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Annual	February 2025	Ruth Garland-Davis Claire Jessop	February 2026

Ratification

Role	Name	Email	Date
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The key safeguarding responsibilities within each of the roles above are set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)			

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PART 1: Policy

1.1 Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child Protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined in the Children Act 1989 (s.47) as when a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. Under statutory guidance and legislation action must be taken to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

Effective safeguarding means practitioners should understand and be sensitive to factors, including economic and social circumstances and ethnicity, which can impact children and families' lives.

1.2 Introduction

At **First Steps Childcare**

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. **Everyone** who encounters children, their families, and carers, has a role to play.
- In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should always consider what is in the **best interests** of the child.
- We take an '**it can happen here**' approach where safeguarding is concerned.
- **Everyone** who encounters children has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action.
- Victims of harm should **never** be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence, or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

First Steps childcare is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children by:

- The provision of a safe environment in which children and young people can learn.

- Acting on concerns about a child's welfare immediately.
- Fulfilling our legal responsibilities to identify children who may need early help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

All action taken by **First Steps childcare** will be in accordance with current legislation and guidance. The following safeguarding legislation and guidance has been considered when drafting this policy:

- [The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Information Sharing 2024](#)
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#)
- [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Local Guidance from the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership: [Policies and Procedures - Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safer Recruitment
- How to report Low Level Concerns
- Whistleblowing
- Code of Conduct for Staff/ Staff Behaviour Policy
- Behaviour
- E-Safety Guidelines
- Absent child
- Health and Safety
- Physical Contact
- Terms and Conditions (Parental Pack)
- GDPR
- Staff Handbook
- Special Educational Needs and Disability
- Equality and Inclusion
- Our Local Offer

Through regular monitoring, management should ensure that the above policies and procedures, are accessible, understood and followed by all staff.

1.3 Equalities Statement

With regards to safeguarding we will consider our duties under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and our general and specific duties under the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#). General duties include:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
3. Foster good relations across all protected characteristics between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Details of our specific duties are published under First Steps childcare's equality statement and measurable objectives. (see Equality and inclusion policy)

Staff are aware of the additional barriers to recognising abuse and neglect in children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This will be in line with our Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy and Our local offer.

First Steps Childcare also adheres to the principals of and promotes anti-oppressive practice in line of the [United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child](#) and the [Human Rights Act 1998](#).

1.4 Overall Aims

This policy will contribute to the safeguarding of children at **First Steps Childcare** by:

- Clarifying safeguarding expectations for members of the education setting's community, staff, learners, and their families.
- Contributing to the establishment of a safe, resilient, and robust safeguarding culture in the setting built on shared values; and that our learners are treated with respect and dignity, taught to treat each other and staff with respect, feel safe, have a voice, and are listened to.
- Supporting contextual safeguarding practice recognising that the setting's site can be a location where harm can occur.
- Setting expectations for developing knowledge and skills within the setting's community (staff, learners, parents/carers) to the signs and indicators of safeguarding issues and how to respond to them.
- Early identification of need for vulnerable learners and provision of proportionate interventions to promote their welfare and safety.
- Working in partnership with learners, parents, and other agencies in the Local Safeguarding Partnership including Early Help.

First Steps childcare is named as a relevant agency in the Local Safeguarding Partnership (Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership). This policy sets out its statutory duty to co-operate, follow and comply with published arrangements as set out by the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership's professional expectations, roles, and responsibilities.

1.5 Professional expectations, roles and responsibilities.

1.5.1 Role of all staff

- All staff will read and understand Part 1 of statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2024 Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). Those working directly with children will also read Annex B. Those who do not work directly with children will have the option of reading Annex A instead – for example; cleaner and or cook.
- In addition to this all staff will be aware of the systems in place which support safeguarding including reading this Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy; the Behaviour Policy; the Staff Behaviour Policy (code of conduct); safeguarding response to children who go missing or are absent from education; and the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Know who and how to contact the DSL and any deputies,
- All staff will be able to identify vulnerable learners and take action to keep them safe. Information or concerns about learners will be shared with the DSL where it includes those:
 - who may need a social worker and may be experiencing abuse or neglect.
 - requiring mental health support.
 - may benefit from early help.
 - where there is a radicalisation concern.
 - where a crime may have been committed.
- Be clear as to the setting's statement for child on child abuse (appendix E) and the [impact of technology in relation to online safety](#) including online filtering and monitoring processes (refer to E-safety policy).
- Be involved where appropriate, in the implementation of individual plans to further safeguard vulnerable learners and understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort.
- Record concerns appropriately and in a timely manner by using the setting's safeguarding systems.
- To be aware of the need to raise to the DSL/DDSL any concerns they have about safeguarding practices within the setting.

