one adult to 10 children aged 13 to 18⁴. Larger groups and vehicles will require more adults to ensure adequate supervision. If the group is mixed gender, the supervising staff should also include both male and female workers wherever possible.

15. LFB staff will ensure that, in the event of any injury to a child, accidental or otherwise, it is recorded and the statement witnessed by another adult. All accidents should be reported in accordance with the Brigade's health and safety policy.
16. LFB staff will only take photographs or video footage of children under the age of 18 years in sight of other persons with agreement by their line manager and only at Brigade events for official purposes. They must obtain prior permission in writing from a parent or guardian if there is an intention for any images or footage is to be taken and used for any promotional or publicity purposes on behalf of the Brigade (See appendix 3 for Photo Consent form).
17. LFB staff should only engage in contact with a child in matters directly involving a brigade activity using authorised Brigade social media accounts only. If a child initiates personal contact unrelated to any Brigade activity such contact must be reported to a line manager or youth engagement scheme leader who will note it and discuss with the child where appropriate.
18. Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is unlawful for anyone in a position of trust to have a sexual relationship with any person under the age of 18 years.
19. When visiting client's homes or other external locations e.g. FIS role, LFB staff should be aware of and follow lone worker procedures and carry out dynamic risk assessment. Any inappropriate or threatening behaviour (either physical or verbal) should be reported to management. If faced with immediate threat, follow lone working protocol and contact the police.

⁴ Current youth engagement schemes operating within London Fire Brigade do not involve the transportation of any young person under the age of 13

Appendix 4 - Photo consent form flowcharts

Agreement to use photography, video and other media



You have been given this form as you, or a child for which you are the parent or responsible adult, are taking part in an event where the London Fire Brigade (LFB) are taking photographs or other recordings ("materials"). By signing this form you will be agreeing that the LFB can use these materials for the purposes of:

- Promotional activity to publicise the work and services of the LFB.
- Promoting messages about fire safety and general wellbeing.
- Training materials for use within the LFB and/or with other trusted organisations that we work with.

You are also agreeing to:

- The materials being used in publications, on the internet and social media, and in other public facing displays.
- The copyright being owned by the LFB and that you will have no rights of ownership or other claim over any of the resources.
- The LFB holding and using the materials for as long as they remain relevant to the event and then retaining them permanently as part of a records archive for posterity once they are no longer appropriate for the current use.

To the extent that the resources contain personal data, the LFB is processing this information under data protection law on the basis that it appropriate (directly or incidentally) for the purposes of the carrying-out of our functions as a fire and rescue service and that any sensitive information it contains has been obviously made public.

If you do not want to be photographed or recorded, please make the LFB event organiser and the photographer aware of your wishes and remove yourself from those areas where this is taking place.

If you are happy to be part of the recordings of this LFB event, please sign below and complete the following details.

By signing below, you are agreeing to the conditions set out above.

Name or description of LFB event:

Your full name:

Signed:

Date:

Addition information when **people under the age of 18** are involved.

Full name of person under 18ys:

Relationship to person named above:

If at any time you have concerns about how the materials have been used, or how the LFB use personal data, then you can:

- Visit: www.london-fire.gov.uk/privacy
- Email: informationaccess@london-fire.gov.uk
- Telephone: 020 8555 1200 ext. 30300 and talk to a member of our Information Access Team
- Write to: Data Protection Officer, London Fire Brigade, 169 Union Street, London SE1 0LL.

Appendix 5 - Person At Risk (PAR) Form

Use this form to make a safeguarding or welfare referral for someone you believe is at risk.

Referrer details

Referrer Name *

Contact Number

Date/ Time Added

Type of referral

☐ Adult Safeguarding concern - Immediate risk (4hrs)
☐ Adult Safeguarding concern - No immediate risk (24hrs)
☒ Child Protection concern
☐ Welfare concern (adult only)

Person at risk details

Forename *

Surname *

Age or Date of Birth (if known)

Sex

☒ Male
☐ Female
☐ Not disclosed/ Unknown

Borough *

Postcode *

Address *

Previous Address (if known)

Previous Post Code (if known)

Person At Risk Contact Number

Is the person aware of this referral? *

☐ Yes
☒ No

Has consent been given? *

☐ Yes
☒ No









If 'no' why not?

