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# Coram Group

# Safeguarding Policy & Procedures

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| **Updated** | **August 2026** |
| Policy Owner | Coram Safeguarding Lead |

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# Part One – Safeguarding Policy

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This policy and associated procedures set out Coram's commitment to ensure that the safety and welfare of children and adults at risk is paramount. The policy covers all services within the Coram Group including Coram Adoption Services, Coram International Adoption Centre, Parenting and Creative Therapies, Coram Children's Legal Centre, Coram-i, Coram Voice, Coram Life Education, Coram Beanstalk, Coram Shakespeare in Schools, Coram Family and Childcare, Coram BAAF, Coram Research and Impact Evaluation, Coram Hempsall's, Coram Pacey, Coram Leap, Coram Family Lives, Coram Kidscape and Coram Potential Plus. Some of which are specialist charities operating within the Coram Group governance and safeguarding framework.

1.2 A key principle for the Coram Group is that children and adults at risk are kept safe and prevented from suffering harm. All Coram Group staff members, associates, volunteers and trustees have a responsibility to do all they can to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk with whom they come into professional contact. The Coram Group approach to safeguarding children or adults is based on the principles recognised in the Children Act 1989, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Human Rights Act 1998, the Care Act 2014, and the Equality Act 2010. It is informed by recent

developments and learning in safeguarding and national guidance updates including Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

## *Policy Aims*

1.3 The Coram Group safeguarding policy and procedures aims to safeguard children and adults at risk. Specific objectives are to:

- Provide staff and managers and leaders working with children and young people with the information they need in respect of safeguarding;
- Guide staff as to steps they should follow when they have safeguarding concerns in respect of a child/young person and /or adult at risk;
- Inform staff as to what might happen after they have reported a concern and of continuing responsibilities to safeguard children or adults at risk after referral
- Assist and support decision making when there are concerns about the safety and welfare of a child or adult;
- Assist staff and managers dealing with cases where there are reported potential safeguarding concerns about the actions of other staff members.

1.4 Adherence to the safeguarding policy and procedures is mandatory for all the Coram Group staff, associates, trustees, volunteers and governors and corporate support services, and the policy and procedures are made available at induction and for reference in the Coram share drive as well as within service teams.

1.5 Copies of local safeguarding boards procedures can be accessed via contact with the Local Authority staff employed to support the safeguarding partners and are usually available on Council websites and local children and adults safeguarding boards for each authority. Staff members have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with these key documents in the areas their services reach. Staff should actively raise any discrepancies between local and Coram group procedures by contacting the Coram Safeguarding Lead.

1.6 The safeguarding policy should also be read in conjunction as appropriate with other Coram Group policy and procedure documents, for example, the whistle-blowing, equalities and harassment related Coram policies.

1.7 In respect of all concerns about safeguarding, these procedures take precedence over all other Coram Group procedures in matters relating to service provision. Delay in referring and sharing information can never be justified in cases where there is a child protection concern. Consent should not delay the making of a referral in these circumstances nor concerns about information sharing where poor communication of concerns is cited in national case reviews as contributory to important signals of abuse being missed.

1.8 The term 'child' denotes all children and young people that have not yet reached their 18th birthday and safeguarding also covers an unborn child where there are concerns. Young people 16- and 17-year-olds are children with recognition to their

increased maturity and wishes appropriately taken into account with protection at the heart. Child welfare is paramount. The term 'adult' denotes all people aged 18 years and over though there can be overlap of children's procedures where relevant to transition to adulthood and a child's specific needs and circumstances and extended child care duties to age 25.

## *Statutory Guidance*

1.9 The statutory safeguarding adult procedures are underpinned by the Care Act 2014, the Care and Statutory Support Guidance March 2016, and Revisiting Safeguarding Publication 2022. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/revisiting-safeguarding-practice

1.10 Within safeguarding adult procedures, Coram recognise the six principles of: empowerment, prevention, proportionality, protection, partnership and accountability.

1.11 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 underpins Coram's safeguarding policy and practice. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children

1.12 It sets out what should happen when a child is believed to be in need of support and/or protection. Local authorities along with their partners have overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in their area. The Coram Group safeguarding policy and associated procedures will direct staff on making appropriate referrals to statutory agencies (Local Authority Children's Social Care and the Police) mindful of the renewed focus on shared responsibility, multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and providing help and early protection. It amplifies in the revised guidance that safeguarding means all children including those living with their birth or extended family, in kinship or special guardianship or adopted families and children looked after in foster or residential settings and duties towards unborn children where there is an identified concern.

1.13 This statutory guidance sets out the important role of Voluntary, Charity and Social Enterprise agencies in safeguarding children through the services they deliver, emphasising the need to have an appropriate policies and arrangements in place and the strong emphasis on early help and more integrated universal and family help available. This includes family group decision making and family first partnership models and guidance.

1.14 The Charity Commission also provides guidance for Charities and Trustees in relation to key role and responsibilities for safeguarding that is incorporated in training for the role as Trustees at Coram. Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees

1.15 Overall Safeguarding policy implementation must enable the key aims of the statutory guidance to be implemented and to be central to our work and practices, namely:

- Keeping children safe from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Promoting children's welfare and wellbeing through early identification of need and timely support
- Strengthening multi-agency working between local authorities, health services, police, education, voluntary organisations and charities.
- Supporting families earlier through Family Help bring together targeted early help and Section 17 support into a more seamless offer
- Promoting anti-racist, anti-discriminatory and culturally informed practice ensuring professionals recognise and challenge discrimination.

1.16 In promoting best practice in safeguarding Coram staff will ensure that the child's needs, voice and lived experience is at the heart of practice at all times.

1.17 Effective safeguarding is guided by two key principles:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each individual in Coram must play their full part; and
- A child centered approach for services to be effective based on a clear understanding of needs and views of children and rights to protection.

1.18 Coram's safeguarding children procedures recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have the right to protection from all types of potential or actual harm
- Working in partnership with children, their parents, carers and agencies is key to promoting children's welfare

1.19 In promoting the wellbeing and protection of children Coram staff will ensure that

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment whether this is within or outside of the home;
- preventing impairment of children's mental or physical health or development;
- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care;
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents or family network

where it is in their best interest, and

- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

1.20 Safeguarding involves sensitivity to factors impacting on a child's life including economic, social and ethnicity and interlaced impact of layers of discrimination alongside social media risks and the importance of balancing risks and protection factors.

1.21 The nature of the work undertaken by the Coram Group means in some services it is imperative that staff ensure a child or adult at risks is protected wherever possible outside of normal office opening hours. To this end, senior staff will make available to staff members an out of hours telephone number to ensure management advice and support is available to Coram staff at all times. This will often be the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the specific service or the Coram Safeguarding Designated Lead.

### *School facing Services*

1.22 Many services of Coram operate directly in schools and or related schools' provision. Knowledge and understanding of the schools safeguarding operating processes is therefore important and the Safeguarding Designated Lead for respective services will ensure there are clear protocols in place for identifying and responding to abuse concerns in the course of work in or with schools. The Safeguarding Children in Education 2026 (from 1 September 2026) is a key document to be read by all schools with new considerations for safeguarding processes on school premises, children requiring mental health support, young carers, and children who are questioning their gender and safer recruitment. Coram's own process incorporates the statutory guidance in relation to partnership working and collaboration in child safeguarding.
Keeping children safe in education: for schools and colleges

# Part Two: The Coram Group Safeguarding Procedures

## 2. Introduction

2.1 The purpose of these procedures is to advise Coram Group staff on what to do if they are worried about a child or adult at risk and to support staff in responding to safeguarding concerns.

2.2 All services and boards operating under the Coram Group will have a nominated Designated Safeguarding Lead who is suitably skilled and trained in providing safeguarding advice and guidance.

## 3. Role of the Safeguarding Designated Leads

3.1 All Charity organisations should have a Senior Management level person to take leadership responsibility for championing the organisation's safeguarding

arrangements. Within the Coram Group for services the named person is Cathrine Clarke, Coram Safeguarding Lead. Governance Boards of Coram also have a named lead for safeguarding in accordance with Charity Commission Guidance.

3.2 Day to day responsibility for responding and managing safeguarding concerns is delegated to the Managing Directors/ Heads of Service or equivalent Manager in each service, called the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Their responsibilities are to:

- Provide support and advice to staff
- Advise on all referrals as appropriate to Social Care and/or Police (investigation of criminal offences is a Police responsibility)
- Report through the quality mechanisms of the group on the number and nature of safeguarding incidents following the internal quality reporting processes.
- Take action in escalating safeguarding concerns when required and where concerns have not been responded to appropriately.
- Maintain an accurate and up to date record of all actions and decisions in and receive casework sign off for Safeguarding Alert Reporting Forms.
- Ensure that all staff are suitably trained and supported in safeguarding and the designated safeguarding leads regularly update their training and facilitate a positive safeguarding culture in respective services and across coram

3.3 In all cases of suspected child or adult abuse and neglect, the staff member should report the concerns to their Line Manager who in turn must report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in their service.

3.4 The Designated Safeguarding Lead in each service has responsibility for deciding whether to refer the matter onto the relevant Children's Social Care or Adult's service and/or the Police and, if so, for ensuring the referral is made. If in doubt advice can be sought from Coram Safeguarding Lead /or Local Authority Children's or Adults Social Care services regarding potential onward referral. Consultation and advice may be sought from the relevant local authority safeguarding team without disclosing family details and the advice received must be recorded on the relevant Coram case file.

3.5 In some circumstances Coram services are commissioned by another organisation, such as a local authority or schools. In these circumstances where appropriate in terms of partnership working Safeguarding Protocols will be put in place to clarify the safeguarding reporting and referral process and be made available to the relevant staff and volunteers. This will support consistency in safeguarding practice and ensure compliance with the Coram Safeguarding Policy and procedures and reflect the responsibilities of partner organisations. The working protocols involve education and early years services including use of volunteers in schools, and advocates and champions outreach alongside other commissioned services.

3.6 In all cases where a Line Manager recommends that safeguarding concerns do not warrant a referral to the Local Authority, the Line Manager must report and record the details and reasons for the recommended decision to the Designated

Safeguard Lead.

## 4. The Coram Group Safeguarding Procedures for Operational Support Staff

4.1 Operational support staff includes all the Coram Group staff who are not directly involved in delivering services or advice to children and families. For example, Coram staff in Communications, Fundraising, Human Resources, IT, and financial services.

4.2 Where Coram Operational Support staff have any concerns about a child or adult's welfare or any suspicion, allegation or information about an incident of abuse they must report this to their Line Manager within one working day. The line manager should discuss the concern with their Designated Safeguarding Lead.

4.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead in the service will then manage the concerns, recommend making a referral to Children's Social Care or the police if required and always completing the Coram Safeguarding Alert Reporting Form.

4.4 Where a safeguarding concern comes to the attention of Coram staff through the Coram general website email address, the information should be passed to the Coram Safeguarding Lead who will decide on any action to be taken and liaise with relevant services within the group.

## 5. Safeguarding Procedures for Solicitors

5.1 Where Coram Group staff are engaged in providing legal advice, assistance or representation in their role as solicitors, or are undertaking such activities under the supervision of solicitors, their practice will be guided by their professional regulator, the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) or Bar Standards Board (BSB). Advisers who work under different regulatory regimes must ensure they meet the relevant standards which provides a greater level of confidentiality and legal privilege protection for clients.

5.2 The SRA Standards and Regulations does not allow for client confidentiality to be breached unless that disclosure is pursuant to a court order/statutory authority or the client consents.

5.3 It does however have exceptions in relation to death or serious physical harm, serious abuse of a child or vulnerable adult or serious criminal activity.

5.4 The SRA recognises that there may be situations where you believe that it is necessary to disclose confidential information in order to prevent the client or a third party committing a criminal act that you reasonably believe is likely to result in serious bodily harm of an individual, or indeed if you discover that that a child has been the subject of continuing abuse or neglect. The SRA recognises that, in the strictest sense, any disclosure would be a breach of client confidentiality. However, the SRA suggests that where you take the view that this disclosure is necessary to

uphold the rule of the law and the proper administration of justice (principle 1) and to act in the best interests of your client (principle 4) it is unlikely that you would be criticised for such disclosure, provided that you can evidence the fact that you have carefully considered the matter prior to making the disclosure and consent issues including capacity to consent as applicable.

5.5 Under the Coram Group safeguarding policy all solicitors, or those working under the supervision of solicitors, are required to follow the safeguarding procedures for children's services staff in line with the following guidance:

- If you believe that there is a requirement to make a disclosure in line with the SRA professional conduct rules then you should do that.
- If you have a safeguarding concern but do not believe the professional conduct rules allow you to make a disclosure, then you should seek your client's consent to make the disclosure.
- If the client does not consent you should seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead in your service
- Where a decision is made to make a safeguarding referral to a local authority, the Coram Group safeguarding procedures should be followed.
- If a safeguarding referral is made against the wishes of your client, then you may need to consider if you can continue to act for the client and this should be considered by you and your supervisor or the Director of Legal Practice so that a decision can be taken and logged.
- If a safeguarding concern arises in the context of an outreach session, the outreach host organisation should be informed and the concerns discussed with their Designated Safeguarding lead. Information about the concerns should be shared with the Legal & Policy Manager and then logged, including any follow up to be undertaken by the host organisations or by Coram.
- If a safeguarding concern arises in the context of a telephone advice call or email, the adviser should discuss next steps with their line manager and ensure that concerns are logged.

5.6 Advice and guidance in the handling of confidentiality and disclosures will be available to legal staff from the Designated Safeguarding Lead for Legal Services.

## 6. The Coram Group Safeguarding Procedures for Adults and Children

6.1 Children's services staff includes all the Coram Group staff who deliver services, or provide advice to children, adults and families. These safeguarding procedures covers both children and adult.

6.2 The purpose of these procedures is to support staff working with adults to develop swift and personalised responses to safeguarding concerns about any adult who may be at risk and provide a framework for the reduction or removal of safeguarding risks for the adult concerned, as well as to secure any support to protect the adult and, where necessary, to help the adult recover and develop resilience.

6.3 Staff should be aware of the six principles underpinning safeguarding work with adults where possible be, person-led and outcome-focused, and engage the person in a conversation about how best to respond to their safeguarding situation in a way that enhances involvement, choice and control as well as improving quality of life, wellbeing and safety.

6.4 Safeguarding applies to an adult who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs)
- is experiencing, or at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect

6.5 The Care Act 2014 requires each local authority to have in place multi-agency procedures for safeguarding adults. Coram staff working within and across local authority areas should be aware of the relevant local procedures when responding to safeguarding adult concerns.

6.6 All local authorities are required to make enquiries, or cause others to do so, if it believes an adult is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect. An enquiry should

- Establish whether any action needs to be taken to prevent or stop abuse or neglect and if so, by whom;
- Arrange, where appropriate, for an independent advocate to represent and support an adult who is the subject of a safeguarding enquiry or Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) where the adult has 'substantial difficulty' in being involved in the process and where there is no other suitable person to represent and support them.
- Co-operate with each of its relevant partners (as set out in Section 6 of the Care Act) in order to protect the adult. In their turn each relevant partner must also co-operate with the local authority and safeguarding adult partnership arrangements.

### *Local authority's role in carrying out adult concern enquiries*

6.7 Local authorities must make enquiries, or cause others to do so, if they reasonably suspect an adult is at risk of being abused, neglected or exploited.

6.8 The purpose of the enquiry is to decide whether or not the local authority or another organisation, or person, should do something to help and protect the adult. If the local authority decides that another organisation should make the enquiry, then the local authority should be clear about timescales, the need to know the outcomes of the enquiry and what action will follow if this is not done and the considerations of risk, need, rights and responsibilities.

### *Making a safeguarding Referral in relation to a concern about an adult.*

6.9 Referrals of concern about an adult should be made in the first instance to the Local Authority Adult Services duty service. In situations where a service user aged 18 to 25 years old is receiving services from Children's Social Care, under the Children (Leaving Care) Act, Coram staff should consult with the allocated Local Authority worker to agree if referrals should be made to the Adult or Children's Social Care teams or to both.