1.5.2 - Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputies (DDSL)

Duties are further outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2024, Annex C)

Details of our DSL and Deputy DSL and how to contact them are available on First Steps Childcare website, our newsletters, the notice board and laminated posters around the setting.

- The DSL is a senior member of staff who undertakes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within the setting.
- The DSL has undertaken the **SSCP** training to ensure they are compliant with the Local Authority requirement for DSLs.
- The DSL works with deputies, and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that learners in need are experiencing or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on learner's attendance, engagement and achievement at the setting.
- Activities include the management of work undertaken by any Deputy DSLs.
- Manages early identification of vulnerability of learners and their families from staff through cause for concerns or notifications. This will ensure detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals.
- Manages referrals to local safeguarding partners where learners with additional needs have been identified. These can include those –
 - who need a social worker and may be experiencing abuse or neglect.
 - requiring mental health support.
 - who may benefit from early help.
 - where there is a radicalisation concern.
 - where a crime may have been committed.

The DSL will also:

- Work with others – acting as a point of contact for outside agencies about safeguarding.
- Support and advise other staff in making referrals to other agencies.
- When required, liaise with the case manager and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in relation to child protection cases which concern a staff member.
- Liaise with the clerical/training manager to provide safeguarding training and raise awareness and understanding around policies and practice in relation to safeguarding.
- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing information about vulnerable learners with relevant staff. This includes ensuring that staff:
 - know who these children are,

- understand their developmental progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort.
 - Are supported to identify the challenges that children in this group might face.
 - Provide additional support or make reasonable adjustments to help children who have **or have had** a social worker to reach their potential.
- Ensure the secure transfer of the Child Protection File when a child moves to a new setting-within 5 days for in year transfer or the first 5 days of the start of a new term.
 - Take lead responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.

1.6 Safeguarding training for staff

Managers/Managing Director will ensure that all staff members undergo the Somerset Safeguarding Child Partnership (SSCP) safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) training at induction.

1.6.1 - All staff:

- Will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) refresher training (**every two years**) at least annually (via online/formal training, email e-bulletins and staff meetings).
- Must complete FGM awareness training and will understand their legal duty under the Mandatory Reporting Duty.
- Must complete PREVENT awareness training annually. This is to ensure that they can comply with the legal expectations under the PREVENT duty.
- Will receive training which includes clear reference to internal whistleblowing policy and guidance for escalating concerns.
- All staff should receive training on the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring (refer to e-safety guidelines policy)

1.6.2 - Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies:

- Will undergo formal training provided by the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SSCP) to provide them with the knowledge and skills and training (including online safety) required to carry out the role. The training will be updated every two years.
- Deputies will be trained to the same level as the DSL.

- The DSL and any deputies will liaise with the SSCP and Somerset Education Safeguarding Service to ensure that their knowledge and skills are updated via e-bulletins, attend DSL network meetings, and take time to read and digest safeguarding bulletins.

1.6.3 - Other training considerations:

- The Setting will ensure that at least one person at First Steps Childcare will have undertaken safer recruitment training, in line with the Safer Recruitment policy.
- Manager/Managing Director will make themselves aware of and understand their role within the local safeguarding arrangements. This will ensure that those who have responsibility for the management of behaviour, inclusion, Special Educational Needs, attendance, and exclusions will carry out their duties with a safeguarding consideration.
- The mental health lead has access to appropriate training.
- Training around safeguarding issues in Annex B (including online safety and filtering and monitoring) will be integrated, aligned, and considered as part of a whole settings safeguarding approach.
- Appropriate colleagues have received appropriate training in relation to use of reasonable force and positive handling.
- Staff regulating activity with children at First Steps Childcare will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training at induction.