If 'other' and any further details

Other Members Of Household	<input type="text"/>	
Child Referral Only (if applicable)		
Parent or Guardian Name	<input type="text"/>	
Parent or Guardian Contact Number	<input type="text"/>	
Adult Referral Only (if applicable)		
Carer or responsible relative	<input type="text"/>	
Carer or responsible relative contact number	<input type="text"/>	
Carer organisation	<input type="text"/>	
All Referrals		
Date and time identified *	<input type="text" value="28/04/2021"/> <input type="text" value="07:00"/>	
Reason For Visit *	<input type="text" value="HFSV"/>	
If Other	<input type="text"/>	
Incident Number/ HFSV Number/ Other ID Number	<input type="text"/>	
Description Of Concern *	<div><input type="text"/></div>	
Source Of Information *	<input type="text"/>	
Immediate Action Taken *	<div><input type="text"/></div>	
What EXTERNAL support would be of benefit?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referral to Adult Social Care for assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to Children's Social Care for assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to Housing department <input type="checkbox"/> Referral for a mental capacity assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to Environmental Health department <input type="checkbox"/> Support from health teams <input type="checkbox"/> Consideration for a personal protection suppression system <input type="checkbox"/> Recommending telecare with interlinked smoke detection <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify below)	
Other (external support)	<input type="text"/>	
What INTERNAL support would be of benefit?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Flame Retardant Bedding <input type="checkbox"/> Arson Proof Letterbox <input type="checkbox"/> Specialist Fire/ Smoke Detection (such as heat alarms for kitchens or hard of hearing smoke alarms)	
Other (internal support)	<input type="text"/>	
Special Considerations	<input type="text"/>	
PC Shoulder No and/or Police CAD No	<input type="text"/>	
LAS Call Sign and/or Incident No	<input type="text"/>	
<p>Please ensure the appropriate SC/BC/OOD is on duty before you action the referral. If not, please contact the next available officer to action</p>		
Who are you referring this PAR to? SC/ BC/ OOD Name	<input type="text" value="Enter a name or email address..."/>	
SC/BC/OOD Contact No.	<input type="text"/>	
<div> <input type="button" value="Save and Send"/> <input type="button" value="Cancel"/> </div>		









To be completed by the SC/ BC

Reviewer's decision

Reviewer's Name	<input type="text" value="Enter a name or email address..."/>	
Reviewer's Contact No.	<input type="text"/>	
Date/ Time Reviewed	<input type="text" value="17/02/2021"/>  <input type="text" value="12:"/> <input type="text" value="44"/> 	
Reviewer's decision	<input type="radio"/> Adult Safeguarding concern <input type="radio"/> Child Protection concern <input type="radio"/> Welfare concern (adult only) <input type="radio"/> No further action required 	
Reason for decision to refer/not refer	<input type="text"/>	
Recommendations for Adult/ Child Social Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Referral for Adult Social Care assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Referral for Children's Social Care assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to Housing department <input type="checkbox"/> Referral for a mental capacity assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to Environmental Health department <input type="checkbox"/> Support from health teams <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation for a personal protection suppression system <input type="checkbox"/> Recommending telecare with interlinked smoke detection to BS5839 Part 6 category LD1 standard <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify below) 	
If other, please specify	<input type="text"/>	
SC Name	<input type="text" value="Enter a name or email address..."/>	
SC Contact No	<input type="text"/>	
Local Authority email address	<input type="text"/>	
	<input type="button" value="Save and Send"/> <input type="button" value="Cancel"/>	

To be completed by the SC/ BC

Reviewer's decision

Reviewer's Name	<input type="text" value="Enter a name or email address..."/>	
Reviewer's Contact No.	<input type="text"/>	
Date/ Time Reviewed	<input type="text" value="17/02/2021"/>  <input type="text" value="12:"/> <input type="text" value="44"/>	
Reviewer's decision	<input type="radio"/> Adult Safeguarding concern <input type="radio"/> Child Protection concern <input type="radio"/> Welfare concern (adult only) <input type="radio"/> No further action required 	
Reason for decision to refer/not refer	<input type="text"/>	
Recommendations for Adult/ Child Social Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Referral for Adult Social Care assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Referral for Children's Social Care assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to Housing department <input type="checkbox"/> Referral for a mental capacity assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to Environmental Health department <input type="checkbox"/> Support from health teams <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation for a personal protection suppression system <input type="checkbox"/> Recommending telecare with interlinked smoke detection to BS5839 Part 6 category LD1 standard <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify below) 	
If other, please specify	<input type="text"/>	
SC Name	<input type="text" value="Enter a name or email address..."/>	
SC Contact No	<input type="text"/>	
Local Authority email address	<input type="text"/>	

Save and Send

Cancel

Appendix 6 - Guidance for senior officers on making referrals concerning children at risk