6.10 Referrals should be made without delay and within one working day. When a staff member has a safeguarding concern for an adult, they must first discuss matters with his or her line manager who will in turn discuss matters with the Designated Safeguarding Lead for that service who will advise if a referral should be made. The Managing Director for that service and Coram Safeguarding Lead, should be informed of all cases where there is a serious incident or steep escalation of concerns and risks.

6.11 Whenever a concern about an adult at risk requires consultation with a Line Manager to discuss if a referral should be made, staff must report their concerns and the actions taken on the Coram Safeguarding Alert Reporting Form Adults (Appendix G) and submit it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for their service within one working day. All forms should be actioned, signed and dated on the day of activity with counter-signatory from the Designated Lead or Managing Director of that services within 5 days of initial discussion.

6.12 Reports on safeguarding will be reviewed by the Senior Management Team to monitor effective response and action by Coram staff to safeguarding adult concerns. Coram Safeguarding is reported to the Children's Services and Research Committee and to the independently chaired Safeguarding and Service Improvement Forum.

A referral should be made to the Local Authority and/or the Police when:

- the person is an adult at risk and there is a concern that they are being, or are at risk of being, abused or neglected, and at risk of significant harm and they consent to a referral being made;

- the person is an adult at risk without mental capacity and there is a concern that they are being, or are at risk of being, abused or neglected, and at risk of significant harm;

- a crime has or may have been committed against an adult at risk without the mental capacity to report a crime and a 'best interests' decision is made;

- the abuse or neglect has been caused by a member of staff or a volunteer;
- other adults or children are at risk from the person causing the harm;
- the concern is about institutional or systemic abuse;
- an adult at risk has been harmed and the person causing the harm is also an adult at risk, in which case a referral should be made for both people.

Factors to consider in making a referral:

- Is there any doubt about the mental capacity of an adult at risk to make decisions about their own safety? We should assume capacity unless there is evidence to the contrary at the time of a concern. (Capacity can be undermined by the experience of abuse and where the person is being exploited, coerced, groomed or subjected to undue influence or duress.)

- How vulnerable is the adult at risk? What personal, environmental and social factors contribute to this?
- What is the nature and extent of the abuse?
- Is the abuse a real or potential crime?
- How long has it been happening? Is it a one-off incident or a pattern of repeated actions?
- What impact is this having on the individual? What physical and/or psychological harm is being caused? What are the immediate and likely longer-term effects of the abuse on their independence and well-being?

- What impact is the abuse having on others?
- What is the risk of repeated or increasingly serious acts involving the person causing the harm?

- Is a child (under 18 years) at risk?
- Does the adult at risk have capacity to make decisions about their own safety and wants this to happen?

- Has the adult at risk been assessed as not having capacity to make a decision about their own safety, and a decision is made it is in their best interests

to make a referral.

6.13 Coram has a commitment to work in partnership with service users and to share any issues or concerns. Staff should expect to discuss the concerns with the person and seek consent for a referral to Local Authority Adult Social Care services unless seeking agreement is likely to place the adult, or others, at risk. If this is the case, the decision should be made in consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead for that service as to whether the referral is made without consent and, if so, this should be shared with the Local Authority when the referral is made and clearly recorded on the service user file.

When there is a safeguarding adult concern, the service user may be assessed as having the capacity to make decisions about their own safety and they may decide that they do not want a referral to be made. If there is an overriding public interest or vital safety interest, a referral must be made even if the adult does not consent. This would include situations where:

- other people or children could be at risk from the person causing harm
- it is necessary to prevent crime
- where there is a high risk to the health and safety of the adult at risk
- the person lacks capacity to consent.

## *The Coram Group Safeguarding Children Procedures*

6.14 If a member of staff has any concerns about a child's welfare or a suspicion, allegation or information about an incident of abuse they must report this to their Line Manager who, in turn, will report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for that service within one working day of the concern arising or immediately if there is an immediate risk of harm to a child. If the Line Manager is not available, the concern should be raised directly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead for that service.

6.15 Whenever a concern about a child at risk requires consultation with a Line Manager to discuss if a referral should be made, staff must report their concerns and the actions taken on the Coram Safeguarding Alert Reporting Form Children (Appendix F) and submit it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for their service within one working day. All forms should be actioned, signed and dated on the day of activity with counter-signatory from the Designated Lead or Managing Director of that services within 5 days of initial discussion.

6.16 The Designated Safeguarding Lead in each service is the Managing Director/Head of Service or a named Manager. If they are not available, the concern should be discussed with the Coram Safeguarding Lead. The only exceptions for not reporting concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the service is if they are themselves suspected of the abuse, in which case the Coram Safeguarding Lead and Director of People's Service should be consulted, and the Chief Executive of Coram if

they are not available.

6.17 The Designated Safeguarding Lead for that service, in discussion with the Line Manager and/or member of staff, will decide on one of the following options within one working day of the concern being raised:

6.17.1 Where there is a risk to the life of a child or a likelihood of serious immediate harm, a child protection referral should be made as a matter of urgency to the Local Authority and/or the Police who can use their statutory powers to act immediately to secure the safety of the child.

6.17.2 Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, a child protection referral should be made to the Local Authority;

6.17.3 Where there are concerns about the welfare of a child but it is unclear if they meet the threshold of significant harm, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will direct that either a safeguarding referral should be made to the Local Authority for further assessment, as the child is believed to be in need and there are safeguarding concerns or that the Local Authority should be contacted for consultation on the case before a decision about referral is made (this can be done without disclosing the identity of the service user);

6.17.4 That contact should be made with other agencies that are providing services to the child/family to discuss the concern, before a decision about referral is made;

6.17.5 That a referral will not be made at that time but the case should remain under review/further information sought and a referral made if the concerns escalate. In this scenario a clear action plan should be recorded with review points in place and an explicit timeframe for tasks to be completed.

6.18 In some circumstances, staff will be able to anticipate the likelihood of significant harm with regard to an expected baby (e.g., where there are other risk factors such as domestic abuse, parental substance misuse or mental ill health). These concerns should be addressed and referred to the Local Authority as early as possible before the birth, so that a full assessment can be undertaken and support offered to enable the parent/s (wherever possible) to provide safe care.

6.19 The Safeguarding Partners in the relevant local area will have a published threshold documents and safeguarding policies and procedures that show the threshold criteria they each apply as to early help and statutory provision and duties under the Children Act 1989 as to early help provision, safeguarding and protection of children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm and the statutory powers and duties to protect children.

6.20 The local authority will have duties for cases relating to the sexual exploitation of children and young people as well as children at risk in specific circumstances such as missing from care, radicalisation and online abuse of children and grooming.

6.21 Coram Managers should ensure all staff have access to the thresholds document for their local authority area that are usually available on the website of the local Safeguarding Partnership area to support them in reaching decisions about making referrals to the Local Authority.

6.22 Whenever a concern about a child requires consultation with a line manager, to discuss if a referral to a local authority needs to be made, staff must report their concerns and actions taken on the Coram Safeguarding Alert Reporting Form and submit it to their Designated Safeguarding Lead for that service within one working day to be reviewed.

6.23 The Designated Safeguarding Lead for the service should undertake regular reviews of the progress of any safeguarding concerns on a weekly basis for the first 4 weeks and monthly thereafter until such time as satisfied that the child no longer requires safeguarding. Review notes should be clearly recorded on the child's file within the supervision record or relevant section.

6.24 When contacting the local Children's Social Care service, the referrer should always have the opportunity to discuss the referral with a qualified Social Worker. In some areas the referral will be made via a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) who will assess the information provided and reach a decision about an appropriate response to the concerns. In either situation, by the end of the conversation, the referrer should be clear about the proposed initial course of action, timeframes and who will be taking the actions. This information should be recorded in the child's file by Coram staff.

6.25 Where a child is in care or otherwise Looked After and is living in a different Local Authority to that which is responsible for her or his care, the referral should be made by Coram Group staff both to the Local Authority that holds responsibility for the child (the 'home' Authority) and to the Authority where the child currently lives, with a request to both that Coram Group staff be advised as to which will take the lead for assessment or investigation. The 'home' Authority maintains responsibility for the child, even when they are living in a different authority area.

6.26 The referral information should then be followed up in writing to the Local Authority within 48 hours from the point of telephone referral. Most Local Authorities have a standard multi-agency referral form to aid such written referrals and Coram Group staff should use this wherever possible. Alternatively, where a local authority will accept a referral in another written format the completed Coram Safeguarding Alert Reporting Form could be submitted provided it is appropriately and comprehensively completed by the Coram member of staff and signed off by the line manager (refer to paragraph 7.16 of these procedures). The Local Authority services should acknowledge receipt of this referral and provide advice on their decision about the type of response that will be required to meet the needs of the child, within one working day. If acknowledgement has not been received within three working days, the Local Authority Children's Social Care services should be contacted again to ensure that the referral is receiving attention and to seek their decision and plan in

response to the concerns. Coram should continue to escalate concerns until satisfied with the proposed course of protective action.

6.27 It is important that all safeguarding concerns are recorded in a timely manner. In some cases, it will be known that a child receives services from an allocated Social Worker in the Local Authority. In such cases, the referral should still be made to the Duty Social Worker in the initial contact team or via the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and the referral copied to the allocated Social Worker.

6.28 In some circumstances Coram Group services are placed in services/projects where they are part of a team led or commissioned by another organisation such as a local authority or school. In these circumstances joint safeguarding protocols will be put in place to clarify the safeguarding reporting and referral process. This will support consistency in safeguarding practice and ensure compliance with Coram's procedures and government legislation and guidance. Generally, this will require discussion and decisions being made as to who is responsible for making the referral and the route of the referral to local statutory agencies.

6.29 Coram staff are responsible for ensuring they discuss any safeguarding concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead for their service and the host agency /local authority and following up on the outcome of referrals made. The Coram Safeguarding Alert Reporting Form should be completed in these circumstances. Joint protocols should reflect that the Coram can decide to go direct to the Local Authority or Police to make a safeguarding referral, if Coram do not agree with the outcome of a referral made, or there is a difference of opinion about referral thresholds. They should also reflect that a referral should be made directly to the Local Authority or Police by Coram Group staff if an immediate response is required, as there is a risk to the or a likelihood of serious immediate harm.

## *Out of Hours Services*

6.30 All Local Authority Children's Social Care services have an out of hours or emergency duty service. This means that a concern which comes to light out of normal office hours can be referred on without delay. Managers should establish the contact details of the Emergency Out of Hours Duty Team for the local Children's Services for those local Authorities where Coram Children's Services are operating.

## Historic Abuse Concerns

6.31 Some cases of concern relate to reports of past abuse of children. Such concerns should be followed up in the same way as current safeguarding concerns. This is important as there may be other children living with an alleged perpetrator of abuse and the welfare of those children will need to be assessed by the Local Authority Children's Social Care services. Past reports of abuse may still be investigated by the Police on occasions and ensures justice is achieved for victims of crime and that their care and support needs are addressed.

## *Data Protection*

6.32 Data Protection law allows you to share information when required to identify children at risk of harm and to safeguard them for harm. Learning from national serious case reviews where children have not been protected has identified gaps in information sharing as a factor contributing to failures to protect children from harm and is a key learning message to inform practice in acting on duties to protect children and vulnerable adults.

6.33 Coram ensures it complies with the seven GDPR principles in its collection, use, retention, transfer, disclosure and destruction of personal data in terms of:

- Lawfulness, fairness and transparency
- Purpose limitation
- Data minimisation
- Accuracy
- Storage limitation
- Integrity and confidentiality
- Accountability

6.34 Coram ensures that privacy notices are available and up-to-date and clearly sets out our approach to requesting, collating, using, managing and storing personal and sensitive data. Our privacy notice demonstrates that this is done with the knowledge and consent of the individual concerned. Where a need exists to request and receive the consent of an individual prior to the collection, use or disclosure of their personal data, Coram is committed to seeking such consent.

### Sharing information with Parents and Carers

6.35 Sharing information with Parents and Carers is a clear commitment to work in partnership and to share issues or concerns related to their children. Where practical, staff should expect to discuss the concerns with parents or carers and, if possible, seek agreement for a referral to be made to Children's Social Care unless seeking agreement is likely to place the child at risk of significant harm through delay or through that parent's or family member actions or reactions. This decision should be made in consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the service and shared with the Local Authority when the referral is made and the reasons should be clearly recorded. However, if there is any doubt that in sharing this information a child may be placed at further risk, silenced or removed from the area, then staff should not engage in discussion with parents or carers about the referral until after agreement to do so is provided by the Local Authority. In all cases, staff should not impart the fact of a referral to parents or carers without agreement from a Line Manager and the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the service. Coram staff should refer to the Government Guidance in relation to Information Sharing which Coram adheres to as part of these procedures

## *After Referral*

i. Further to referral and receipt of acknowledgement, staff should be prepared for further contacts with agencies. It is certainly likely that a Social Worker will seek to clarify aspects of the referral details with the staff member and/or their Line Manager. Staff should always respond speedily and within one working day to such requests for clarity or for further detail.

ii. It is possible in some cases relating to physical injuries, serious neglect or allegations of sexual abuse that the Police will launch a criminal investigation. In such cases the Police will be likely to seek a statement from staff involved with the referral or otherwise involved with the child and family. Staff should respond positively to such requests and provide the witness statement requested without delay in order to assist the Police to use the criminal law to protect children where necessary. The Designated Lead for the service and Coram Safeguarding Lead should be informed where witness statements are being provided to statutory agencies and staff may consult on producing such a witness statement.

iii. In some situations, the Local Authority will convene a planning or strategy meeting in order to review information and decide on a plan to make further enquires. It is expected that the referring agency should be invited to this meeting and when staff members are invited to such a meeting, they should immediately consult with their Line Manager. The Line Manager will need to identify whether she or he also needs to attend to assist the staff member in this meeting. Such meetings must take priority and require consideration of changes to other work commitments in order that the Coram Group can play the fullest part possible in efforts to keep the child concerned safe where we have case holding responsibilities.

## *Child Protection Conference*

iv. Where the Local Authority, Police or other agency remains concerned about the likelihood of further significant harm beyond an investigation of circumstances, a Child Protection Conference is likely to be called. Staff may be invited to the conference and asked to submit a written report in advance. These meetings must always be attended and where the staff and Line Manager directly involved are not able to attend, the Designated Safeguarding Lead for that service should be notified to make arrangements for a substitute to attend. This should however only be the case where annual leave, ill health, other leave or a vital existing work commitment prevent those directly involved from attending. If staff receiving an invitation to attend a conference or strategy meeting believes they are unable to attend, they must ensure that agreement to this is obtained from both Line Manager and the Designated Person.

v. The Child Protection Conference is a meeting held under the auspices of the local Safeguarding Partners procedures in all Local Authority areas. Its purpose and functions are set out in government guidance: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. The conference exists to enable the sharing of information and analysis about a family and

consider whether or not a child is likely to suffer further significant harm. In the event that such likelihood is agreed by the agencies and Chair of the meeting, a formal child protection plan will be put into place. This plan will outline a number of agency activities to be undertaken in order to ensure that children are safer in future. Where a conference determines a formal child protection plan is needed, the Conference Chair may request that Coram Group staff undertake certain roles consistent with the purpose of Coram services to participate in keeping the child or children safe. The Line Manager has an important part to play in this part of the conference in ensuring that the Coram Group accepts responsibilities for which it is suited.

vi. In such situations, Coram Group representatives might also be asked to be a part of a core group. This is a group of professionals most closely involved with a family and which meets regularly between child protection conferences in order to evaluate the impact of the plan in safeguarding children. Coram would wish to be part of such core groups where there is relevant and substantial involvement with a child.

vii. Where a formal child protection plan has been put into place, review conferences will be convened until it is thought safe by the inter-agency network involved to remove the need for such a plan. In some cases where a child protection conference is held, a decision is reached that a formal child protection plan is not required. In such cases, Coram Group staff may still be required to provide support services in a manner coordinated with other professional agencies as part of a help and support for a child in need.

viii. The child protection plan should be reviewed regularly and recorded in supervision and if there are any concerns that Coram Group staff will be unable to complete their agreed actions then written feedback should be provided to the core group and to the chair of the child protection conference stating which actions are unlikely to be completed and giving an explanation, noting the importance of statutory and legal timelines.

ix. In all cases, the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the particular service area will need to undertake regular review of the progress of the case on a weekly basis for the first 4 weeks and monthly thereafter until such time as satisfied that the child no longer requires safeguarding. Review notes should be clearly recorded on the case file.

x. It should be noted that if Coram Group staff were involved in a child protection referral and section 47 investigations, then they have the right to request that a child protection conference be convened if they have serious concerns that a child's welfare may not otherwise be adequately safeguarded. This request should be made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead within the service area.