1.7 Safeguarding in the curriculum

First Steps Childcare is dedicated to ensuring that children are taught about how to keep themselves and others safe, including online. We recognise that effective education should be tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

This is part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

This includes:

- Working within statutory guidance in respect to [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-statutory-framework)
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, to explore key issues at an age-appropriate stage such as:
 - healthy and respectful relationships
 - boundaries and consent
 - stereotyping, prejudice and equality
 - body confidence and self-esteem
 - how to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour

- the concepts of, and laws relating to - sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so-called 'honour'-based violence such as forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and how to access support, and
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.
- A whole-setting preventative age appropriate education approach that prepares children for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment.
- Appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place to ensure that 'over-blocking' does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught about online teaching and safeguarding. (Further information can be found in KCSIE 2024, page 40)
- The curriculum will be shaped to respond to safeguarding incident patterns in the setting identified by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and safeguarding team (e.g., to respond to an increase in bullying incidents).
- Providing engagement opportunities with parents and carers to consult on key aspects of the curriculum.

1.8 Safer recruitment and safer working practice

1.8.1 - Safer recruitment

First Steps Childcare pays full regard to the safer recruitment practices detailed in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part Three' (DfE 2024), Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) ensuring a well maintain an accurate Single Central Record.

- This includes scrutinising applicants, by verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history and identifying any gaps within this, and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. References are always obtained, scrutinised and concerns resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.
- It also includes undertaking appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the barred list checks and prohibition checks (and overseas checks if appropriate), dependent on the role and duties performed, including regulated and non-regulated activity.
- Applicants must provide an application form and Curriculum Vitae will not be accepted as a stand-alone.
- All recruitment materials will include reference to First Steps Childcare's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of learners.

- Assurances are sought for contractors who are required on site, including identification checks on arrival.

1.8.3 – Visitors

All visitors complete a signing in/out process, wear a school ID badge and are provided with key safeguarding information including the contact details of safeguarding personnel in the setting.

Scheduled visitors in a professional role (e.g. fire officer, police, LA staff) are asked to provide evidence of their role and employment details (usually an identity badge) upon arrival at setting. Careful consideration is given to the suitability of any external organisations.

If the visit is unscheduled and the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will contact the relevant organisation to verify the individual's identity, if necessary.

1.8.4 – Site Safety

Risk assessments are undertaken and maintained in accordance with the settings' health and safety policy.

1.8.5 – Off site visits

We carry out a risk assessment prior to any off-site visit and designate the specific roles and responsibilities of each adult, whether employed or volunteers.

1.8.6 - Use of reasonable force

'Reasonable force' refers to the physical contact policy to restrain and control children using no more force than is needed.' The use of reasonable force is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and will be determined by individual circumstances and the vulnerability of any child with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) will be considered.

- There is robust recording of any incident where positive handling or restraint has been used. Further review of the incident is carried out to reflect on how the incident could be avoided, this will involve the child and their family.

The process around how the setting manages concerns where a professional may pose a risk to learners and our response to low level concerns can be accessed in section [2.6 Allegations of abuse made against professionals.](#)

1.8.7 - Whistleblowing procedures refer to Whistleblowing policy

Staff are aware of the following whistleblowing channels for situations where they feel unable to raise an issue with the management team or feel that their genuine concerns are not being addressed:

- General guidance can be found at: Advice on whistleblowing <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>.
- The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available [here](#) for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and Email: help@nspcc.org.uk.
- The above channels are clearly accessible to all staff (in the staff handbook, code of conduct and staff notice boards).

