

Connecting: Safeguarding Young People Policy



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Policy

1. Named staff and contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead for **Connecting**: Clare Clay

cclay@educationmentalhealthsolutions.co.uk - 07971 224142

Training completed: Refresher DSL- 05/03/2026

With: County Safeguarding

To be renewed: 05/03/2028

Deputy Safeguarding Lead for **Connecting**: Carolyn Hall

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Training completed: Refresher DSL- 05/03/2026

With: County Safeguarding

To be renewed: 05/03/2028

Trustee Safeguarding Lead for **Connecting**: Claire Mulhern

Cmulhern@discoverytrust.org

Training completed: Refresher DSL- 23/09/2025

With: Leicestershire County Council

To be renewed: 23/09/2027

Specialist training & resources- S&A Safeguarding: www.countysafeguarding.co.uk

Note - At **Connecting**, the person designated to take responsibility for child protection (DSL) is the Service Director: Clare Clay, who holds lead responsibility for safeguarding on the Connecting Leadership Team, and is available to all staff and service users for advice and guidance.

The **Connecting** Safeguarding team can be contacted on 07971 224142 during working hours (Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm, apart from bank holidays/Connecting closure days).

2. Company Introduction

Connecting's mission is to improve the mental health, wellbeing and outcomes for young people, their families and school communities across the UK (primarily in Leicestershire). Young people may, through the relationships provided to them by **Connecting**, take the opportunity to share information about a harmful experience or incident. This may happen in a direct way through a verbal disclosure, or indirectly through play or demeanour or through another child. In addition, there may be some physical evidence of neglect or apparent injury, which is noted by a member **Connecting's** staff or Counsellor working within a setting. **Connecting's** staff and Counsellors on Placement who are working with parents may also have cause to be concerned about the welfare of that person as well as their children.

3. Our Safeguarding Statement

Connecting believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people.

Connecting is committed to supporting educational settings to provide a safe, caring, and positive environment where every pupil is valued, respected, and able to learn and thrive. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is at the heart of everything we do and underpins our ethos, policies, and practices.

Connecting recognises our responsibility to ensure that robust safeguarding policies and procedures are in place. We are committed to taking timely and appropriate action to safeguard young people, protect them from harm, and support their mental health and wellbeing.

Connecting understands it is accountable for ensuring appropriate actions are taken by us, to safeguard any of our service users. This may also include ensuring our partner agencies have taken appropriate actions.

Connecting's services are all underpinned by child centred (person centred) approaches. The child centred approach is fundamental to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child. A child centred approach means keeping the child in focus when making decisions about their lives and working in partnership with them and their families.

Note: For the purpose of clarity -in this policy, when we refer to children or young people, we mean from the ages of 0 (unborn) through to anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. For any concerns relating to a young person aged 18 years old or above, please refer to our Adult Safeguarding Policy for further guidance. This policy includes and can be used with the adult policy for young people that are still in education until the age of 25 years (primarily to safeguard and include young people with additional needs).

Connecting recognises that:

- the welfare of the child / young person is paramount.

- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

Connecting's team are aware of their duties concerning safeguarding and ensure that:

- the safety and wellbeing of the child is promoted.
- law and statutory guidance concerning child protection and safeguarding is complied with.
- the policies of the school, the Local Authority, Safeguarding Partners / Child Protection Committees in which **Connecting** is working are respected.
- all staff and Counsellors on Placement at **Connecting** comply with this child protection and safeguarding policy.

Note- It is not the role or responsibility of **Connecting to investigate allegations of harm or risk of harm.**

Connecting recognises that safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm. It also relates to the broader aspects of care and education including:

- Pupils' health and safety and emotional well-being, and their mental and physical health or development. OUR CORE WORK.
- Meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Meeting the legal duties on *the school* under the Equality act: will not unlawfully, discriminate against pupils or students based protected characteristics; we will carefully consider how we support pupils/students regarding particular protected characteristics; we will take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils or students (*see next section*)
- Where a child receives elective home education and has an EHCP, the LA should review the plan working with parents and carers.
- The use of reasonable force.
- Meeting the needs of children with medical conditions.
- Providing first aid.
- Educational visits and off-site education.
- Alternative Provision Placements
- Intimate care and emotional wellbeing.
- On-line safety and associated issues, including filtering and monitoring in accordance with DfE monitoring standards.
- Appropriate arrangements to ensure school security, considering the local context.
- Keeping children safe from risks, harm, exploitation and sexual violence and sexual harassment between children: KCSiE 2025 Part 1.