## *Child Safeguarding Practice Case Reviews*

xi. Working Together 2026 states that the Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency (England regulations 2018) sets out the functions of Local Safeguarding Partner. This includes the requirement for Safeguarding Partners to undertake reviews of serious cases in specified circumstances and notify The National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, and their partners on lessons to be learned. A serious case is one where: a) abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected and b) either i) the child has

died; or ii) the child has been seriously harmed and there is cause for concern as to the way in which the authority, their partners or other relevant persons have worked together to safeguard the child.

xii.

'Seriously harmed' and the regulations includes, but is not limited to, cases where the child has sustained, as a result of abuse or neglect, any of the following:

- A potentially life-threatening injury:
- Serious and/or likely long-term impairment of physical or mental health, or physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development).

Cases which meet one of these criteria must always trigger a safeguarding practice review. In addition, even if one of these criteria are not met a safeguarding practice review should always be carried out when a child dies in custody, in Police custody, on remand or following sentencing, in a Young Offender Institution, in a secure training center or a secure children's home, or where the child was detained under the Mental Capacity Act 2005. Regulations also include cases where a child died by suspected suicide (and abuse and/or neglect was a factor).

xiii

Coram staff as relevant to a particular case may contribute to such a review and alongside partner agencies implement safeguarding learning messages and act on multiagency partner implications and working practices. At the point of a request to take part in a formal safeguarding review the staff members should notify the Coram Safeguarding Lead and the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the service in their advisory capacity to enable best information to be shared.

## *Recording safeguarding concerns*

xix

Where a safeguarding concern is being referred to a Local Authority, staff will need to write up the referral, following the initial telephone call, on the local Safeguarding Partners referral form (if provided). The Local Authority Duty Social Worker will provide such a form electronically or how this form might be accessed. Some Local Authorities will accept the Coram Safeguarding Alert Reporting Form (SARF) as a referral. Coram staff should ensure the SARF is recorded in such a way as the details of the concern and the key information is clearly presented in such a way as to facilitate the Local Authority response to the safeguarding concern. Whenever SARF's are submitted to a Local Authority agreement to refer should always have been sought from a manager and the SARF reviewed and signed by a manager in line with Coram's safeguarding reporting procedure. Emails accompanying SARF's should always emphasise that the information contained within the SARF relates to a safeguarding referral and constitute a record of the referral and sent through secure email. A signed electronic case record must be always be kept.

xx In all case recording it is important not to write speculative comments but to adhere to the facts. Staff views and opinion may be crucial and offer insight, but they should ensure it is recorded as an opinion and observation and that the evidence of the case is correctly and clearly recorded to a high standard and using the words of those impacted where possible.

All personal information must be accurately recorded, including details of risks and dates and times of events, name spelling and address, ethnicity and religion. Where information is not known this can be made clear in the recording. Value laden terminology should be avoided at all times. Records pertaining to issues of safeguarding may be accessible to third parties such as social services, the police, regulatory bodies, the courts and solicitors and the children and families involved in the safeguarding matters and or part of a child's life story access to records in later years.

xxi Records should have each new entry dated, timed and signed by the staff member and available to their line manager and supervision notes available on the individual file related to the service user. In keeping with process, the Designated Safeguarding lead for the service will keep the matters under review in relation to progress on the case. All SARFs relevant to the case must be signed off and dated and held in the case file.

## 7. Information Sharing

i) Any services provided by the Coram Group are of a highly personal and sensitive nature and children, adults and their families can usually expect to receive such a service in a confidential manner. Coram works in line with GDPR and will not ordinarily share individual information without consent. However, all service users should be aware that information will be shared about them with other agencies, including Local Authority services and the Police, where there exist concerns about the protection of children or adults at risk.

i i ) Working Together to Protect Children 2026 sets out the common myths that hinder effective information sharing between professionals and that due regard must be given to the data protection principles which allows information to be shared.

iii) Early sharing of information is the key to providing effective early help where there are emerging problems. At the other end of the continuum, sharing information can be essential to put in place effective child protection services. Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) learning have shown how poor information sharing has contributed to the deaths and or serious injuries of children.

iv) The key principles of information sharing are covered in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 encompassing early identification and intervention, child centered approaches, multiagency accountability and legal and ethical compliances.

v) 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. The fears can relate to perceived legal barriers, issues around consent not being clear, or agency boundaries. To ensure effective safeguarding arrangements no professional should assume that someone else will pass on information which they think may be critical to keeping a child safe. If a professional has concerns about a child's welfare and believes they are suffering or likely to suffer harm, then they should share the information with Local Authority Children's Social Care.

vi) The Government information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners (May 2024) supports practitioners working in child or adult services, who have to make decisions

about sharing personal information on a case-by-case basis.
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice

## 8. People in positions of trust - Managing Allegations and Concerns

8.1 Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2026 makes clear that agencies must have clear policies and processes for dealing with allegations against people who work with children. Concerns may arise about the behaviour of members of staff or others engaged by the Coram Group including employed staff, associates, freelance workers, lawyers and volunteers, trustees and governors.

8.2 Where an allegation or concern comes to the attention of the services, the Director of People and the Coram Safeguarding Lead should be immediately informed and they will provide advise on how best to proceed and keep relevant individuals informed.

8.3 Where an allegation and concern is in relation to a staff member who works with adults, a decision will be made regarding the need to refer to the Local Authority Adult Safeguarding Principal Lead and be guided by their process. Where it is believed a staff member has harmed, or poses a potential risk of harm to an adult, there is a duty to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Consideration will also be given to Coram's disciplinary procedures that are compatible with the responsibility to protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

8.4 Whenever a member of staff has behaved in a manner which could indicate that they are unsuitable to work with children, whether at work or in any personal capacity, the Coram Group safeguarding policy and procedures apply. Any allegation against people who work with children should be reported immediately where a member of staff has:

i. Behaved in a way which has harmed or may have harmed a child.
ii. Possibly committed an offence against or related to a child.
iii. Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
iv. Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

8.5 All concerns and allegations that appear to meet the criteria should be referred to the Designated Officer/ Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who is a social worker in a senior role and nominated by the LA to undertake investigations into such matters. Some allegations may be so serious that they will require immediate referral to the Police and Social Care. The Coram Safeguarding Lead and the Director of People Services can advise on next steps and consult with the Police and Social Care as appropriate. They will make a decision to refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in accordance with published thresholds and guidance including consultation

with the LADO prior to referral. Coram service staff must keep a case record of decisions and reasons recorded in the Coram Safeguarding Alert Report Form.

8.6 The LADO should also be informed of any allegations that have been made directly to the Police or Social Care. They will monitor and track any investigation with the expectation that it is resolved as quickly as possible. There are a number of ways in which such concerns emerge:

i. Direct observation of physical assault however minor the assault might appear.
ii. A perception that restraint has been used without justification and/or to too great a degree.
iii. Concerns about inappropriate touching.
iv. Concerns about a staff member meeting a child outside of work hours or at the staff member's home or similar engagement in a personal relationship.
v. Disclosure by a child of feeling "uncomfortable" or similar with a staff member.
vi. Disclosure of direct concern of alleged assault by a child.
vii. Allegations or concerns that come to light in respect of a member of staff's own children including witnessing to domestic abuse.

8.7 In dealing with allegations, staff and managers need to be aware there may be a number of separate but related investigations which need to be undertaken including police investigation in cases of criminal offence, enquires by children social care, disciplinary action by Coram and or investigation under the Coram Complaints process.

8.8 Such concerns can sometimes come to light after the reported incident but must still be dealt with under safeguarding procedures. Where the concern raised is a matter of conduct such as use of drugs or alcohol, the disciplinary code should be used; whilst such matters may have serious consequences for service users and could be criminal offences, there exists adequate recourse in the disciplinary code to deal with such matters. Wherever an offence is suspected, the Police should be advised

8.9 A staff member with a concern must inform their Line Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead for that service unless one of them is the subject of suspicion or allegations. It is important that any suspicion is dealt with thoroughly as the Coram Group wishes to avoid and prevent harm to children wherever possible.

8.10 If the parents/carers have not been already informed of the allegation or concerns the LADO will discuss with the referring Manager how and by whom they should

be informed. It will also be decided when the employee will be informed of the allegation, unless it is decided that a strategy meeting should be held, in that case the strategy meeting will agree what information can be disclosed to the employee. If a strategy meeting is to be held it is important that the Coram Group is represented at all such meetings by both the Managing Director/Head of Service, a senior Human Resources Officer liaising with the Coram Safeguarding Lead.

8.11 For cases that are deemed not to require a formal strategy meeting but where a Police investigation may still be required, the LADO will lead on discussions with the Police to determine how the investigation will proceed.

8.12 In some cases, a criminal investigation will be made. This will be led by the Police. The investigation may involve the taking of statements from any staff involved, any child or adult involved and interviewing the member of staff or other such person about whom there are concerns or suspicions. This interview will sometimes take place using the Police's power of arrest and under caution. Staff will co-operate with any such criminal investigation and will make records available to assist the investigation.

8.13 Many cases will require no further action from the Police or Local Authority, in these circumstances the LADO will discuss the next steps with Coram and will advise on how an internal management investigation under the disciplinary proceedings will be conducted.

8.14 Where a member of staff resigns or ceases to offer his or her services it must not prevent an allegation being followed through by these procedures, likewise "compromise agreements" in which the member of staff agrees to resign, must preserve the right for Coram to pursue the allegation in the interest of children and be excluded from any compromise agreement as the safety of children always takes precedence. It is important that every effort is made to reach an early conclusion in every case of an allegation being made against staff.

8.15 Clear and comprehensive records must be kept regarding the details of the allegation, how it was followed up and resolved and any actions and decisions taken. This should be retained on the employee's confidential file for 10 years or until the person reaches normal retirement age. A copy should be given to the employee.

8.16 Where there is an ongoing Child Protection investigation involving the Local Authority or Police or both, all actions in the disciplinary investigations should be checked with the Police and LADO before taken in order not to compromise the investigation or children's safety. Where there is delay and it is important that the Coram Group proceed in spite of lack of closure to Local Authority or Police investigations, this decision can only be taken by the Coram Safeguarding Lead and Director of People's Services and or with the Chief Executive, in consultation with the LADO.

### *Suspension and return to work*

8.17 When a concern about a member of staff is raised in a safeguarding context, a prime consideration by Coram is how best to ensure the continuing safety of children or adults at risk in contact with the organisation. Managers should not seek to automatically suspend staff but action may be taken to remove the member of staff concerned from contact with children or adults at risk and from access to service user records. This should be undertaken on a precautionary basis and without prejudice to that individual's employment rights. The availability of other work in the organisation and the individual concerned will dictate to managers whether suspension is required and managers will need to balance concerns to fully protect children and/or adults at risk and the organisation with a need to be fair and proportionate to members of staff. The decision to redeploy or suspend members of staff in such circumstances lies with the Coram Safeguarding Lead and the Director of People.

8.18 An investigation may produce no clear outcome and it is impossible to say whether an incident has occurred and external agencies do not wish to pursue an investigation. In these circumstances, the manager must consider if the evidence or suspicion is of such weight that they wish to undertake disciplinary action in any event or whether to allow the member of staff to resume duties with children and families. Advice regarding this decision should be taken at the strategy meeting and from the LADO, although the decision will ultimately be for Coram based on the evidence. In all cases where a staff member is allowed to resume duties this decision must be taken in consultation with the Coram Safeguarding Lead, the Managing Director for that service and/or the Chief Executive of the Coram Group. Human Resources Business Partners will always be engaged.

8.19 Some of the indications of situations where there should be more serious concern would be as follows but this is not an exhaustive or prescriptive list:

i) Evidence exists of a member of staff having contact with a child or other service user outside of work hours and/or where that relationship has become personal or sexual.

ii) A child has disclosed directly to a professional about abuse by a staff member where here is no overt antagonism with the worker or agency

iii) Concerns are supported by concerns about, or expressed by, more than one service user.

iv) Where the staff member seeks to justify actions which are clearly outside of safer care or seeks to alter records of contacts.

v) Evidence of sexual or physical abuse by way of medical examination but where the Police has insufficient evidence to proceed or decide with the Crown Prosecution Service that a formal charge is unlikely to succeed in court or is not in the public interest possibly because of the need to make the young person give evidence in court.

vi) Where there exists evidence of previous concerns about a member of staff behaving in a concerning manner with young people and children.

8.20 In determining whether or not to allow a staff member to resume normal duties with children and families, consideration must be given to:

i. Is it likely that the child or adult at risk has been harmed as a result of the actions or inactions of the staff member?

ii. Is it likely that a child or adult at risk will suffer harm in the future as a result of knowledge about a staff member gained through this investigation?

iii. Can the organisation continue to have trust and confidence in allowing the member of staff to have access to vulnerable children and families in future?

8.21 Where the member of staff does not have direct access to children or vulnerable adults a comprehensive risk assessment must be carried out as to access to files and data bases and commitment to keeping people safe.

8.22 In all cases, it is likely that Coram will need to ensure that support is available for colleagues of the member of staff concerned in a way which enables them to understand and to respect the confidential personnel reasons for actions taken and to endorse that professional boundary are properly observed and upheld at all times.

8.23 The member of staff against whom concerns have been raised may also require support and be encouraged to seek advice from a trade's union and or a lawyer or counselling service throughout the process. The line manager should take responsibility for ensuring that information about progress of enquiries is passed to the member of staff and should agree the contents of this exchange with the police should a criminal investigation be under way.

8.24 It is important that Coram Managers take steps to ensure that they learn lessons across a series of investigations each year to inform practice. The Coram Group maintains other policies relating to safer recruitment and will appoint staff, volunteers and carers to work directly with children only where there is an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Scheme check showing no offences of relevance to working with children. Where a DBS check indicates any offence at all in the background of an applicant the decision to appoint can only be taken by the Coram Safeguarding Lead and HR in consultation with the CEO of Coram.

### *Referral to regulatory bodies*

8.25 If the allegation of abuse is substantiated and the person is dismissed or Coram

ceases to use their services, or the person resigns, then Coram Group staff should discuss with the Coram Safeguarding Lead who will clarify with the LADO whether a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is required. A referral should always be made if Coram believes the employee has harmed a child or poses a risk to children. The LADO will also advise whether a referral or notification should be made to a professional or regulator body such as Social Work England, HCPC, the Solicitors Regulation Authority or Bar Standards Board or Ofsted or other such regulatory body related to the practice.

## 9. Managing Allegations and Concerns relating to foster carers and adopters

9.1 There may be occasions when prospective adopters and foster carers will be subject to child protection allegations. These concerns should be investigated by the Local Authority and the Police and the lead for investigation should be taken by the Local Authority responsible for services where the child is living. The role of Coram staff during such investigations is to share information relevant to the matters concerned and to provide any support to the carers in a manner agreed with the investigating agencies.

9.2 In the case of a serious concern involving adopters and or foster carers, a notification duty to Ofsted the regulatory body for VAA Adoption services is activated. The Designated Safeguarding Lead for Adoption, also the Registered Manager, will apply the criteria for making a safeguarding notification and provide advice to the service staff and retain a record of the online notification in the adoption case record. The Registered Manager may also see advice from the linked Ofsted Inspector. The Ofsted required procedure will be followed in all cases with follow up communication as necessary.

Report a serious incident in a voluntary adoption agency - GOV.UK

## 10. Concerns Relating to the Welfare of Staff Members Children

10.1 Staff may become aware of safeguarding concerns about the children of a member of staff, through direct observation or through hearing things said to or about them. These concerns should be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead for that service. Equally, where there has been a concern about a member of staff having contact with children, it will be necessary to ensure that consideration is given by the relevant authorities to the welfare of his/her own children.