1.9 Key safeguarding areas

These topics are themes that can impact on children and families, there are specific areas of safeguarding that the setting has statutory responsibilities to address which are hyperlinked:

- Children in the court system
- Children affected by parental offending/imprisonment.
- [Children missing or absent from education](#) – including persistent absence.
- [Child Exploitation](#) (including both Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation and county lines, modern day slavery and trafficking)
- Cybercrime
- [Domestic Abuse](#)
- Homelessness
- So-called Honour based Abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage),
- [Online Safety](#)
- [Mental health](#)
- [Child on child abuse](#):
- [Preventing Radicalisation \(The Prevent Duty\)](#)
- [Serious Youth Violence](#)
- Substance Misuse
- [Private Fostering](#)
- [Young Carers](#)

Additional information about key safeguarding areas can also be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education Annex B (DfE 2024); the [NSPCC website - Types of Abuse](#). Localised resources for education settings can be accessed through Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Somerset Education Safeguarding Service.

PART 2: Procedures

2.1 Reporting concerns

All staff are clear about recording and reporting concerns to the DSL/Deputy DSL in a timely way. In the case a child is in immediate danger, staff should phone the police.

All staff are aware of and follow the procedures to respond to a concern about a child detailed in [Appendix A](#).

At **First Steps Childcare we will follow procedures if** any disclosures are made by children, they will be treated seriously. (refer and use concerns/conversation document)

2.2 Information Sharing

First Steps childcare is committed to have due regard to relevant data protection principles which allow for sharing (and withholding) personal information as provided for in the Data protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulations. This includes how to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information which is sensitive and personal and should be treated as 'special category personal data'. (ref T&C, GDPR policy)

Staff at the setting are aware that:

- 'Safeguarding' and 'individuals at risk' is a processing condition that allows practitioners to share special category personal data.
- Practitioners will seek consent to share data where possible in line with [Information Sharing for Safeguarding Practitioners 2024](#).

There may be times when it is necessary to share information without consent such as:

- To gain consent would place the child at risk,
- by doing so will compromise a criminal investigation,
- It cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent,
- or, if by sharing information it will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner, but it is not possible to gain consent.

There are also times when First Steps Childcare will not provide pupil's personal data where the serious harm test under legislation is met, (by sharing the information the child may be at further risk). When in doubt First Steps Childcare will seek legal advice.

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

2.3 Identifying and monitoring the needs of vulnerable learners.

The DSL and Deputy DSL will regularly review and monitor those children who have been identified as vulnerable. This can include reviewing attendance data, behaviour data, attainment data and safeguarding records. This is to ensure that:

- Proportionate and early interventions can be taken to promote the safety and welfare of the child and prevent escalation of harm.
- Information about vulnerable learners is shared with their keyperson/buddy and management to promote educational outcomes.
- Learners who currently have, or have had, a social worker will have their academic progress and attainment reviewed and additional academic support will be provided to help them reach their full potential.
- Reasonable adjustments are made in relation to nursery / preschool-based interventions – for example responding to behaviour.

2.4 Multi-agency working

First Steps Childcare will work together with appropriate agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children including identifying and responding to their needs. This is in compliance with statutory guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#).

Occasions that warrant a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989:

- If the child is in need under s.17 of the Children Act 1989 (including when a child is a young carer and or subject to a private fostering arrangement).
- Or if the child needs protection under s.47 of the Children Act 1989 where they are experiencing significant harm, or likely to experience significant harm.

Referrals in these cases should be made by the DSL (or Deputy DSL) to Children's Social Care in the Local Authority in which that child resides.

Where the child already has a social worker, the request for service should go immediately to the social worker involved or, in their absence, to their team manager. If the child is a child in care, notification should also be made to Somerset's Virtual School.

First Steps Childcare will co-operate with any statutory safeguarding assessments conducted by children's social care: this includes providing written reports and ensuring representation at inter-agency meetings such as integrated support plan meetings, initial and review child protection conferences and core group meetings.

2.4.1 Additional considerations:

- Where a learner and/or their family is subject to an inter-agency child protection plan or a multiagency risk assessment conference (MARAC) meeting, the setting will contribute to the preparation, implementation, and review of the plan as appropriate.
- If there is a risk of harm, the police should be called via 999. For other concerns of criminality, the non-statutory guidance can be helpful or contact the local PCSO/ Police Beat Officer/Neighbourhood Team.
- In the rare event that a child death occurs, or a child is seriously harmed, **First Steps Childcare** will notify the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership as soon as is reasonably possible.