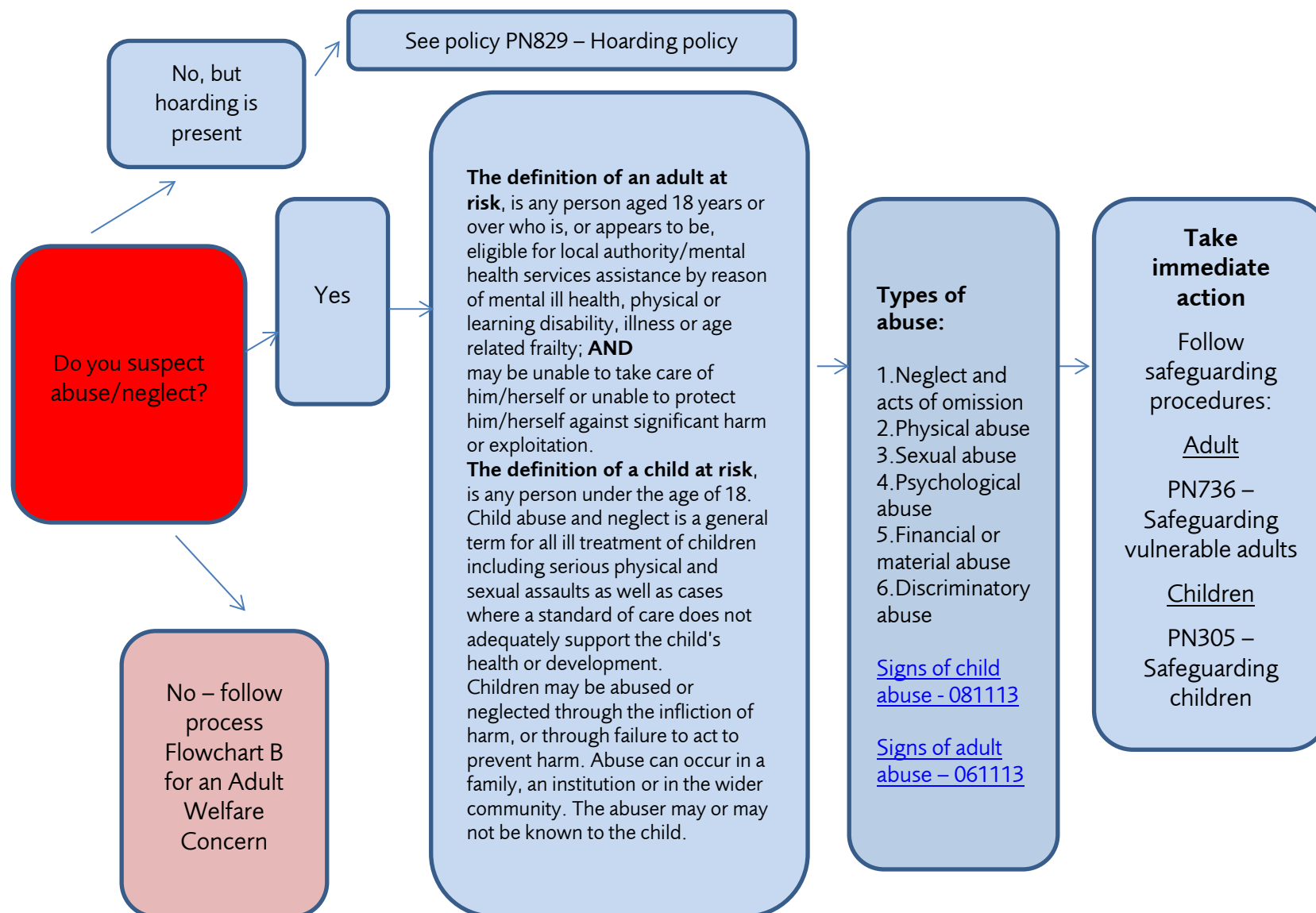
- 1 The designated safeguarding team (DST) is comprised of the local borough Station Commander (SC), another SC in the borough and the Borough Commander (BC).
- 2 During working hours (between 08:00 and 17:00), where there is an immediate risk to the individual, all concerns should be raised with the local base Station Commander OR another Station Commander in the borough OR the local Borough Commander in writing within 4 hours, and within 24 hours for all other concerns.
- 3 In the event that there is no DST member available, the concern will be passed to the OOD. As the local SC/BC will not be the first port of call for making referrals, it is the responsibility of the other DST members/ the OOD to update the local SC/BC with details of any concerns raised.
- 4 Outside working hours (between 17:00 and 08:00) concerns should be reported to the Officer Of the Day (OOD) who will check the availability of senior officers in order of above in paragraph 1. If no senior officer is available, the OOD will assume this role. In all cases, **the referral process should be started, and actions taken, immediately.**
- 5 The referrer needs to complete the PAR form with as much relevant detail as possible. The PAR form can be accessed via the safeguarding hotwire page or the start menu. Guidance on completing the PAR is available on the Safeguarding Hotwire page.
- 6 In the event that the referral process cannot be completed before those involved go off duty at change of watch, the DST/OOD (as detailed above) must be contacted who will decide whether the watch need to stay on duty to complete the referral, or whether the referral can be handed over for completion to the on-coming watch (to prevent any unnecessary delay).
- 7 The responsibility for deciding whether to refer the matter to the safeguarding adults team within the local Social Services Department (SSD) lies with the DST/ OOD. On receipt of a referral the DST senior officer/OOD will liaise, if necessary, with the relevant SSD for guidance on whether a concern needs to be raised. The DST senior officer/OOD must be the only point of contact with the Children's Services department of the relevant Borough Council Social Services department (SSD) in respect of safeguarding referrals.
- 8 This procedure applies irrespective of whether that harm is perceived to have come from a member of the family, another person including another child, or from a member of staff. Where those concerns relate to a member of staff, the duty DAC in liaison with the relevant manager, must also make sure that the relevant complaints and disciplinary procedures are initiated.
- 9 A LFB safeguarding referral **must** be made even if a partner agency, such as the police, has already made a referral.
- 10 Once the decision has been taken by the DST senior officer/OOD to raise as a safeguarding referral they will complete the [PAR form](#) using the relevant SSD email address.
- 11 All correspondence that sits outside the PAR form, meaning sent before and/or after raising an official referral using the PAR form, should be marked " OFFICIAL –SENSITIVE PERSONAL DATA" in the subject title of the email and copied to the Social Issues (SI) mailbox. Policy number 619 - the LFB protective marking scheme applies.
- 12 When contacting Children's Services, the DST senior officer/OOD making the referral must state clearly that this is a safeguarding children referral, calling:
 - During normal office hours – the duty or referral team.
 - Outside normal office hours – the emergency duty team.