10.2 It is never the responsibility of Coram staff to investigate such matters. However, the Designated Safeguarding Lead for that service should ensure that where safeguarding concerns may be present in relation to staff member's own children, the welfare of the children is consulted with Coram Safeguarding Lead in relation to ensuring children are kept safe and actions are taken in the spirit of support and protection, including where relevant any matters for the individual concerned and professional codes of conduct.

## 11. Resolving differences and collaboration with agencies

### *Purpose and scope of practice note*

11.1 The welfare safety and protection of children can only be assured and promoted when professionals work effectively together in partnership, sharing responsibility for information sharing and communication, case management and decision making in the best interests of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

11.2 To ensure safe practice in multi-agency working, there must be a culture of constructive challenge and an understanding of the need to use processes and mechanisms to raise concerns about practice and decision making both internally and with other agencies where appropriate, so that concerns will be taken seriously and appropriately responded to.

11.3 This escalation process sets out what actions should be taken by Coram practitioners and managers where there are professional differences around how to keep a child safe. It aims to keep a focus on children's safety by providing a process to facilitate the swift and satisfactory resolution of differences of opinion between members of a child's professional network.

11.4 As an organisation Coram seeks to work in partnership with multiple agencies to safeguard children and young people in line with statutory guidance. However, there may be occasions where there is disagreement between Coram and other agencies involved with a child as to how best to keep children safe and promote their welfare. Concerns regarding the practice, action or lack of action of a partner agency which may adversely impact on the safety and welfare of a child should not be ignored.

11.5 The range of disagreements might include:

11.5.1 Decisions on levels of need and whether a child has met service threshold.

11.5.2 Decisions on how a case should be conducted in relation to support and protection pathways.

11.5.3 The roles and responsibilities of involved agencies.

11.5.4 Actions or lack of action by any agency in progressing the child's plan.

11.5.5 The level or quality of communication between agencies

### *Principles*

11.6 The child's safety and welfare should be the primary focus at all times and a dispute between agencies should never leave a child unprotected.

11.7 Disputes should be resolved in an open and timely manner with all relevant issued

identified for resolution and way forward identified within a working week.

11.8 Staff must seek to resolve operational issues and/or seek a resolution of differences or disagreements with the full involvement of those staff and/or agencies involved in the dispute.

11.9 Where a dispute identifies an issue arising from a policy issue, the matter should be referred in the first instance to the Coram Safeguarding Lead for consideration and advice. Where appropriate the issue can then be escalated through the relevant agencies and/or Coram board for consideration.

11.10 Where a dispute involves a complaint about the behaviour or professional conduct of a worker, this should initially be reported to their manager and dealt with under the relevant agency's policies.

## *Procedures for dispute resolution*

11.11 **Immediate Risk:** if the child is thought to be at imminent risk of harm and there is a disagreement in the course of action to be taken the matter should be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the Service and the Coram Safeguarding Lead.

11.12 **In all other situations;** the process set out below should be followed:

### Stage 1: discussion between front line workers

Whenever a dispute arises, the professionals directly involved should discuss the matter in the first instance. Often, differences in professional opinion can be based on lack of communication or a misunderstanding of agency policy and procedures and can consequently be resolved quickly. If the matter cannot be resolved at this stage, the parties should identify what the issues are and agree to move to the next step of the escalation process.

### Stage 2: discussion between frontline managers

If the matter is not resolved at stage 1, the Coram practitioner should contact their manager to consider the issues raised, what outcome they would like to achieve and how the differences might be resolved. The managers relevant to the case and the referral should then meet to negotiate a settlement and clarify issues that may need to be resolved to settle the dispute.

### Stage 3: discussion between named safeguarding designated leads.

The dispute should be passed to the relevant named safeguarding lead officer for the agencies involved by the Head of Service/Managing Director. These named officers should discuss the issues identified and try to find a solution that is

child focused and ensures their safety and welfare. If this is not possible, the matter should be escalated to the next stage.

**Stage 4: referral to Senior Directors and Coram Safeguarding Lead**

The disputes should be referred to the named senior managers within the relevant agencies to negotiate a swift resolution in the interest of children and ensure effective and positive collaboration between the agencies involved.

11.13 Any learning should be identified and shared within the service groups in support of effective and collaborative working practices between agencies.

# Part Three: Safeguarding Children in specific circumstances

## 12. Introduction

12.1 This guidance must be read in conjunction with the Coram Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and is intended to supplement the safeguarding procedures. Much of the content is reflected in the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 that also has substantial information and links to key agencies including official bodies dealing with specific safeguarding matters. Other Local Safeguarding Boards will also have online resources and training to support clear and effective practices in safeguarding.

### *Children who go missing from Home and Care*

12.2 Children running away and going missing from care, home and education is a key safeguarding issue. There is a need to ensure that there is an effective collaborative response from all agencies involved with a child or young person when this occurs. Children and young people who go missing are at risk of serious harm. There are particular concerns about the links between children running away child trafficking and the risks of sexual exploitation.

12.3 Coram staff and managers should ensure that in relation to identifying and locating children who go missing the following principles are applied:

12.3.1 The safety and the welfare of the child is paramount.

12.3.2 Locating and returning the child to a safe environment is the main objective;

12.3.3 Child protection procedures will be initiated whenever there are concerns that a child who is missing may have suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm.

12.4 Based on the 'Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care' DfE (2014), the definitions are set out as follows:

12.4.1 **Child:** anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' and

'young people' are used throughout this guidance to refer to anyone under the age of 18;

12.4.2 **Young runaway:** a child who has run away from their home or care placement, or feels they have been forced or lured to leave.

12.4.3 **Missing child:** a child reported as missing to the police by their family or carers.

12.4.4 **Responsible local authority:** the local authority that is responsible for a looked after child's care and care planning.

12.4.5 **Host local authority:** the local authority in which a looked after child is placed when placed out of the responsible local authority's area.

12.4.6 **Missing from care:** a looked after child who is not at their placement or the place they are expected to be (e.g., school) and their whereabouts is not known.

12.4.7 **Away from placement without authorisation:** a looked after child whose whereabouts is known but who is not at their placement or place they are expected to be and the carer has concerns or an incident has been notified to the local authority or police.

## Police definitions

12.5 Since April 2013 police forces have been adopting new definitions of 'missing' and 'absent' in relation to children and adults reported as missing to the police. These are:

12.5.1 ***Missing:*** anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character, or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another; and

12.5.2 ***Absent:*** a person not at a place where they are expected or required to be.

The police classification of a person as 'missing' or 'absent' will be based on on-going risk assessment. Note that 'absent' within this definition would not include those defined as "away from placement without authorisation" above: a child whose whereabouts are known would not be treated as either 'missing' or 'absent' under the police definitions.

12.6 Coram staff involved directly with children, young people and their families are in a position to build trusted relationships with children and young people and play an important part in recognising, responding to and managing circumstances where children are at risk of going missing, have run away or are missing. The response to any episode of a child going missing will be one which is taken in conjunction with other agencies.

12.7 All Coram staff and managers must ensure that they are familiar with the 'Missing from Home and Care' policies and procedures of both the responsible authority for the child they are working with and the host authority in which a looked after child is placed when placed out of the responsible local authority's area. Coram staff and

managers must ensure that they are compliant with the reporting procedures in the authority where the child is living, whenever they are concerned that a child is missing or at risk of running away.

12.8 Whenever it comes to the attention of Coram staff and managers that a child, they are working with is missing, they must ensure that the concern has been reported to the Police at the earliest opportunity and the relevant Children's Social Care Service, if the child is known to them or is a looked after child.

12.9 If staff are concerned that a child/young person is at risk of running away, they should ensure that support is accessed for the child and the parents/carers to prevent this from happening. Consideration should also be given to the need to consult with and/or make a referral to Children's Social Care where the risks to a child are such that a referral for further assessment and support would be beneficial.

12.10 In the event that a child goes missing, Coram staff should work in partnership with the statutory agencies and other agencies to ensure that as a result of safe and well checks, return interviews, and other interventions, the opportunity these provide inform future case planning. They should also establish the views of professionals, parents and children and ensure that these are taken into account in relation to all on-going e work with the child, their family and/or carers.

12.11 All incidents of a child going missing must be fully recorded on the child's files.

12.12 In addition to reporting concerns to the Police and Children's Social Care, whenever a child/ goes missing or there are concerns that a child is at risk of going missing, Coram staff and managers must ensure in accordance with Coram safeguarding policy and procedures that:

12.12.1 the concern is reported to the appropriate Line Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead.

12.12.2 that a safeguarding alert report is made within the required timescale.

12.13 Whenever a child repeatedly goes missing, this should not be viewed as a normal pattern of behaviour. For example, repeat episodes of a child going missing can indicate sexual exploitation. If a child has run away two or more times, Coram staff should ensure that the Local Authority reviews the circumstances either with the child, their family or both, to offer further support and guidance. Actions following earlier incidents should be reviewed and alternative strategies considered.

## 13. Safeguarding Trafficked Children and Modern Slavery

13.1 Some children including some who are looked after children, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and other migrant children may have been trafficked into the UK or within the UK and may remain under the influence of their traffickers even while they are looked after. Trafficked children are at high risk of going missing. Unaccompanied migrant or asylum-seeking children who go missing immediately after becoming looked after should be treated as potential victims of trafficking and trafficked into modern slavery.

13.2 Whenever there are concerns that a child is a potential victim of trafficking an immediate referral must be made to Children's Social Care in line with Coram's safeguarding procedures. The assessment of need to inform the care plan will be particularly critical in these circumstances and should be done immediately as the window for intervention is very narrow. In cases where a child displays indicators that they may have been trafficked, whether from overseas or within the UK, social workers or other front-line professionals should refer the case to the relevant competent authority by submitting a National Referral Mechanism referral form.

13.3 The National Referral Mechanism has been put in place to identify victims of trafficking and to refer them to organisations that will offer help and support.

This support could include:

13.3.1 finding temporary safe accommodation

13.3.2 helping with medical treatment

13.3.3 having someone to help the victim cope with their experience

13.3.4 providing an interpreter/translator to help communicate in English

13.3.5 protection: modern slavery and human trafficking is a crime (if a victim choses to report it to the police they must respond)

13.3.6 independent legal advice.

If there are also issues relating to the Modern Slavery Act 2015 the 'Duty to notify' should be observed (see Modern Slavery: duty to notify, Home Office 2016The Modern Slavery Act received Royal Assent on 26th March 2015 and became law from March 2016. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 . The Modern Slavery Strategy states: 'It (Modern Slavery) encompasses slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking. Traffickers and slave drivers coerce, deceive and force individuals against their will into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment. Victims may be sexually exploited, forced to work for little or no pay or forced to commit criminal acts against their will.' It is a global crime. Many victims are 'held in plain sight' – having the appearance of living in society but in fact having little or no freedom. It is also important to be aware that 'Human beings who are treated as a commodity are rarely 'used' for a single purpose. The offending associated with them can include: sham marriages; identity fraud; false benefits claim; rape; false imprisonment; violence; and a range of other crimes.

13.4 The Modern Slavery Act seeks to consolidate and clarify the existing offences of slavery and human trafficking whilst increasing the maximum penalties for such offences. It establishes the new Independent Anti-slavery Commissioner, introduces new measures designed to support and protect victims and requires some businesses to disclose what they are doing to eliminate slavery from their supply chains and their own business. It also creates two new civil preventative orders, the Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Order and the Slavery and Trafficking Risk Order. Slavery trafficking and prevention orders

**Additional government guidance:** Care of unaccompanied and trafficked children. Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities July 2014 and 'Safeguarding Children who may have been trafficked 2011 also contains practical guidance for agencies which are likely to encounter children and young people who may have been trafficked.

The NSPCC Child Trafficking Advice Centre provides specialist advice and information to professionals who have concerns that a child may have been trafficked. (Tel: 0808 800 5000 Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm; email: help@nspcc.org)

## 14. Child Sexual Exploitation

14.1 The definition of child sexual exploitation as set out in the DfE document: Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation (February 2017) is as follows;

'Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity

a. In exchange for something the victim needs or wants; and/or

b. For the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

14.2 Child sexual exploitation (CSE) through the use of technology can occur without the child's immediate recognition; for example, being persuaded to post images on the internet / mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

14.3 Violence, coercion and intimidation are common. Involvement in exploitative relationships is characterised by the child's or young person's limited availability of choice as a result of their social, economic or emotional vulnerability.

14.4 A common feature of CSE is that the child or young person does not recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and does not see themselves as a victim of exploitation.

14.5 Sexually exploited children should be responded to as victim survivors of abuse and never as offenders

14.6 The principles underpinning a multi-agency response to the child sexual exploitation include:

14.6.1 Sexual exploitation includes sexual, physical and emotional abuse and, in some cases, neglect;

14.6.2 Children do not make informed choices to enter or remain in sexual exploitation but do so from coercion, enticement, manipulation or desperation;

14.6.3 Children under sixteen cannot consent to sexual activity;

14.6.4 Child sexual exploitation covers a range of offences which will need differing responses from a range of agencies;

14.6.5 Young people who are sexually exploited or at risk of will have varying levels of need, may have multiple vulnerabilities and be caught up in different risks situations. This calls for a multi-agency response and good coordination;

14.6.6 Sexually exploited children may confusion distinguishing between their own choices and the sexual activities they are coerced into;

14.6.7 Law enforcement must direct resources against the coercers and sex abusers, who are often adults, but could also be the child-on-child abuse.

14.6.8 Sexually exploited children are children in need of services under the Children Act 1989 and 2004. They may also be children in need of immediate protection;

14.6.9 A multi-agency network or planning meeting / discussion should take place for all children considered at risk of sexual exploitation. Child protection procedures should always be followed as appropriate in relation to the assessed risk.

14.7 Coram staff and managers should be alert to the possibility that a child they are in contact with may be being sexually exploited. They may already have concerns about the child e.g., that s/he is missing school, frequently missing from home, misusing substances, is depressed or self-harming.

14.8 Coram staff should familiarise themselves with the procedures and guidance available in the authority where they are operating and delivering a service, in relation to responding to children about whom there are concerns regarding child sexual exploitation. This guidance will include details of the local multi-agency arrangements to respond to child sexual exploitation and helpful guidance in relation to assessing risk and referral processes.

14.9 Where staff have immediate concerns about child sexual exploitation, they must discuss their concerns with their line manager and the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

14.10 In all cases where a child is considered to be at risk of harm, a referral must be made to the Local Authority Children's Social Care where the child is resident, and inform the local authority with responsibility for the child if the child is looked after. This will enable an assessment to be made to determine if the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer significant harm, and for appropriate support and safety planning for the child to be put in place.

## 15. Safeguarding Children and Young People affected by gang activity

15.1 Practitioners should consider the risks to young people involved in gangs from violence and weapons, drugs, and sexual exploitation.

15.2 Teenagers can be particularly vulnerable to recruitment into gangs and involvement in gang violence. This vulnerability may be exacerbated by risk factors in an individual's background, including violence in the family, involvement of siblings in gangs, poor educational attainment, or mental health problems.

15.3 Young people who are involved in gangs are more like to suffer harm themselves, through retaliatory violence, displaced retaliation, and territorial violence with other gangs or other harm suffered whilst committing a crime. Young people involved in gangs are more likely to possess and use weapons, both knives and guns.

15.4 Dealing with drugs can also bring gang members into organized crime and can increase the threat of violent situations. Some gang members deal in drugs either as a way to make money or to fund their own use of drugs.

15.5 There is often pressure for girls associated with young boys in gangs to 'link' with gang members to attain status, for their own protection and perhaps to benefit from a criminal lifestyle. Some girls adopt an antagonist role within gangs.

15.6 Safeguarding principles should be a priority for girls who are sexually exploited and abused, which can be a particular risk for girls associated with or targeted by gang members, but it may also affect male gang members.

15.7 Some children and young people are at risk of exposure to or involvement with groups or individuals who condone violence as a means to political end. Violent extremist causes range from animal rights to far-right politics and to international terrorism.

15.8 If a Coram member of staff has concerns that a child may be at risk of harm as a consequence of gang activity, they should discuss their concerns with their line manager and the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the Coram Safeguarding Reporting procedure and refer the concerns to the relevant Local Authority's Children's Social Care Service or the Police.