2.5 Permanent exclusions

(To be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy)

When the setting is considering permanently excluding a child where an additional vulnerability is identified it is important that the child's welfare is a paramount consideration. Management will consider their legal duty of care when sending a child home.

2.6 Responding to allegations of abuse made against adults working in the setting.

Staff must report any concerns or allegations about a professional's behaviour (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors and those from organisations or individuals using the settings premises) where they may have:

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

2.6.1 - Immediate action must be taken:

- Do not speak to the individual it concerns.
- Allegations or concerns about colleagues and visitors must be reported directly to Management who will follow guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2024, Part four: Allegations of abuse made against practitioners and other staff).
- If the concern relates to Managing Director, it should be reported to the Owner who will liaise with the [Local Authority Designated Officer \(LADO\)](#) and they will decide on any action required.

- If there is a conflict of interest which inhibits this process of reporting, staff can report directly to the LADO.
- If allegations are regarding a member of supply staff, the setting will take the lead and progress enquiries with the LADO, whilst continuing to engage and work with the employment agency.
- Allegations regarding foster carers or anyone in a position of trust working or volunteering with children should be referred to the LADO on the day that the allegation is reported. The allocated social worker should also be informed on the day. First Steps Childcare will not undertake any investigation unless the LADO advises this.

2.6.2 - Low level concerns (refer to Low level concerns policy)

This should be read in conjunction with the staff code of conduct and Keeping children Safe in Education (DfE 2024). A low-level concern is not insignificant. This process should be used in events where a concern about professional conduct does not meet the threshold set out at the beginning of this section.

The setting provides a clear procedure for sharing low level concerns. These will be shared with the DSL

- Reports should be made to the DSL. First Steps Childcare creates an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer where they have found themselves in a situation.
- The DSL will address unprofessional behaviour and support the individual to correct it at an early stage providing a responsive, sensitive, and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised.
- Review and correct any deficits in the setting's safeguarding system.

2.7 Mental health and wellbeing.

Early Years Settings have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their learners. Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation, and or may require early help support. (ref SENCO policy and Government guidance <https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/mental-health-for-early-years-children>)

2.7.1 - Contextual safeguarding approach to mental health

First Steps Childcare will ensure that preventative measures in terms of providing safeguarding on the curriculum will provide opportunities for learners to identify when they may need help, and to develop resilience.

The setting will take a 'whole approach' to:

- deliver high quality teaching around mental health and wellbeing on the curriculum.