4. The Legal and Statutory Framework

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined 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 on-line.
- Preventing the 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

Note - Definition: Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

England and Wales: The Children Act 1989 and 2004 provides the overall framework for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The child's welfare is to be the paramount consideration in all decision-making.

The Government's guidance on safeguarding children in England is called: 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 (often shortened to Working Together). Working Together acknowledges the need for all providers of children's services, including those in the voluntary sector, to work in collaboration and to agreed local standards.

[Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance](#)

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 sets out what schools and colleges in England must do to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people under the age of 18.

[Keeping children safe in education: proposed revisions 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

Section 157 and 175 of the Education Act 2002, and the Education and Inspections Act 2006, places the duty on schools and educational settings (Governors) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Note - We ensure that **Connecting** staff and volunteers are also aware of their Local Safeguarding Children Partnership/Safeguarding Boards policies and procedures.

This Safeguarding Young People Policy should be read alongside other key policies that support safeguarding, including:

- **Connecting:** Culture, ethos and professional conduct policy
- **Connecting:** Safer Recruitment Policy
- **Connecting:** Complaints Policy including allegations
- **Connecting:** Data protection and Confidentiality Policy
- **Connecting:** Whistleblowing Policy
- **Connecting:** Supervision Policy
- All Policies of settings/ organisations working in partnership with **Connecting**

5. Mental Capacity and Decision Making

UK Law assumes that all people over the age of 16 have the ability to make their own decisions, unless it has been proved that they can't. It also gives people the right to make any decision that they need to make and gives them the right to make their own decisions even if others consider them to be unwise. People make so many decisions that it is easy to take this ability for granted.

The Law says that to make a decision we need to be able to:

- Understand information
- Remember it for long enough
- Think about the information
- Communicate our decision

When practitioners are trying to decide whether a child is mature enough to make decisions about things that affect them, they often talk about whether the child is 'Gillick competent' or whether they meet the 'Fraser guidelines'.

Gillick competence: Gillick competency applies mainly to medical advice, but it is also used by practitioners in other settings.

For example, if a child or young person: would like to have therapeutic support but doesn't want their parents or carers to know about it is seeking confidential support for substance misuse has strong wishes about their future living arrangements which may conflict with their parents' or carers' views.

For more information - [Gillick competence and Fraser guidelines | NSPCC Learning](#)

Fraser guidelines: The Fraser guidelines apply specifically to advice and treatment about contraception and sexual health. They may be used by a range of healthcare professionals working with under 16-year-olds, including doctors and nurse practitioners.

For more information - [Gillick competence and Fraser guidelines | NSPCC Learning](#)

Note - All young people known to **Connecting**, under the age of 18, will be safeguarded in line with statutory child protection policies and procedures.

6. Best Practice in handling a disclosure

When responding to safeguarding disclosures made by children or young people, **Connecting** staff and Counsellors on Placement will ensure they adhere to the following 'dos and don'ts'.

Do:

- stay calm - let the individual know that you will need to share what they have told you (and who with)

- stay with what the individual is saying or doing and only intervene if the individual is putting themselves, or others, at risk.
- record the disclosure straight away - word for word - time, date and sign (no feelings or assumptions).
- report the information immediately, ensuring you follow the setting's policy.
- if you believe that the young person is at immediate harm or risk, report verbally to a DSL (or DDSL) immediately and record the information at the same time.
- report any safeguarding issues, reporting and concerns to **Connecting's** DSL (or DDSL) as soon as is possible.

Do not:

- promise confidentiality
- ask any leading questions
- accept any retraction or backtracking from an individual. If it has been said, it needs to be reported.
- take any action without reporting to the setting's Safeguarding team.

Note - It is not the role or responsibility of **Connecting to investigate allegations or commit actions without partnership with the setting they are working with.**

7. Types of Abuse

All members of staff and volunteers are aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation. They know how to identify young people who may be being harmed and then how to respond to a young person who discloses abuse, or where others raise concerns about them.

Our staff understand that abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition, and that in most cases multiple issues will overlap with each other.