## 16. Female Genital Mutilation

16.1 Female genital mutilation constitutes significant harm. FGM is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls, and therefore is part of existing child and adult protection policies and procedures. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 refers to FGM as an honor or faith-based belief-based abuse as to the context in which it arises and the children impacted.

16.2 Female Genital Mutilation is illegal in England and Wales under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 and under this act the practice of FGM carries a maximum prison

term of 14 years for any UK national or permanent resident convicted of carrying it out, or aiding and abetting the process, while in the UK or overseas.

16.3 The Serious Crime Act 2015 extended the offences relating to FGM to make parents or those responsible for caring for a child liable for failing to prevent their child being subjected to FGM. It also granted victims of FGM lifelong anonymity, the commencement date for these duties was 3 May 2015.

16.4 In addition, FGM civil protection orders (FGMPO) have been introduced in order to protect girls who are at risk of FGM or girls against whom a FGM offence has been committed.

16.5 It also introduced a mandatory reporting duty requiring regulated health and social care professionals to report known cases of FGM in under 18s to the police. This duty applies when a girl informs a professional that FGM has been carried out on her and/or the professional observes physical signs on the girl appearing to show that FGM has been carried out. The duty applies to all teachers and regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales.

16.6 Where a professional, who is subject to the mandatory reporting duty, has either been told by a girl that she has had FGM or has observed a physical sign appearing to show that a girl has had FGM s/he should personally report the matter to the police by calling 101.

16.7 In all other cases, Coram staff should follow normal safeguarding processes and should consult their local safeguarding procedures for specific guidance in relation to FGM. This procedure is in line with guidance produced by NHS England and the Metropolitan Police Service.

## Responding to concerns about FGM

16.8 Coram staff working with children and young people need to be aware of which girls are at risk of experiencing FGM, be prepared to ask questions of those girls and their families regarding FGM and where necessary refer concerns to the police and children's social care for further investigation. All professionals and volunteers should also know the warning signs that FGM has taken place or may be about to take place and how to report these concerns.

16.9 Where a girl is thought to be at risk of FGM, practitioners should be alert to the need to act quickly - before FGM takes place. If any girl has symptoms or signs of FGM, or if there is good reason to suspect they are at risk of FGM, having considered their family history or other relevant factors, they must be referred to children's social care in line with Coram's safeguarding policy and procedures.

16.10 Additionally, when a girl is identified as being at risk of FGM this information must be shared with the GP and, where the girl is under the age of 5, the health visitor should also be informed as part of the required safeguarding actions

16.11 Where there is insufficient information to adequately assess the likely risk a referral to children's social care should be considered. Where risk is identified a referral to children's social care should be made.

16.12 If Coram staff are worried about a girl under 18 who is either at risk of FGM or who you suspect may have had FGM, they should discuss their concerns with their line manager and the Designated Safeguarding Lead for Safeguarding and share this information with the Local Authority Children's Social Care or the Police, whichever is most appropriate.

16.13 Further guidance is contained within the following guidance documents.

16.13.1 Female Genital Mutilation Risk and Safeguarding

## 17. Information and Communication Technology based abuse

17.1 Online abuse relates to three main areas of sexual abuse to children:

17.1.1 Abusive images of children
17.1.2 A child or young person being groomed for the purpose of sexual abuse;

17.1.3 Exposure to pornographic images and other offensive material via the Internet; and

17.1.4 Internet Abuse may also include cyber-bullying or online bullying where a child is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated and belittled, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child using the internet or mobile phones.

17.2 Sexting describes the use of technology to generate images or videos made by children under the age of 18 of other children; images that are of a sexual nature and are indecent. The content can vary, from text messages to images of partial nudity to sexual images or video. These images are then shared between young people and/or adults more widely. Young people are not always aware that their actions are illegal and the increasing use of smart phones has made the practice much more common place that is a focus on government policy to reduce the levels of this activity in the interest and welfare of children.

### Indicators of concern

17.3 There is some evidence from research that people found in possession of indecent images/pseudo images or films/videos of children may currently, or in the future become involved directly in child abuse themselves.

17.4 In particular, the individual's access to children should be established during an assessment and investigation to consider the possibility that they may be actively involved in the abuse of children including those within the family, within employment contexts or in other settings such as voluntary work with children or other positions of trust.

17.5 Any indecent, obscene image involving a child has, by its very nature, involved a person, who in creating that image has been party to abusing that child.

17.6 The initial indicators of child abuse are likely to be changes in behaviour and mood of the child victim. Clearly such changes can also be attributed to many innocent events in a child's life and cannot be regarded as diagnostic. However, changes to a child's circle of friends or a noticeable change in attitude towards the use of computer or phone could have their origin in abusive behaviour. Similarly, a change in their friends or not wanting to be alone with a particular person may be a sign that something is upsetting them.

17.7 Coram Safeguarding policy and procedures apply where coram staff have:

17.7.1 suspicions or actual evidence of anyone accessing or creating indecent images of children or;

17.7.2 a child being groomed, exposed to pornographic material or contacted by someone inappropriately, via the Internet, social media or other ICT tools such as a mobile phone.

These concerns must always be referred to the Police and Children's Social Care in line with the Coram Safeguarding reporting procedures. Due to the nature of this type of abuse and the possibility of the destruction of evidence, the referrer should first discuss their concerns with the Police and Children's Social Care before raising the matter with the family. This will enable a joint decision to be made about informing the family and ensuring that the child's welfare is safeguarded.

17.8 Further information and guidance is available from:

17.8.1 http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/

17.8.2 https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/

17.8.3 http://www.childnet.com/young-people/secondary/hot-topics/sexting

## 18. Other key safeguarding and protection areas

### *Safeguarding Children and Young People at risk of radicalisation*

18.1 Coram staff should be aware of the risks associated with children and young people who are likely to suffer or may have suffered significant harm due to radicalisation and extremism and may need the support of the service if they are at risk of radicalisation.

18.2 Radicalisation is defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism and violent extremism and in some cases to then participate in terrorist groups.

18.3 Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

18.4 Nationally a number of strategies and measures are related to specific agencies having 'due regard in the exercise of their functions of the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.'

18.5 From July 2015 all schools and child care providers must have regard to the statutory guidance issued in July 2015 under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and is known as the PREVENT duty.

18.6 Coram staff should be aware of indications that a child or young person may be becoming radicalised and how to respond to in a proportionate and appropriate way and where necessary take appropriate measures to safeguard the child/young person and those living with or in direct contact with known extremists.

18.7 Staff should also be aware that the grooming of children for the purposes of involvement in violent extremist activity is child abuse and should follow Coram safeguarding procedures for reporting concerns when they suspect or are \aware that a child is at risk of or is being exploited in this way.

18.8 Advice regarding the assessment of risk in relation to extremism and support to identify appropriate interventions can be provided by Prevent Co-ordinators in each local authority.

18.9 Whenever there is immediate cause for concern then the Coram Safeguarding reporting procedures must be followed and a referral made to Children's Social Care.

## *Domestic Abuse*

18.10 Outcomes for children can be adversely affected if they are living with domestic violence and abuse. The impact of domestic violence and abuse on an individual child will vary according to the child's resilience and the strengths and weaknesses of their particular circumstances.

18.11 The three imperatives of any intervention for children living with domestic violence are:

18.11.1 To protect the child/ren;

18.11.2 To support the parent (usually) the mother to assist her to protect herself and the child/ren; and

18.11.3 To hold the abusive partner accountable for the violence and provide him /her with opportunities to change.

18.12 The definition of 'domestic violence and abuse' was updated by the Home Office in March 2013 to include the reality that many young people are experiencing domestic abuse and violence in relationships at a young age. They may therefore be Children in need or likely to suffer significant harm, the definition from the Home Office is as follows:

"Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence and abuse between those aged 16 or over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender and sexuality."

This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

18.12.1 Psychological;

18.12.2 Physical;

18.12.3 Sexual;

18.12.4 Financial;

18.12.5 Emotional.

**Controlling behaviour is:** a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

**Coercive behaviour is:** an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim."

Domestic abuse must be seen as a safeguarding concern and responded to in accordance with these procedures. Further information in respect of domestic abuse and the multi-agency response and interventions available can be found by accessing the London Safeguarding Children Protection and Practice Guidance updated March 2026 **.londonsafeguardingchildrenprocedures core_pr**

## 19. Further resources (App. B of Working Together to Safeguard Children)

### Guidance issued by the Department for Education

- Care of unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery
- Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners
- Children Act 1989: court orders and pre-proceedings
- Children Act 1989 guidance and regulation volume 2: care planning, placement, and case review
- Children Act 1989: private fostering
- Keeping children safe in education: for schools and colleges
- Listening to and involving children and young people
- Managing risk of radicalisation in your education setting
- Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation: procedural information
- Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation
- National action plan to tackle child abuse linked to faith or belief
- National minimum standards for private fostering
- Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015
- Pathways to harm, pathways to protection: a triennial analysis of serious case reviews, 2011 to 2014
- Preventing and tackling bullying
- Prevention of homelessness and provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation
- Safeguarding and social care for children
- Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked practice guidance
- Safeguarding strategy: unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children

- Social work post-qualifying standards: Knowledge and skills statements
- Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (EYFS)
- Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care
- Statutory visits to children with special educational needs and disabilities or health conditions in long-term residential settings
- The Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency (England) Regulations 2018
- The Prevent duty: support for those working in education with safeguarding responsibilities
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: how legislation underpins implementation in England
- Use of reasonable force in schools
- Visiting children in residential special schools and colleges statutory guidance
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners

### Guidance issued by other government departments and agencies

- Achieving best evidence in criminal proceedings: guidance on interviewing victims and witnesses, and guidance on using special measures Ministry of Justice
- Apply for a forced marriage protection order Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
- Asset plus: assessment and planning in the youth justice system Youth Justice Board
- Carers strategy: second national action plan 2014-2016 Department of Health and Social Care
- Channel and Prevent Multi-Agency Panel guidance: protecting people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism Home Office
- Child exploitation disruption toolkit Home Office
- Commissioning framework for child sexual abuse support Home Office
- Counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST) Home Office
- County lines offending: the Crown Prosecution Service legal guidance Crown Prosecution Service
- Controlling or coercive behaviour: statutory guidance framework Home Office
- Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines Home Office
- Cyber aware National Cyber Security Centre
- DBS barring referral guidance Disclosure and Barring Service
- Developing local substance misuse safeguarding protocols Public Health England
- Disclosure and Barring Service
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021: statutory guidance Home Office
- Every child matters: statutory guidance (arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children UK Visas and Immigration
- Female genital mutilation protection orders: factsheet Home Office
- Female genital mutilation resource pack Home Office
- Forced marriage Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, and Home Office
- Forced marriage protection orders (application) HM Courts and Tribunals Service
- Forced marriage resource pack Home Office
- Forced marriage: statutory guidance for heads of safeguarding organisations, and non- statutory guidance for front-line professionals Home Office, and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
- Guidance for health professionals on domestic violence Department of Health and Social Care
- Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
- Mental Health Act 1983: Code of Practice Department of Health and Social Care
- Missing children and adults: a cross-government strategy Home Office
- Modern Slavery Act: statutory guidance Home Office

- Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA): Guidance Ministry of Justice, HM Prison and Probation Service
- National service framework: children, young people, and maternity services Department of Health and Social Care
- Practice direction 12A – care, supervision, and other part 4 proceedings: guide to case Management Ministry of Justice
- Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales Home Office
- Prison, probation, and rehabilitation: public protection manual HM Prison and Probation Service
- Probation Service Serious further offence procedures policy framework Ministry of Justice
- Protocol for liaison and information exchange when criminal proceedings coincide with child safeguarding practice reviews in England Crown Prosecution Service
- Recognised, valued and supported: next steps for the carers strategy 2010 Department of Health and Social Care
- Safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk in the NHS: Safeguarding accountability and assurance framework NHS England

- Serious and organised crime toolkit: an interactive toolkit for practitioners working with young people Home Office
- Statutory guidance for integrated care boards on executive lead roles NHS England
- Supporting children to stay safe online National Crime Agency/CEOP Education
- Understanding the female genital mutilation enhanced dataset: updated guidance and clarification to support implementation Department of Health and Social Care
- Violence against women and girls Home Office

### Guidance issued by external organisations

- Child maltreatment: when to suspect maltreatment in under 18s NICE
- Child protection and the dental team British Dental Association
- Child Protection Companion Royal college of Paediatrics and Child Health
- Children's Commissioner
- Children's rights and the law guide Children's Rights Alliance for England
- Communicating with children: a guide for those working with children who have or may have been sexually abused Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse
- Cyberbullying: understand, prevent, respond – guidance for schools Childnet International
- Guide to UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) Information Commissioner's Office
- Helping education settings identify and respond to concerns Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse
- How we protect children's rights Unicef
- Independent Scrutiny and Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme
- Inter-parental relationships Early Intervention Foundation
- Multi-agency practice principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm Non-statutory guidance for local areas, developed by the Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) Support Programme, funded by the Department for Education and supported by the Home Office, the Department for Health and Social Care and the Ministry of Justice
- NICE guideline on child abuse and neglect NICE
- Police response to concern for a child College of Policing
- Pre-proceedings and family justice hub Research in Practice and Essex County Council
- Prison and Probation Ombudsman's fatal incidents reports
- Private fostering CoramBAAF
- Protecting children and young people: doctors' responsibilities General Medical Council

- Protective measures and civil orders College of Policing
- Safeguarding children: toolkit for general practice Royal College of General Practitioners
- Safer young lives research centre University of Bedfordshire
- Signs and Indicators: a template for identifying and recording signs of child sexual abuse Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse
- Standards for safeguarding and protecting children in sport NSPCC
- Sudden unexpected death in infancy and childhood: multi-agency guidelines for care and investigation Royal College of Pathologists
- Supporting parents and carers: a guide for those working with families affected by child sexual abuse Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse
- UK Safer Internet Centre: Online safety advice and resources UK Safer Internet Centre
- Whistleblowing advice line NSPCC
- Working Together with Parents Network: update of the DoH/DfES good practice guidance on working with parents with a learning disability (2007) University of Bristol

# Part Four: Coram Policy Appendices A-I.

## Appendix A: Definition of significant harm (London Safeguarding Partnership)

Some children are in need because they are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children, and gives Local Authorities a duty to make enquiries (Section 47) to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

A Court may only make a Care Order or Supervision Order in respect of a child if it is satisfied that:

- The child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm; and
- The harm, or likelihood of harm, is attributable to a lack of adequate parental care or control (Section 31).

In addition, Harm is defined as the ill treatment or impairment of health and development. This definition was clarified in section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (implemented on 31 January 2005) so that it may include “impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another" for example, where there are concerns of Domestic Abuse.

There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the degree and the extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, the extent of premeditation, and the presence or degree of threat, coercion, sadism and bizarre or unusual elements.

Each of these elements has been associated with more severe effects on the child, and / or relatively greater difficulty in helping the child overcome the adverse impact of the maltreatment.

A single traumatic event may constitute significant harm (e.g., a violent assault, suffocation or poisoning). More often, significant harm is a compilation of significant events, both acute and longstanding, which interrupt, change or damage the child's physical and psychological development.

Some children live in family and social circumstances where their health and development are neglected. For them, it is the corrosiveness of long-term neglect, emotional, physical or sexual abuse that causes impairment to the extent of constituting significant harm.
Significant harm may also refer to harm caused by one child to another (which may be a single event or a range of ill treatment) and which is generally referred to as 'peer on peer abuse' (or child on child) abuse.

As well as threats to the welfare of children from within their families, children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community or online.

Some children have pre-existing vulnerabilities which make them more susceptible to further ongoing abuse. Children with learning difficulties, mental health challenges and who are socially isolated are more likely to be victims of online abuse and may find it difficult to disclose what is happening to them.

# Appendix B: legislation relevant to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

## Statutory framework

The legislation relevant to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is set out below. It is valuable information in its own right and should also be read alongside the statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.

### Children Act 1989

#### Provision of services for children in need, their families and others

The Children Act 1989 places a duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area who are in need.

Section 17(1) states that it shall be the general duty of every local authority:

(a) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need; and

(b) so far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families

by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.