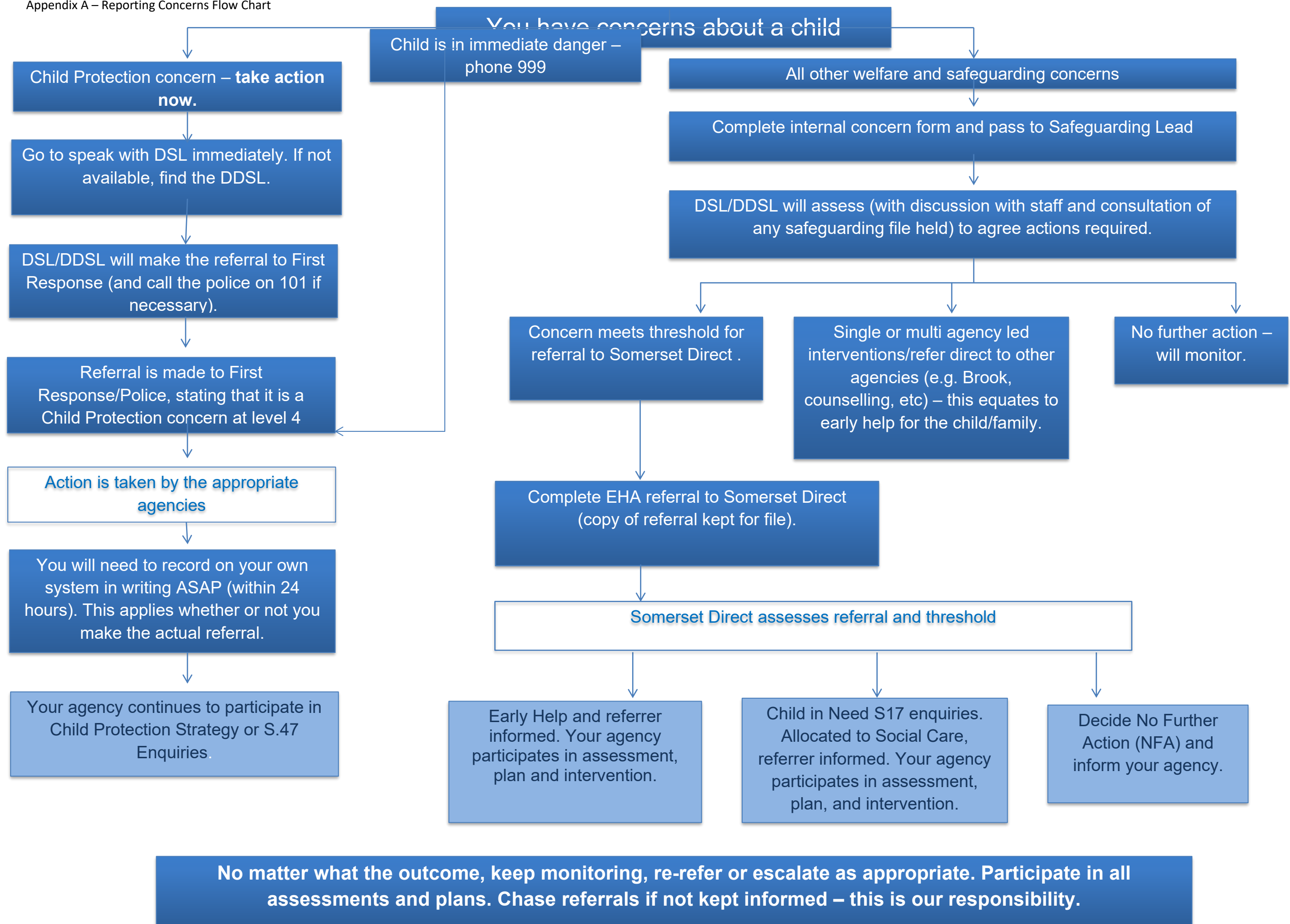
- having a culture that promotes mental health and wellbeing;
- having an environment that promotes mental health and wellbeing;
- making sure children and staff are aware of and able to access a range of mental health services
- supporting staff wellbeing
- And being committed to child and parent participation

2.8 Online Safety (ref online policy)

Online safety is an integrated and interwoven theme with other safeguarding considerations. It is essential that the DSL/DDSL takes a lead on ensuring that interventions are effective. This means coordinating support and engaging with other colleagues in the setting.

First Steps Childcare is committed to addressing online safety issues around content, contact, conduct and commerce. This includes:

- Ensuring that online safety is included in relevant policies and procedures.
- Preparing children with information for any online challenges and hoaxes, sharing information with parents and where to get help.



Multi-Agency Contacts for Safeguarding in Education.

If you have concerns about a child/young person in Somerset:

If a child is at immediate risk call the POLICE	POLICE 999	
To make an URGENT referral to Children's Social Care	i.e., a child is likely to suffer or is suffering significant harm, call Somerset Direct. Somerset Direct 0300 122 2224	
To make a NON-URGENT referral to Children's Social Care.	Complete an Early Help Assessment and send to SD Inputters SDinputters@somerset.gov.uk	
To raise concerns and ask for advice about radicalisation (also contact Somerset Direct).	Police Prevent Team - 01278 647466 PreventSW@avonandsomerset.police.uk Local Authority Prevent Lead prevent@somerset.gov.uk	
To liaise with the specialist Safeguarding Police Unit	Lighthouse Safeguarding Unit – Avon and Somerset Police 01278 649228	
DSL Consultation Line 0300 123 3078	Inclusion Advice Line 0300 123 2224	Critical Incident Support EPS 01823 357000

If you have concerns about a professional working with a child:

To raise concerns and ask for guidance in relation to the conduct of someone who works with children.	Local Authority Designated Officer - (LADO) Anthony Goble/Stacey Davis Allegations Management - Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership
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For information, advice, and guidance in relation to safeguarding policy and procedures:

Education Safeguarding Leads Eductionsafeguardinglead@somerset.gov.uk

Katherine Hollinghurst (East) Katherine.hollinghurst@somerset.gov.uk

Beth Ollive (West) Beth.ollive@somerset.gov.uk

For advice and support in relation to attendance, provision and inclusion:

Education Engagement Service Educationengagementservice@somerset.gov.uk

www.somerset.gov.uk/ees/resources

Child sexual exploitation & child criminal exploitation	Operation Topaz (Avon and Somerset Police) https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/forms/vul
Child Missing from Education	Notify us of a Child Missing from Education (CME) - Somerset Council
Children affected by Forced Marriage	Forced Marriage Unit 020 7008 0151 fmufco.gov.uk
Online Safety Advice	Professional Online Safeguarding Helpline T: 0344 381 4772 E: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
Reporting online sexual abuse and grooming	Child Exploitation and Online Protection command https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/
FGM advice	NSPCC FGM Helpline 0800 028 3550 fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk
Domestic Abuse Helpline	0808 2000 247
Young Carers – advice and support.	0300 123 2224 YoungCarersmailbox@somerset.gov.uk
CAMHS	Single Point of Access CAMHS Single Point of Access (SPA) - CAMHS (somersetft.nhs.uk) 0300 1245 012 camhsspa@somersetft.nhs.uk
Whistleblowing professional policy	NSPCC Whistleblowing hotline 0800 028 0285 help@nspcc.org.uk
Advice around harmful sexualised behaviour.	DSL consultation line 0300 123 3078 Brook Traffic Light Tool Sexual Health & Wellbeing - Brook – Fighting for healthy lives

Appendix D: Dealing with a disclosure of abuse.

When a child tells me about abuse they have suffered, what must I remember?

- Stay calm.
- Do not communicate shock, anger or embarrassment.
- Reassure the child. Tell them you are pleased that they are speaking to you.
- Never promise confidentiality. Assure them that you will try to help but let the child know that you may have to tell other people in order to do this. State who this will be and why.
- Encourage the child to talk but do not ask "leading questions" or press for information. Use 'Tell Me, Explain to me, Describe to me' (TED) questioning.
- Listen and remember.
- Check that you have understood correctly what the child is trying to tell you.
- Praise the child for telling you. Communicate that they have a right to be safe and protected.
- It is inappropriate to make any comments about the alleged offender.
- Be aware that the child may retract what they have told you. It is essential to record all you have heard.
- At the end of the conversation, tell the child again who you are going to tell and why that person or those people need to know.
- As soon as you can afterwards, make a detailed record of the conversation using the child's own language. Include any questions you may have asked. Do not add any opinions or interpretations.

NB It is not education staff's role to seek disclosures. Their role is to observe that something may be wrong, ask about it, listen, be available and try to make time to talk.

- "The 5 R's" are helpful in understanding what professional's duties are in relation to responding to an incident.

Recognise – Respond – Reassure – Refer – Record

Appendix E: Types of abuse and neglect

The Department for Education's Tackle Child Abuse campaign has accessible videos to watch <https://tacklechildabuse.campaign.gov.uk/>

Abuse and neglect are defined as the maltreatment of a child or young person whereby someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

All school staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another. For children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) additional barriers can exist when identifying abuse and neglect, these include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.
- being more prone to peer group isolation than other children.
- the potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

To address these additional challenges, schools and colleges should consider extra pastoral support for children with SEND (KCSIE, 2024).

The following are the definition of abuse and neglect as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) however, the ultimate responsibility to assess and define the type of abuse a child or young person may be subject to is that of the Police and Children's Services – our responsibility is to understand what each category of abuse is and how this can impact on the welfare and development of our children and where we have concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of abuse and neglect (one or more categories can apply) to take appropriate action as early as possible.

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.

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. 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 a 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, although it may occur alone.

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

Child on Child Abuse

We are aware that child on child abuse does take place, so we include children in our policies when we talk about potential abusers. This may take the form of bullying, physically hurting another child, emotional abuse, or sexual abuse. We will report this in the same way as we do for adults abusing children and will take advice from the appropriate bodies in this area for example: the consultation line.