- 13 The appropriate Children's Services will be the borough where the child usually resides, even if the incident happened elsewhere.
- 14 When making the referral, the following information should be provided if available:
 - Details of referrer – name, designation, contact number.
 - Known information about the child such as their name, date of birth, address, gender, ethnic origin, language spoken, and any disability.
 - Any other name the child or family may be known by.
 - Any previous addresses where the child or family may have lived.
 - Details of concern (if an incident the time, place and persons present).
 - The source of the information.
 - Whether the child/family are aware of the referral.
 - The parents/carers response to the concerns if aware.
- 15 When making a child safeguarding child referral, the name and designation of the social worker to which the details have been passed should be taken and recorded. Telephone referrals should be confirmed in writing within 48 hours using the [PAR form](#).
- 16 The social worker will liaise with their manager and the police in line with London Child Protection Procedures. Together they will assess the situation and make a decision as to:
 - Whether immediate action is necessary to ensure the safety of a child.
 - Whether a more planned intervention is possible without exposing the child to any necessary risk.
 - Whether on the information available, no further action will be taken.
 - (i) Where there are concerns, but doubt exists as to whether the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm or whether behaviour may be abusive, and it is uncertain whether a referral should be made, the relevant children's services must be contacted as outlined above to seek advice. The same information must then be passed on if the social worker considers a formal referral necessary.
 - (ii) Before ending this conversation, the social worker must clarify:
 - What actions if any will be taken and by whom.
 - What the person seeking advice should do if there are further concerns.
 - Confirm the receipt of the referral within 48 hours.
 - (i) The DST senior officer/OOD must make a note of any relevant comments and points of the conversation, and this should be included/attached to the PAR record. To attach a file to the PAR form, click on '**Attach File**' icon on the top left hand side of the form, and then click '**Browse**' to choose and upload files from your computer.
 - (ii) Details of any consultation received or given should be recorded on/attached to the PAR form. The Social Issues Mailbox is available to provide advice and guidance as and when necessary.