Section 17(5) enables local authorities to make arrangements with others to provide services on their behalf and states that every local authority:

(a) shall facilitate the provision by others (including in particular voluntary organisations) of services which it is a function of the authority to provide by virtue of section 17, section 18, 20, 22A to 22C, 23B to 23D, 24A or 24B; and

(b) may make such arrangements as they see fit for any person to act on their behalf in the provision of any such service.

Section 17(10) states that a child shall be taken to be in need if:

(a) the child is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services by a local authority under Part III of the Children Act 1989;

(b) the child's health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of such services; or

(c) the child is disabled.

Under section 17, local authorities are responsible for determining what services should be provided to a child in need. This does not necessarily require local authorities themselves to be the provider of such services.

Provisions relating to young carers and parent carers were inserted into Part III of the Children Act 1989 by the Children and Families Act 2014. These provisions came into force on 1 April 2015.

Section 17ZA states that a local authority must assess whether a young carer within their area has needs for support and, if so, what those needs are, if:

(a) it appears to the authority that the young carer may have needs for support; or

(b) the authority receives a request from the young carer or a parent of the young carer to assess the young carer's needs for support.

Section 17ZC requires a local authority that carries out a young carer's needs assessment to consider the assessment and decide:

(a) whether the young carer has needs for support in relation to the care which he or she provides or intends to provide;

(b) if so, whether those needs could be satisfied (wholly or partly) by services which the authority may provide under section 17; and
(c) if they could be so satisfied, whether or not to provide any such services in relation to the young carer.

Section 17ZD states that a local authority must assess whether a parent carer of a disabled child who lives within their area has needs for support and, if so, what those needs are, if:

(a) it appears to the authority that the parent carer may have needs for support
(b) the authority receives a request from the parent carer to assess the parent carer's needs for support; and
(c) the local authority is satisfied that the disabled child cared for and the disabled child's family are persons for whom they may provide or arrange for the provision of services under section 17.

The local authority need not carry out a young carer's assessment (under section 17ZA) or a parent carer's assessment (under section 17ZD) if the local authority has previously carried out a care-related assessment of the young carer/parent carer in relation to the same person cared for, unless it appears to the authority that the needs or circumstances of the young carer/parent carer or the person they care for have changed since the last care-related assessment.

Section 17ZF requires the local authority that carries out a parent carer's needs assessment to consider the assessment and decide:

(a) Whether the parent carer has needs for support in relation to the care they provide;
(b) whether the disabled child cared for has needs for support;
(c) whether any needs identified could be satisfied (wholly or partly) by services which the authority may provide under section 17; and
(d) whether or not to provide any such services in relation to the parent carer or the disabled child cared for.

### Provision of accommodation for children

Section 20 sets out the duty on local authorities to provide accommodation for any child in need within their area who appears to require accommodation as a result of:

(a) there being no person who has parental responsibility for the child;

(b) the child being lost or having been abandoned; or

(c) the person who has been caring for the child being prevented (whether or not permanently, and for whatever reason) from providing the child with suitable accommodation or care.

Section 22C sets out the way in which looked after children[1] are to be accommodated and maintained by local authorities.

### Co-operation between authorities

Section 27 imposes a duty on other local authorities, local authority housing services and certain health bodies to co-operate with a local authority in the exercise of that authority's duties under Part III of the Act (support for children and families). Where it appears to a local authority that any authority mentioned in section 27(3) could, by taking any specified action, help in the exercise of any of the local authority's functions under Part III of the Act, the local authority may request the help of that other authority or body, specifying the action in question. An authority or body whose help is so requested must comply with the request if it is compatible with their own statutory or other duties and

Section 22 sets out when a child will be "looked after" by a local authority for the purposes of the Act obligations and does not unduly prejudice the discharge of any of their functions. The authorities specified in section 27(3) are:

(a) any local authority;

(b) any local housing authority;

(c) NHS England;

(d) any Integrated care board, Local Health Board, Special Health Authority National Health Service Trust or NHS Foundation Trust;

(e) any local authority in Wales; and

(f) any person by the Secretary of State for the purpose of section 27

## Care and Supervision Orders

Section 31 provides that, on the application of any local authority or authorised person, the court may make an order:

(a) placing the child with respect to whom the application is made in the care of a designated local authority; or

(b) putting the child under the supervision of a designated local authority. A court may only make a care order or supervision order if it is satisfied:

(a) that the child concerned is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm;

(b) that the harm, or likelihood of harm, is attributable to:

- the care given to the child, or likely to be given to him if the order were not made, not being what it would be reasonable to expect a parent to give to him; or
- the child's being beyond parental control.

No care order or supervision order may be made with respect to a child who has reached the age of seventeen (or sixteen, in the case of a child who is married).

Where a care order is made in relation to a child it is the duty of the local authority designated by the order to receive the child into their care and keep the child in their care while the order remains in force (section 33).

## Child Protection

Section 47(1) states that, where a local authority:

(a) is informed that a child who lives, or is found, in their area is the subject of an emergency protection order or is in police protection; or

(b) the local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm,

the authority must make, or cause to be made, such enquires as they consider necessary to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.

Section 47(9) places a duty on persons mentioned in section 47(11) where a local authority is conducting enquiries under section 47, to assist the local authority with these enquiries (in particular by providing relevant information and advice) if called upon by the local authority to do so. Under section 47(5A), in determining what action to take following its enquiries, the local authority must, so far as is reasonably practicable and consistent with the child's welfare:

(a) ascertain the child's wishes and feelings regarding the action to be taken; and

(b) give due consideration (with regard to the child's age and understanding) to such wishes and feelings of the child as they have been able to ascertain.

### Emergency protection powers

The court may make an emergency protection order with respect to a child under **section 44** on application by any person, if the court is satisfied that there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is likely to suffer significant harm if the child:

(a) is not removed to accommodation provided by or on behalf of the applicant; or

(b) does not remain in the place in which the child is then being accommodated.

An emergency protection order may also be made by the court on the application of a local authority or an authorised person (i.e., a person authorised to apply to the court for care orders or supervision orders under section 31 of the Act) if the court is satisfied that:

(a) enquires being made with respect to the child (in the case of a local authority, under section 47(1)(b) of the Act) are being frustrated by access to the child being unreasonably refused to a person authorised to seek access; and

(b) the applicant has reasonable cause to believe that access is needed as a matter of urgency.

In addition, where the applicant is an authorised person, the court must be satisfied that the applicant has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

An emergency protection order may authorise the removal of a child to accommodation provided by or on behalf of the applicant or prevent the removal of a child from a hospital or any other place where the child was being accommodated before the order was made, amongst other things.

### Exclusion requirement

The court may include an exclusion requirement in an interim care order or emergency protection order (**section 38A and 44A**). This allows a perpetrator to be removed from or be prohibited entry to the home or to be excluded from a defined area in which the home is situated, instead of having to remove the child from the home. The court must be satisfied that:

(a) there is reasonable cause to believe that, if the person is excluded from the home in which the child lives, the child will not be likely to suffer significant harm, or (in the case of section 44A) that enquiries will cease to be frustrated; and

(b) another person living in the home is able and willing to give the child the care that it would be reasonable to expect a parent to give, and consents to the inclusion of an exclusion requirement in the relevant order.

### Police protection powers

Under **section 46**, where a police officer has reasonable cause to believe that a child would otherwise be likely to suffer significant harm, the officer may:

(a) remove the child to suitable accommodation and keep the child there; or

(b) take reasonable steps to ensure that the child's removal from any hospital or other place in which the child is then being accommodated is prevented.

No child may be kept in police protection for more than 72 hours.

### Children Act 2004

**Section 10** requires each local authority to make arrangements to promote co-operation between the authority, each of the authority's relevant partners[2], and such other persons or bodies who exercise functions or are engaged in activities in relation to children in the local authority's area, as the authority considers appropriate. The arrangements are to be made with a view to improving the wellbeing of children in the authority's area, which includes protection from harm and neglect alongside other outcomes.

Section 11 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to make arrangements for ensuring that their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

[2] Section 10(4) specifies who the relevant partners are for the purposes of section 10.

Sections 16A to 16D - Under section 16A, the Secretary of State must establish the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (the Panel). The Panel's functions under section 16B are to identify serious child safeguarding cases which raise issues that are complex or of national importance and to arrange, where appropriate, for those cases to be reviewed under their supervision. The reviews seek to identify improvements required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency (England) Regulations 2018[3] set out the criteria the Panel must take into account when determining whether serious child safeguarding cases raise issues that are complex or of national importance, along with arrangements for national reviewers and reports. Section 16C places a duty on local authorities to notify the Panel of events where they know or suspect that a child has been abused or neglected and the child dies or is seriously harmed in the local authority's area, or dies or is seriously harmed outside England while normally resident in the local authority's area. Section 16D requires persons or bodies to supply information to the Panel, a reviewer or another person or body to enable the Panel to carry out its functions. The person or body to whom a request is made must comply with the request. The Panel may enforce such a request by making an application to the High Court or the county court for an injunction.

Sections 16E to 16K establish the roles and responsibilities of safeguarding partners for local authority areas.

Section 16E requires safeguarding partners for a local area to make arrangements for the safeguarding partners and any appropriate relevant agencies to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area. 'Safeguarding partners' are the local authority, an integrated care board and the chief officer of police within the local authority area. A 'relevant agency' is a person who is specified in regulations and exercises functions in relation to children within the area. This must include arrangements to identify and respond to the needs of children in the area.

Section 16F requires local safeguarding partners for a local authority area to make arrangements to identify serious child safeguarding cases which raise issues of importance in relation to the area and, where appropriate, for those cases to be reviewed under their supervision. The purpose of these reviews is to identify improvements which should be made locally to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency (England) Regulations 2018 set out the criteria that the safeguarding partners must take into account when determining whether serious child safeguarding cases raise issues of importance in relation to the area, along with arrangements for local reviewers and reports.

Section 16G requires safeguarding partners to publish their arrangements, and to ensure scrutiny of how effective the arrangements have been by an independent person. It places a duty on safeguarding partners and the specified relevant agencies to act in accordance with the published arrangements; and enables the Secretary of State to make regulations which provide for enforcement of this duty if necessary. It also requires the safeguarding partners to prepare and publish, at least once in every 12-month period, a report on the work that they have done as a result of their arrangements, and how effective the arrangements have been in practice.

Section 16H sets out the requirement for persons or bodies to supply (on request) information to the safeguarding partners for the purpose of enabling or assisting the performance of their functions. When a recipient does not comply with such a request, a safeguarding partner may apply for a High Court or county court injunction to enforce it.

Section 16I allows the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies to fund their arrangements by making payments towards expenditure incurred in connection with the arrangements; and to supply resources connected with the arrangements which may include (for example) staff, goods, services or accommodation.

Section 16J enables the safeguarding partners for two or more local authority areas to agree that their areas are to be treated as a single area; and if they agree so, for safeguarding partners in those areas to arrange for one of them to carry out safeguarding partner functions on behalf of the other. The same applies to integrated care boards and chief officers of police.

Section 16K specifies that the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies for a local authority area in England must have regard to any guidance given by the Secretary of State in connection with their functions.

Sections 16M to 16Q establish the roles and responsibilities of child death review partners. "Child death review partners" are the local authority and any integrated care board for the local authority area (section 16Q).

Section 16M sets out the requirement on child death review partners to make arrangements for the review of each death of a child normally resident in the area, or if they consider it appropriate, a child who is not normally resident. It also requires the partners to make arrangements for the analysis of information gathered by their reviews. This section sets out that where partners identify that it would be appropriate for someone to take action in relation to

matters identified in their review, they must inform that person. It also requires that child death review partners must prepare and publish reports on what they have done as result of their arrangements, and how effective the a rrangements have been in practice.

Section 16N sets out the requirement for persons or bodies to supply (on request) information to the child death review partners for the purpose of enabling or assisting the performance of their functions. When a recipient does not comply with such a request, a child death review partner may apply for a High Court or county court injunction to enforce it.

Section 16O allows child death review partners to fund their arrangements by making payments towards expenditure incurred in connection with the arrangements; and to supply resources to support the arrangements which may include (for example) staff, goods, services or accommodation.

Section 16P enables child death review partners for two or more local authority areas in England to agree that their areas are to be treated as a single area. Where a local authority is a child death review partner for the same local authority area as another local authority, the authorities may arrange for one of them to carry out functions under sections 16M to 16O on behalf of the other. The same applies to integrated care boards.

### Children and Social Work Act 2017.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 was enacted following the publication of a 2016 policy paper entitled 'Putting children first: our vision for children's social care'. The Act contains freestanding provisions (for example, it sets out the corporate parenting principles that apply to local authorities in section 1), along with amendments to both the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. In particular, the Act amended the C h i l d r e n Act 2004 to provide for the abolition of Local Safeguarding Children Boards and the creation of new safeguarding arrangements, including the establishment of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the imposition of duties on safeguarding partners and child death review partners.

### Education Acts

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on:

- local authorities in relation to their education functions
- the governing bodies of maintained schools and the governing bodies of further education institutions (which include sixth-form colleges) in relation to their functions relating to the conduct of the school or the institution to make arrangements for ensuring that such functions are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children (in the case of the school or institution, being those children who are either pupils at the school or who are students under 18 years of age attending the further education institution).

A similar duty applies to proprietors of independent schools (which include academies/free schools) by virtue of regulations made under sections 94(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

Regulations made under section 342 of the Education Act 1996, set out the requirements for a non-maintained special school to be approved and continue to be approved by the Secretary of State. It is a condition of approval and continuing approval that arrangements must be in place for safeguarding and promoting the health, safety and welfare of pupils and when making such arrangements, the proprietor of the school must have regard to any relevant guidance published by the Secretary of State.

### Childcare Act 2006

Section 40 of the Childcare Act 2006 requires early years providers registered on the Early Years Register and schools providing early years childcare to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework.

### Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012

Under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPOA), all children remanded in criminal proceedings will be looked-after. Children may be remanded to accommodation provided by the local authority or to

youth detention accommodation (YDA). The authority responsible for a child who becomes looked-after following remand is usually the one where the child normally lives, but where there is a doubt about this the court may initially determine which authority should be designated as being responsible for the child's care.

Where a child is remanded to local authority accommodation, the local authority's care planning responsibilities will be the same as for any other looked-after child (though authorities are not required to produce a "plan for permanence" for this group of children). Where a child, including a child already looked-after, is remanded to YDA, the local authority will be required to produce a Detention Placement Plan, describing the arrangements for responding to the child's needs whilst they are detained. The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010, as amended, take LASPOA into account.

### Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011

**Section 1(8)(h)** of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 requires the police and crime commissioner for a police area to hold the relevant chief constable to account for the exercise of the chief constable's duties in relation to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare under sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004.

### Crime and Disorder Act 1998

**Section 38** of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires local authorities, acting in co-o peration with certain persons (including every Chief Police Officer or local policing body whose area lies within that of the local authority, integrated care boards and providers o f probation services), to such extent as is appropriate for their area, to secure that youth justice services are available in their area. Youth justice services include the provision of persons to act as appropriate adults to safeguard the interests of children and young persons detained or questioned by police officers.

### Housing Act 1996

**Section 213A** of the Housing Act 1996 requires housing authorities to refer to social services persons with whom children normally reside or might reasonably be expected to reside, who they have reason to believe may be ineligible for assistance, or who may be homeless and may have become so intentionally, as long as the person consents. If homelessness persists, any child in the family could be in need. In such cases, if social services decide the child's needs would be best met by helping the family to obtain accommodation, they can ask the housing authority for reasonable advice and assistance in this, and the housing authority must give reasonable advice and assistance.

### Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 reformed England's homelessness legislation by imposing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. The Act made various amendments to the Housing Act 1996, including by inserting a new section 213B, which applies to all public authorities specified in regulations[5] if the authority considers that a person in England in relation to whom it exercises functions is or may be homeless or threatened with homelessness. In those circumstances, the public authority must ask the person to agree to a local housing authority being notified and, provided the person agrees, notify the local housing authority and provide them with the person's contact details.

### Domestic Abuse Act 2021

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse (see section 1 of the Act). The statutory definition is clear that domestic abuse may be a single incident or a course of conduct which can encompass a wide range of abusive behaviours, including a) physical or sexual abuse; b) violent or threatening behaviour; c) controlling or coercive behaviour; d) economic abuse; and e) psychological, emotional or other abuse.