Appendix F: Specific actions to take on topical safeguarding issues.

General or national guidance will not be included here. A summary of specific duties are in [Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE 2024 Annex B](#) and Access to local guidance can be found in [Appendix A](#) of this document.

In recognition that the threshold of child protection is 'likely to suffer' significant harm, First Steps Childcare may need to make a referral to children's social care. Where possible, this will involve notifying the parent/carer if it does not place the learner at further risk of harm. In all other circumstances information will be shared in line with section [2.2 Information Sharing](#).

It is also important to recognise the importance of liaising with other education settings who may have siblings attending. It is likely that they may hold additional information which will support early identification of harm and in turn develop your assessment of need.

Child Exploitation – both Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

First Steps Childcare will ensure that early help intervention is provided as soon as a concern of exploitation is identified. Discussion and advice will be sought from targeted services to consider what support may be available. The learner and their families will be part of any planning and interventions.

- If the learner is at risk of CSE or there is intelligence which indicates that the learner or peer group are at risk of CSE, First Steps Childcare will share information with Operation Topaz (the police). This information will support proactive activity to disrupt criminal activity in relation to sexual exploitation.
- If the learner is at risk of CCE information should be shared with Somerset's Violence Reduction Unit - The VRU can advise and support settings to manage risk. Targeted support maybe available to disrupt learners from getting involved with criminality.
- Agencies will share 'Missing persons' notifications (which a learner is reported missing from home or care) with education settings with a view to support them to take proactive action and reasonable adjustments in relation to behaviour management and achieving positive educational outcomes. These should be stored securely on the learner's Safeguarding/Child Protection file.

Domestic Abuse

Operation Encompass is a national operation where local police forces notify when the police are called to an incident to domestic abuse. Avon and Somerset have their own version of this and will notify education settings through the Education Engagement Service (EES) whenever they have responded to a domestic abuse incident. This will enable the education setting to take proactive action and reasonable adjustments in relation to behaviour management and achieving positive educational outcomes. When a setting is concerned about the amount of police notifications they

receive or disclosures of domestic abuse they should consider seeking further advice and completing an Early Help Assessment or DASH to support the family.

Female Genital Mutilation

Mandatory reporting duty: [Click here for government guidance](#)

There is a legal duty for all professionals undertaking teaching work to report known cases of FGM to the police via 101. This is when they:

1. are informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
2. observe physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on.

These cases must be referred to the DSL who will support them to carry out their duty. It is also advised any referrals made to the police under the mandatory reporting duty is followed up with children's social care, so an assessment of need and support is concurrently considered.

Online Safety

- Refer to E learning policy and Staff handbook.
- Paragraph 134 to 139 of Keeping Children Safe in Education highlights additional actions schools should take to keep learners safe online.
- For concerns around individual cases where a child has been harmed through online mediums, advice and guidance can be made through the **Professional Online Safeguarding Helpline**, T: 0344 381 4772, E: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
- Where there have been established cases of online abuse or grooming, the school settings should alert - **Child Exploitation and Online Protection command (CEOPS)**
<https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/>

Preventing Radicalisation - The Prevent Duty.

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard¹⁰⁹ to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".¹¹⁰ This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools' and colleges' wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads and other senior leaders should familiarise themselves with the revised [Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales](#), especially paragraphs 57-76, which are specifically concerned with schools (and also covers childcare).

The guidance is set out in terms of four general themes:

- risk assessment,
- working in partnership,
- staff training,
- IT policies.

Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child:

- under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled)
- by someone other than a parent or close relative (*Close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step-parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.)
- with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

Cases of private fostering arrangements must be reported to children's social care to ensure that needs are adequately made.

Statutory guidance states that this should be done at least 6 weeks before the arrangement is due to start or as soon as you are made aware of the arrangements. Not to do so is a criminal offence.

Further support and reasonable adjustments should be made by the education setting to promote achievement of positive educational outcomes.

Young Carers

A young carer is a person under 18 who regularly provides emotional and/or practical support and assistance for a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally unwell or who misuses substances. Support for Young Carers can be accessed by completing an EHA.