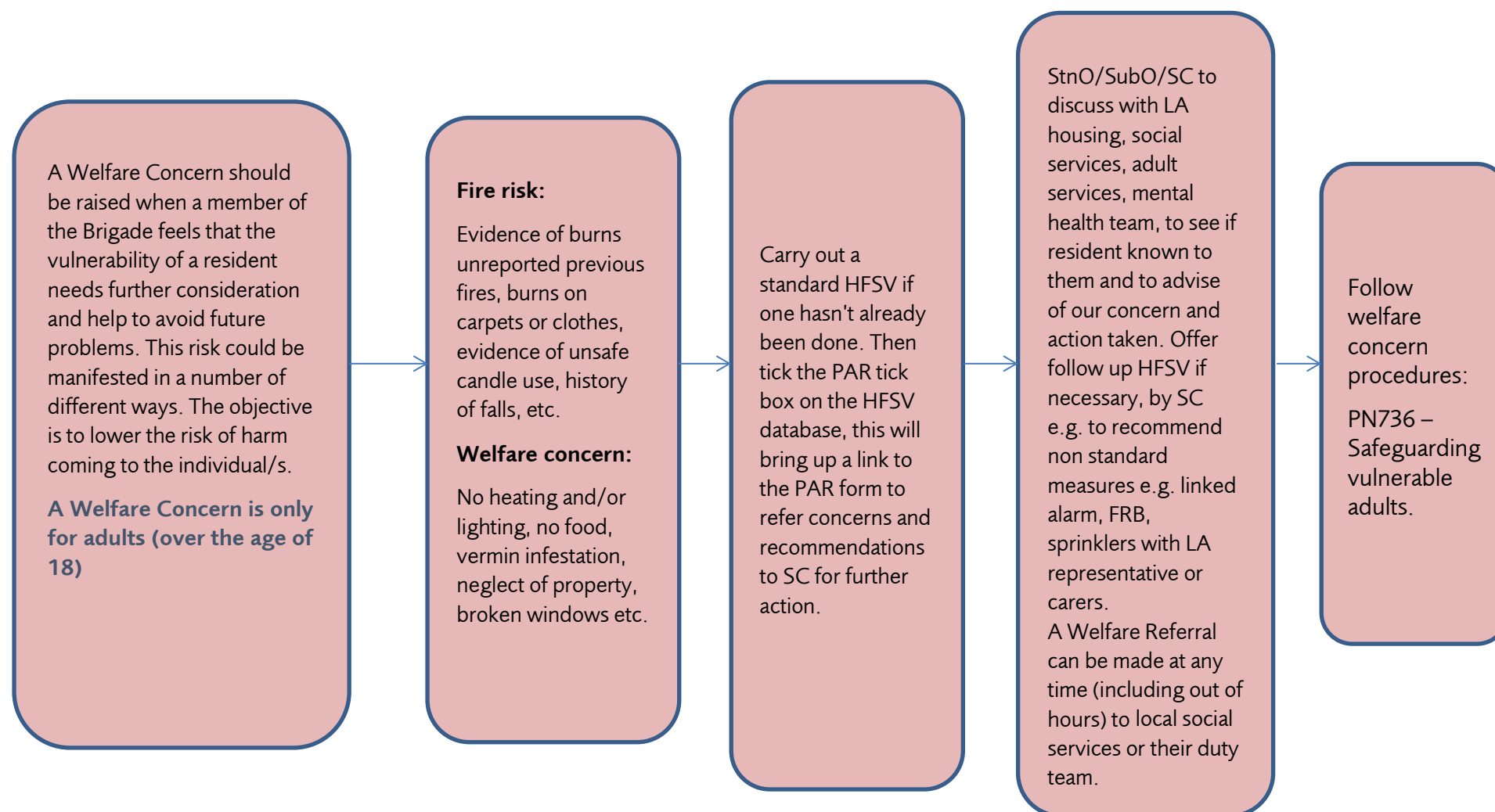
If possible, or appropriate to do so, the DST senior officer/OOD will ensure that the person raising the concern is given feedback as to the actions taken to safeguard the individual(s), following their alert.

Appendix 7 - Flowchart for reporting an adult/child safeguarding concern

(Flowchart A)



Welfare Concern – (Adults only) (flowchart B)



Queries should be directed to the Central Safeguarding Team in the first instance - socialissues@london-fire.gov.uk

Document history

Assessments

An equality, sustainability or health, safety and welfare impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

EIA	30/03/09	SDIA	L - 11/08/20	HSWIA		RA	
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Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy/procedure.

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Throughout	Minor changes.	16/06/2022
Throughout	References to Data Protection Act (DPA) updated to Data Protection Law.	23/06/2022
Throughout	Changes: a) terminology in line with departmental restructure; b) referral timings, c) location of the Person At Risk (PAR) form.	06/09/2022
Page 9, para 4.16	Reference to RMC updated to the CORE Team.	12/08/2025

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Child protection	Children
Mobile Data Terminals (MDT)	
Safeguarding	

Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

Considered by: (responsible work team)	FOIA exemption	Security marking classification