5.See Schedule 1 to the Homelessness (Review Procedure etc.) Regulations 2018/223

Under the statutory definition, both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be "personally connected" (as defined in section 2 of the Act). The definition ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members.

Section 3 of the Act recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children (defined as a person under 18) as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse involving a person they are related to. A child is related to a person if the person is a parent of, or has parental responsibility for, the child, or the child and the person are relatives.

### Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

The Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR regulate the collection and use of personal data. Personal data is information about identified or identifiable living individuals. Everyone responsible for processing personal data has to follow the 'data protection principles. The principles include that information must be processed fairly, lawfully and transparently, must be collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes, and must be adequate, relevant and limited to only what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which it is processed. Further information on data protection
can be obtained from the ICO website.

### Early Help

Effective early help relies upon local organisations and agencies working together to:

• identify children and families who would benefit from early help

• undertake an assessment of the need for early help

• provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to improve the outcomes for the child

• Local authorities, under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, have a responsibility to promote inter-agency co-operation to improve the welfare of all children.

• Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 requires each local authority to make arrangements to promote co-operation between the authority, each of the authority's relevant partners and such other persons or bodies working with children in the local authority's area as the authority considers appropriate.

### Identifying children and families who would benefit from early help

Local organisations and agencies should have in place effective ways to identify emerging problems and potential unmet needs of individual children and families. Local authorities should work with organisations and agencies to develop joined-up early help services based on a clear understanding of local needs. This requires all practitioners, including those in universal services and those providing services to adults with children, to understand their role in identifying emerging problems and to share information with other practitioners to support early identification and assessment.

Multi-agency training will be important in supporting this collective understanding of local need. Practitioners working in both universal services and specialist services have a responsibility to identify the symptoms and triggers of abuse and neglect, to share that information and provide children with the help they need. To be effective, practitioners need to continue to develop their knowledge and skills in this area and be aware of the new and emerging threats, including online abuse, grooming, sexual exploitation and radicalisation. To enable this, the three safeguarding partners should consider what training is needed locally and how they will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of any training they commission.

• Practitioners should, in particular, be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

• is disabled and has specific additional needs6

• has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)

• is a young carer

• is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups

• is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home7

• is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation

• is at risk of being radicalised or exploited

• is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse

• is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves

• has returned home to their family from care

• is a privately fostered child

### Effective assessment of the need for early help.

Children and families may need support from a wide range of local organisations and agencies. Where a child and family would benefit from co-ordinated support from more than one organisation or agency (e.g., education, health, housing, police) there should be an inter-agency assessment. These early help assessments should be evidence-based, be clear about the action to be taken and services to be provided and identify what help the child and family require to prevent needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed through a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989.

A lead practitioner should undertake the assessment, provide help to the child and family, and act as an advocate on their behalf and co-ordinate the delivery of support services. A GP, family support worker, school nurse, teacher, health visitor and/or special educational needs co-ordinator could undertake the lead practitioner role. Decisions about who should be the lead practitioner should be taken on a case-by-case basis and should be informed by the child and their family.

- For an early help assessment to be effective: it should be undertaken with the agreement of the child and their parents or carers, involving the child and family as well as all the practitioners who are working with them.
- It should take account of the child's wishes and feelings wherever possible, their age, family circumstances and the wider community context in which they are living

Practitioners should be able to discuss concerns they may have about a child and family with a social worker in the local authority.
In cases where consent is not given for an early help assessment, practitioners should consider how the needs of the child might be met. If at any time it is considered that the child may be a child in need, as defined in the Children Act 1989, or that the child has suffered significant harm or is likely to do so, a referral should be made immediately to local authority children's social care. This referral can be made by any practitioner.

### Assessment of disabled children and their carers

When undertaking an assessment of a disabled child, the local authority must also consider whether it is necessary to provide support under section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act (CSDPA) 1970. Where a local authority is satisfied that the identified services and assistance can be provided under section 2 of the CSDPA, and it is necessary in order to meet a disabled child's needs, it must arrange to provide that support. Where a local authority is assessing the needs of a disabled child, a carer of that child may also require the local authority to undertake an assessment of their ability to provide, or to continue to provide, care for the child, under section 1 of the Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995. The local authority must take account of the results of any such assessment when deciding whether to provide services to the disabled child.

If a local authority considers that a parent carer of a disabled child (see glossary) may have support needs, it must carry out an assessment under section 17ZD of the Children Act 1989. The local authority must also carry out such an assessment if a parent carer requests one. Such an assessment must consider whether it is appropriate for the parent carer to provide, or continue to provide, care for the disabled child, in light of the parent carer's needs and wishes.

### Assessment of young carers

If a local authority considers that a young carer (see glossary) may have support needs, it must carry out an assessment under section 17ZA of the Children Act 1989. The local authority must also carry out such an assessment if a young carer, or the parent of a young carer, requests one. Such an assessment must consider whether it is appropriate or excessive for the young carer to provide care for the person in question, in light of the young carer's needs and wishes. The Young Carers' (Needs Assessment) Regulations 2015 require local authorities to look at the needs of the whole family when

carrying out a young carer's needs assessment. Young carers' assessments can be combined with assessments of adults in the household, with the agreement of the young carer and adults concerned.

### Assessment of children in secure youth establishments

Any assessment of children in secure youth establishments should take account of their specific needs. In all cases, the local authority in which a secure youth establishment is located is responsible for the safety and welfare of the children in that establishment. The host local authority should work with the governor, director, manager or principal of the secure youth establishment and the child's home local authority, their relevant Youth Offending Team and, where appropriate, the Youth Custody Service17 to ensure that the child has a single, comprehensive support plan.

Where a child becomes looked-after, as a result of being remanded to youth detention accommodation (YDA), the local authority must visit the child and assess the child's needs before taking a decision. This information must be used to prepare a Detention Placement Plan (DPP), which must set out how the YDA and other practitioners will meet the child's needs whilst the child remains remanded. The DPP must be reviewed in the same way as a care plan for any other looked-after child18.

### Contextual safeguarding

As well as threats to the welfare of children from within their families, children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including: exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines; trafficking, online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Extremist groups make use of the internet to radicalise and recruit and to promote extremist materials. Any potential harmful effects to individuals identified as vulnerable to extremist ideologies or being drawn into terrorism should also be considered19.

Assessments of children in such cases should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life and are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Children who may be alleged perpetrators should also be assessed to understand the impact of contextual issues on their safety and welfare. Interventions should focus on addressing these wider environmental factors, which are likely to be a threat to the safety and welfare of a number of different children who may or may not be known to local authority children's social care. Assessments of children in such cases should consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of each child. They should look at the parental capacity to support the child, including helping the parents and carers to understand any risks and support them to keep children safe and assess potential risk to child.

Channel panels, established under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, assess the extent to which identified individuals are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, and, where appropriate, arrange for support to be provided20. When assessing Channel referrals, local authorities and their partners should consider how best to align these with assessments undertaken under the Children Act 1989.

The Children Act 1989 promotes the view that all children and their parents should be considered as individuals and that family structures, culture, religion, ethnic origins and other characteristics should be respected. Local authorities should ensure they support and promote fundamental British values, of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 contains a duty on specified authorities in England, Wales and Scotland to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

### Purpose of assessment

Whatever legislation the child is assessed under, the purpose of the assessment is always:

- to gather important information about a child and family
- to analyse their needs and/or the nature and level of any risk and harm being suffered by the child
- to decide whether the child is a child in need (section 17) or is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm (section 47)
- to provide support to address those needs to improve the child's outcomes and welfare and where necessary to make them safe.

### Local protocols for assessment

Local authorities, with their partners, should develop and publish local protocols for assessment. A local protocol should set out clear arrangements for how cases will be managed once a child is referred into local authority children's social care and be consistent with the requirements of this statutory guidance. The detail of each protocol will be led by the local authority in discussion and agreement with the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies where appropriate.

The local authority is publicly accountable for this protocol and all organisations and agencies have a responsibility to understand their local protocol.

The local protocol should reflect where assessments for some children will require particular care. This is especially so for young carers, children with special educational needs (including to inform and be informed by Education, Health and Care Plans), unborn children where there are concerns, children in hospital, children with specific communication needs, asylum seeking children, children considered at risk of gang activity and association with organised crime groups, children at risk of female genital mutilation, children who are in the youth justice system, and children returning home.

Where a child has other assessments, it is important that these are co-ordinated so that the child does not become lost between the different organisational procedures. There should be clear procedures for how these organisations and agencies will communicate with the child and family, and the local protocol for assessment should clarify how organisations and agencies and practitioners undertaking assessments and providing services can make contributions.

The local protocol for assessment should set out the process for challenge by children and families by publishing the complaints procedures.

### The principles and parameters of a good assessment

Assessment should be a dynamic process, which analyses and responds to the changing nature and level of need and/or risk faced by the child from within and outside their family. It is important that the impact of what is happening to a child is clearly identified and that information is gathered, recorded and checked systematically, and discussed with the child and their parents/carers where appropriate.

Any provision identified as being necessary through the assessment process should, if the local authority decides to provide such services, be provided without delay. A good assessment will monitor and record the impact of any services delivered to the child and family and review the help being delivered. Whilst services may be delivered to a parent or carer, the assessment should be focused on the needs of the child and on the impact any services are having on the child.

Good assessments support practitioners to understand whether a child has needs relating to their care or a disability and/or is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

The specific needs of disabled children and young carers should be given sufficient recognition and priority in the assessment process.

The local authority should act decisively to protect the child from abuse and neglect including initiating care proceedings where existing interventions are insufficient24. Where an assessment in these circumstances identifies concerns but care proceedings are not initiated, the assessment should provide a valuable platform for ongoing engagement with the child and their family.

Where a child becomes looked-after, the assessment will be the baseline for work with the family. Any needs that have been identified should be addressed before decisions are made about the child's return home. Assessment by a social worker is required before a looked after child under a care order returns home. This will provide evidence of whether the necessary improvements have been made to ensure the child's safety when they return home. Following an assessment, appropriate support should be provided for children returning home, including where that return home is unplanned, to ensure that children continue to be adequately safeguarded.

In order to carry out good assessments, social workers should have the relevant knowledge and skills set out in the Knowledge and Skills Statements for child and family social work.

Social workers should have time to complete assessments and have access to high quality practice supervision. Principal social workers should support social workers, the local authority and partners to develop their assessment practice and decision-making skills, and the practice methodology that underpins this.

High quality assessments:

• are child centred. Where there is a conflict of interest, decisions should be made in the child's best interests: be rooted in child development: be age-appropriate; and be informed by evidence

• are focused on action and outcomes for children

• are holistic in approach, addressing the child's needs within their family and any risks the child faces from within the wider community

• ensure equality of opportunity

• involve children, ensuring that their voice is heard and provide appropriate support to enable this where the child has specific communication needs

• involve families

• identify risks to the safety and welfare of children

• build on strengths as well as identifying difficulties

• are integrated in approach

• are multi-agency and multi-disciplinary

• are a continuing process, not an event

• lead to action, including the provision of services

• review services provided on an ongoing basis

• are transparent and open to challenge

Research has shown that taking a systematic approach to enquiries using a conceptual model is the best way to deliver a comprehensive assessment for all children. An example of such a model is the assessment framework. It investigates three domains:

• the child's developmental needs, including whether they are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm

• the capacity of parents or carers (resident and non-resident) and any other adults living in the household to respond to those needs

• the impact and influence of wider family and any other adults living in the household as well as community and environmental circumstances

## Appendix C: Signs and Symptoms and Categories of abuse

There are a number of circumstances under which Coram staff might have concerns that a child or young person has been or is being abused:

- A third party – a parent, relative, carer, another child, neighbours or a child themselves may share concerns
- There might be indicators of abuse. Examples could include observation of injuries with no explanation or dubious explanation,
- A child not collected or brought on time consistently, or appearing listless or hungry or unkept in appearance and wellbeing
- Concern about the conduct of colleagues towards children
- A child or young person may talk about abuse they are experiencing or have experienced in the past

A list of exemplar indicators of child abuse is provided below. The list is not exhaustive and are indicators noting aspects relating to a child's behaviour may or may not be evidence of abuse:

- A bruise or injury which is unusual for example on a part of the body which is not normally prone to such injuries for example on the cheeks
- Injuries which require but have not received medical attention
- Cigarette burns or bite marks
- Frequent minor injuries explained as accidents or with no explanation
- The child becoming unusually dirty or unkempt
- Unexplained changes in behaviour either over time or suddenly for example becoming aggressive, quiet, anxious or withdrawn
- Running away/going missing
- Non-attendance at school, projects or activities
- Reluctance to get changed or for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- The child appears not to trust certain adults for example parent, carer, staff member with whom you would usually expect them to have or once had a close relationship
- Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge
- Sexually inappropriate behavior for example public masturbation or seeking physical comfort from staff when not overtly distressed.
- Relationship with an older partner when young person is aged under 16.
- The child being discouraged or unable to make friends or socialise with others
- Changes to eating patterns
- A disturbed sleeping pattern for example nightmares, bed wetting
- The child self-harms or attempts to self-harm

There are four main categories of abuse:

### *Physical Abuse*

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

### *Neglect*

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

### *Sexual Abuse*

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothes. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

### *Emotional Abuse*

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's

developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

## Appendix D: listening and managing a child disclosure from a child

Whenever a child reports that they are suffering or have suffered significant harm through abuse or neglect, or have caused or are causing physical or sexual harm to others, the initial response from all staff should be limited to listening carefully to what the child says to:

- Clarify the concerns;
- Offer re-assurance about how the child will be kept safe;
- Explain what action will be taken and within what timeframe.

The child must not be pressed for information, led or cross-examined or given false assurances of absolute confidentiality, as this could prejudice Police investigations, especially in cases of sexual abuse. If the child can understand the significance and consequences of making a referral to LA children's Social Care, they should be asked their view. However, it should be explained to the child that whilst their view will be taken into account, the professional has a responsibility to take whatever action is required to ensure the child's safety and the safety of other children.

If a child tells a member of staff s/he has been abused, the staff member should:

- Stay calm – panic or anxiety will silence the child
- Allow the child to use his/her own words and go at his/her own pace
- Make a full record of what the child has said at the earliest opportunity and always within 24 hours

If a child tells a member of staff s/he has been abused, the staff member should not:

- Promise to keep secrets
- Ask in detail about the abuse – this is for Social Services/the Police to
- investigate
- Put pressure on the child if s/he is reluctant to speak
- Ask to see injuries

The information shared by a child may be distressing to the member of staff. The child's needs and interests will always be kept at the centre, but it is important that support, training and advice is available to all Coram staff undertaking safeguarding and working directly with children where a disclosure may be made and support is available from the designated safeguarding lead in the service.

## Appendix E: Assessments (taken from Working Together 2018 & 2026)

### *Early Help Assessments*

Local agencies should work together to put processes in place for the effective assessment of the needs of individual children who may benefit from early help services.

Children and families may need support from a wide range of local agencies. Where a child and family would benefit from coordinated support from more than one agency (education, health, housing, police) there should be an inter-agency assessment. These early help assessments, such as the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), should identify what help the child and family require to prevent needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989.
The early help assessment should be undertaken by a lead professional who should provide support to the child and family, act as an advocate on their behalf and coordinate the delivery of support services. The lead professional role could be undertaken by a General Practitioner (GP), family support worker, teacher, health visitor and/or special educational needs coordinator. Decisions about who should be the lead professional should be taken on a case-by-case basis and should be informed by the child and their family.

For an early help assessment to be effective:

- the assessment should be undertaken with the agreement of the child and their parents or carers. It should involve the child and family as well as all the professionals who are working with them;
- a teacher, GP, health visitor, early years' worker or other professional should be able to discuss concerns they may have about a child and family with a social worker in the local authority, with process guidance by the local authority as to how to access this.

- if parents and/or the child do not consent to an early help assessment, then the lead professional should make a judgement as to whether, without help, the needs of the child will escalate. If so, a referral into Local Authority Children's Social Care may be necessary.

- If at any time it is considered that a child may be a child in need as defined in the Children Act 1989 or the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm a

referral should be made immediately to the Local Authority Children's social care.

## *Statutory Assessments*

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. Local Authorities undertake assessments of the needs of individual children to determine what services to provide and action to take.

A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health and development will be significantly impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. In these cases, assessments by a social worker are carried out under **section 17** of the Children Act 1989. Children in need may be assessed as to their special educational needs, disabilities, or as a carer, or because they have committed a crime.

The process for assessment should also be used for children whose parents are in prison and for asylum seeking children. When assessing children in need and providing services, specialist assessments may be required and, where possible, should be coordinated so that the child and family experience a coherent process and a single plan of action.

Concerns about maltreatment may be the reason for a referral to local authority children's social care or concerns may arise during the course of providing services to the child and family. In these circumstances, local authority children's social care must initiate enquiries to find out what is happening to the child and whether protective action is required. Local authorities, with the help of other organisations as appropriate, also have a duty to make enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare. There may be a need for immediate protection whilst the assessment is carried out.

Some children in need may require accommodation because there is no one who has parental responsibility for them, because they are lost or abandoned or because the person who has been caring for them is prevented from providing them with suitable accommodation or care. Under **section 20** of the Children Act 1989, the local authority has a duty to accommodate such children in need in their area.

Following an application under section 31A, where a child is the subject of a care order, the local authority, as a corporate parent, must assess the child's needs and draw up a care plan which sets out the services which will be provided to meet the child's identified needs.

Whatever legislation the child is assessed under, the purpose of the assessment is always:

- to gather important information about a child and family;
- to analyse needs and/or the nature and level of any risk and harm being

suffered by the child;

- to decide whether the child is a child in need (section 17) and/or is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm (section 47); and
- to provide support to address identified needs to improve a child's outcomes and make them safe

### *The principles and parameters of a good assessment*

High quality assessments:

- are child centered - where there is a conflict of interest, decisions should be made in the child's best interests.
- are rooted in child development and informed by evidence.
- are focused on action and outcomes for children.
- are holistic in approach, addressing the child's needs within their family and wider community.
- ensure equality of opportunity.
- involve children and families.
- build on strengths as well as identifying difficulties.
- are integrated in approach.
- are a continuing process not an event?
- lead to action, including the provision and review of services.
- are transparent and open to challenge.

### The Assessment Framework

Informed by research the assessment framework delivers a comprehensive assessment for all children including unborn children where there are concerns. It investigates three domains comprised of child's developmental needs, parenting capacity and family network and environmental factors.

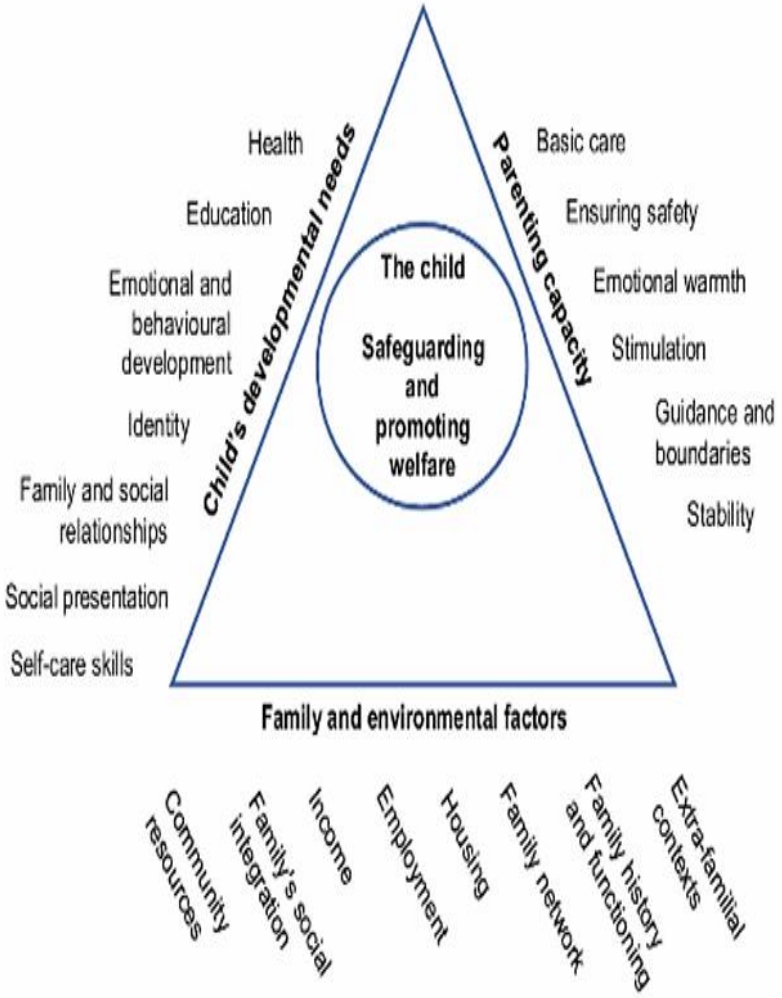



Figure 1: Assessment framework

# Appendix F: Coram Group Safeguarding Alert Reporting Form – Children

| Safeguarding Alert Reporting Form Children | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Whenever a concern about a child requires consultation with a Manager in Coram you must use this form to record safeguarding concerns, decisions made and actions taken. You must submit this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for safeguarding within your service within 24 hours.** | | | | |
| **Details of the child involved** | | | | |
| Initials: | Age: | Ethnicity: | Project/Work Area: | Case reference: |
| Is this child subject to a formal protection plan agreed at a child protection conference? | | | | Yes ☐<br>No ☐<br>Not Known ☐ |
| Has the child been subject to a formal child protection plan agreed previously? | | | | Yes ☐<br>No ☐<br>Not Known ☐ |
| Is the Child Looked After by the LA? Yes ☐ No ☐ | | | | |
| Is this Child a Coram Service User? Yes ☐ No ☐ | | | | |
| Coram services being used by this child: | | | | |
| **Nature of concern (Always tick one category from line 1 and any additional concerns and risks as appropriate** | | | | |
| Physical ☐ | Sexual ☐ | Neglect ☐ | Emotional ☐ | |
| Homelessness ☐ | Child Missing ☐ | Self-harm ☐ | Child Sexual Exploitation ☐ | |
| Risk of radicalisation ☐ | FGM or risk of ☐ | Other (please specify) | | |
| **Please tick any of the following that are a factor in this case** | | | | |
| Domestic Abuse ☐ | Adult Mental Health ☐ | Adult Substance Misuse (Drugs and Alcohol) ☐ | Adult Learning Difficulties/disabilities ☐ | |

| |
|---|
| Description of matter of concern: |
| Date and time noticed: |
| Name and role of member of staff reporting the concern: |
| Date and time discussed with Line Manager: |
| Detail any action taken by Coram staff at this point: |
| Line Managers recommended decision to Designated Safeguarding Lead for safeguarding in this service: |
| Line Managers name: |
| Date discussed with Designated Safeguarding Lead for safeguarding in this service: |
| Has Designated Safeguarding Lead directed a referral to be made to the Local Authority?<br>Yes ☐ No ☐<br><br>**If no, go straight to section 3** |

| *Safeguarding Alert Reporting Form Section 2* |
|---|
| Name and contact details of Local Authority worker and agencies involved in referral: |

| |
|---|
| Local Authority response to referral and proposed plan: |
| Did we hear from Local Authority within 1 working day after referral? Yes ☐ No ☐ |
| If no, did we follow up within 3 working days of referral? Yes ☐ No ☐ |
| If no, give reasons: |
| Is further action required by Coram to ensure child is safeguarded (give details)? |
| Is a notification to a regulatory or standards body required, e.g., Ofsted, Charity Commission, Accrediting agency?<br>Yes ☐ No ☐ |
| Insert details of notification if applicable: Agency and person notified, date and time and person in Coram making the notification. |
| Completing by (name and role) Date |
| **Any additional information/update following initial reporting of concern** |

| |
|---|
| |
| **Safeguarding Alert Reporting Form Section 3** |
| Name: Date |
| **Safeguarding Counter-signatory comments (within 5 days)** |
| Name: Date form received |
| Can this form be filed centrally now: Yes ☐ No ☐ |
| If no, please detail what is required: |
| |
| Completing by (name and role) Date |
| |
| Date form complete and filed centrally: |

# Appendix G: Coram Group Safeguarding Alert Reporting Form – Adults

## Safeguarding Alert Reporting Form Adults Section 1

**Whenever a concern about an adult at risk requires consultation with a Manager in Coram you must use this form to record safeguarding concerns, decisions made and actions taken. You must submit this to your service's designated person for safeguarding within 24 hours.**

### Details of the adult involved

| Initials: | Age: | Ethnicity: | Project: | Case reference: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

Is this a Coram service user? Yes ☐ No ☐

Coram services being used by this adult:

### Nature of concern (tick all that apply)

| Physical ☐ | Sexual ☐ | Neglect ☐ | Emotional ☐ | Financial or material ☐ |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Other (please specify)

### Please tick any of the following that are a factor in this case ☐

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Domestic Abuse ☐ | Adult Mental Health ☐ | Adult Substance Misuse (Drugs and Alcohol ☐ | Learning Needs ☐ |
| Modern Slavery ☐ | Discriminatory Abuse ☐ | Institutional ☐ | Radicalisation ☐ |

Description of matter of concern:

| |
|---|
| Date and time noticed: |
| Name and role of member of staff reporting the concern: |
| Date and time discussed with Line Manager: |
| Detail any action taken by Coram staff at this point: |
| Line Managers recommended decision to designated person for safeguarding in this service: |
| Line Managers name: |
| Date discussed with designated person for safeguarding in this service: |
| Has the designated person for this service directed a referral should be made to the Local Authority (or other statutory agency)?<br><br>Yes ☐ No ☐<br><br>**If no go straight to section 3** |

## Safeguarding Alert Reporting Form Section 2

| |
|---|
| Name and contact details of Local Authority worker (or another agency) to whom matter reported: |
| Local Authority response to referral and proposed plan: |

| Is further action required by Coram to ensure adult is safeguarded (give details)? | |
|---|---|
| Completed by (name and role) | Date |

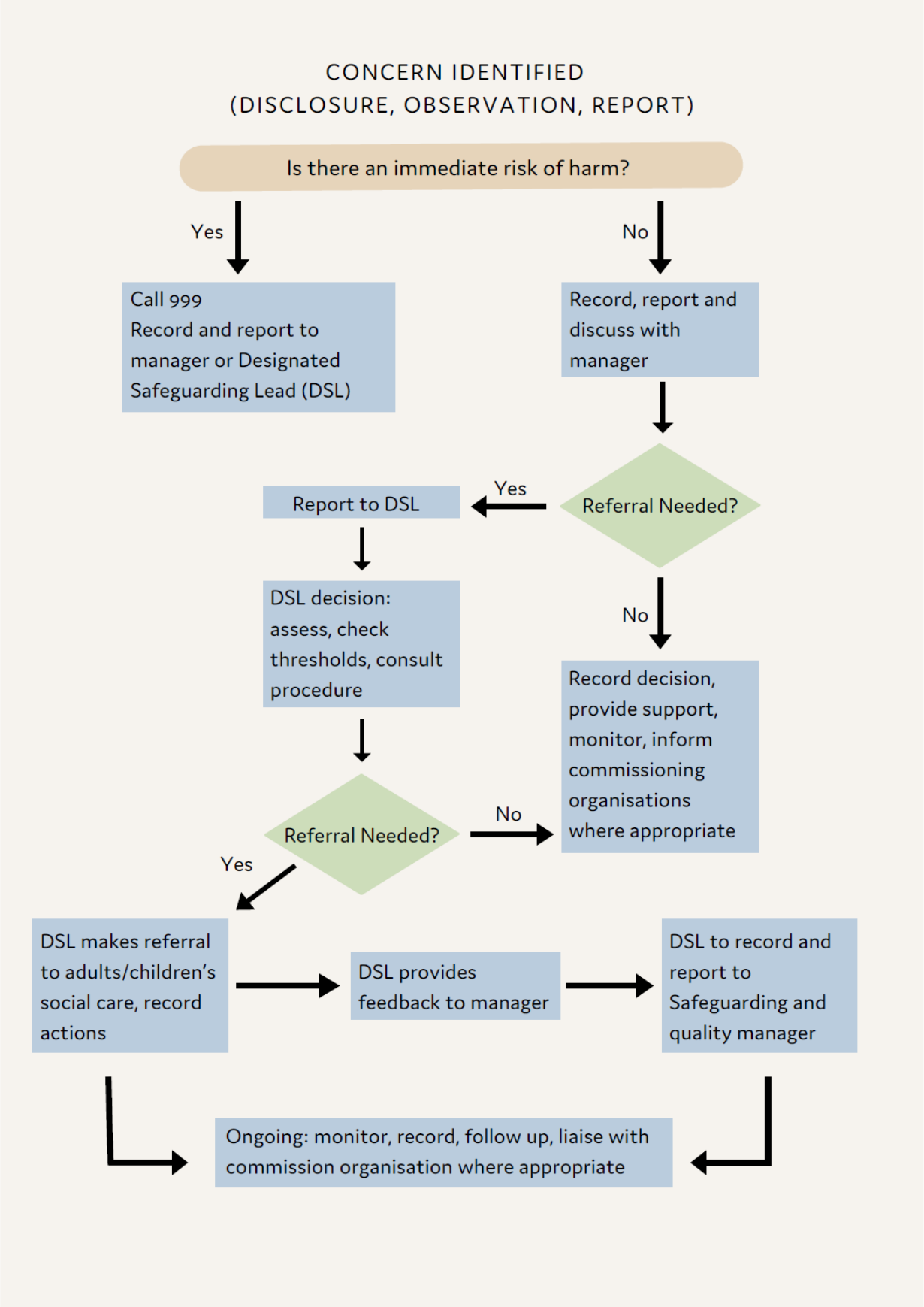
## Safeguarding Alert Reporting Form Section 3

| Designated person for safeguarding within service's comments<br>(Please detail any actions to be completed) | |
|---|---|
| Name: | Date |

## Safeguarding Senior Counter-signatory comments

| Designated person for Safeguarding within the service comments<br>(Please detail any further actions to be completed) | |
|---|---|
| Name: | Date form received: |
| Can this form be filed centrally in case system now: Yes ☐ No ☐ | |
| If no, please detail what is required: | |
| Date form complete and filed centrally: | |

## Appendix H Coram Flowchart – responding to concerns



## Appendix I – summary of changes to the Coram Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

### *Policy Amendments and Updates*

| Paragraph/Section | Content |
|---|---|
| Para 1.11 | Amendments and additions to Safeguarding Adults procedures: Changes to guidance in relation to the Care Act 2014 and Care and Statutory Support Guidance |
| Para 6.2 - 18 | Amendments and additions - Coram Group Safeguarding Adults procedures for Children's Services Staff: Amendments in light of the above guidance |
| Section 15 | Safeguarding Trafficked Children and Modern Slavery |
| Section 16 | Additional section: Safeguarding Children and Young People who may be affected by gang activity |
| Section 17 | Additional section: Female Genital Mutilation |
| Section 18 | Internet Abuse |
| Section 19 | Safeguarding Children at risk of radicalisation and extremism |
| Section 20 | Domestic Abuse<br>Additional and revised links to guidance |
| Section 21 | Additional: Resolving Professional Differences – Coram Escalation Policy Addition: |

| | |
|---|---|
| All Sections | General update to safeguarding children. Changes to guidance in relation to Working Together 2018 and Social Work Act 2017. |
| All Sections | Incorporation of the role of Group Head Quality Assurance and Safeguarding. |
| Section 18.48 | Insertion of new section on online service delivery and reference to Coram remote working policy and safety. |
| All Sections | Adjustments to process consultation for safeguarding within Coram. Adjustments to Form F & J in relation to signatory requirements. |
| All Sections | Adjustments to Form F & J in relation to notification requirements. Updates of narrative and insert of new statutory guidance (adults 2022). Updates of links as required by new national content. |
| All Sections | Content revision to incorporate new Working Together to Safeguarding Children December 2023. |
| All Sections | Reviewed to incorporate changes to Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.<br><br>(Previous updates November 2016, June 2017 and December 2018, July 2020, July 2021, July 2022, April 2025, August 2026) |