There are four main categories of abuse (definitions adapted from Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023):

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, e.g. as a result of 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).
- 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 persistent 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.
- not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.
- age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.
- 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.
- seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another, such as domestic abuse or serious bullying.
- serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Note - Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though 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.
- 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.

Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. People of all genders can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

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.

8. Information Sharing and Record Keeping (Including confidentiality)

It is essential that those of us that work with children/ young people and families should be alert to the signs of child abuse, this includes cases where children may disclose non-recent / historical abuse.

When recording information and determining when, what and how to share information, **Connecting** works within the Children's Act 1989 and through Section 47 and 17:

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. Safe working practices

As a therapeutic organisation, our safeguarding young people policy **must** outline how **Connecting** protects young people from harm from those placed in positions of trust or care. At Connecting, the following steps are taken:

- No-one can undertake direct work with young people without receipt of two satisfactory references.
- An enhanced DBS check is carried out for all **Connecting** staff who work directly with children and young people and will be updated on a **three yearly basis** or on a 'live' basis for those registered with the DBS update service. Overseas checks will also be undertaken for any person who has lived abroad in the last 7 years, which will include police checks / letters of good conduct.
- Safeguarding Induction Training is delivered to all staff and Counsellors on Placement who work directly with young people.
- It is a requirement of **Connecting** that viewing panels are in place in doors of Connecting rooms, so that the **Connecting** school-based staff or other staff members can see through the viewing panels. (or equivalent)
- **Connecting** provides supervision for ALL members of staff and Therapeutic staff including Counsellors on Placement receive Clinical Supervision.
- **Connecting** Line Managers and the School Leadership Team maintain an overview of **Connecting** involvement with young people.
- All services provided by **Connecting** are delivered in accordance with BACP ethical standards, and the IDMT standards when working with animals.
- If any member of **Connecting's** staff has concerns regarding the conduct of another member of **Connecting** staff or Counsellor on Placement, they have a duty to report this concern in confidence to the Service Director. If the concern is about the Service Director, it must be shared with the Trustee responsible for Safeguarding (see section 1 of this policy).
- If a member of the **Connecting** team, working within a school or organisation, has concerns regarding the conduct of any member of the school's or organisation's staff, they have a duty to follow the school's/ organisation's policy and report it immediately to the Head teacher.
- **Connecting** team members will always adhere to the advice, boundaries, responsibilities and standards in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

10. Allegations against staff and volunteers

As a Community Interest Company (CIC) working with vulnerable children, **Connecting** has a duty to ensure that where an allegation against a member of staff or Counsellor on Placement has been made, steps are taken to fully investigate the allegation and prevent other children or staff members being harmed.

Any concern or allegation about a **Connecting** member of staff or Counsellor on Placement should be made to the Service Director – Clare Clay using the following contact details. This should be

provided in writing, but where someone is at a high risk of harm, it should be done verbally and immediately.

Email: Cclay@educationmentalhealthsolutions.co.uk Telephone: 07971 224142

If the concern is about the Service Director, the above should be followed but communicated to our Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding using the following details.

Email: Cmulhern@discoverytrust.org

Connecting equally has a wider duty to ensure that the necessary authorities are informed of concerns about situations where a member of staff or Counsellor on Placement has harmed a child, placed a child at risk of harm, or is unsuitable to work with children. **Connecting** therefore takes responsibility for making the required referrals, to external regulatory bodies such as but not limited to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), University providers and/or the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP).

For England and Wales, we will contact the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) immediately to establish whether the LADO, **Connecting** or the partnership school/ organisation will carry out the investigation. If it is decided that **Connecting** will carry out an investigation, we will liaise closely with the LADO.

Whistleblowing – If you are concerned of a wrongdoing or that appropriate action has not been taken to deal with a safeguarding concern, then this is when whistleblowing should take place. This is sometimes referred to as ‘making a disclosure’ or ‘blowing the whistle’. The wrongdoing will typically (although not necessarily) be something you have witnessed. Please see **Connecting’s** Whistleblowing Policy for further information.

11. Working virtually

Safeguarding all those who access of our services is a fundamental role we **all** play. This is true when we are working face to face, **remotely or virtually**. Our policies and procedures remain the same irrespective of how we are delivering our services.

When working virtually, any member of **Connecting’s** staff will only ever use an approved virtual platform, via their **Connecting** email address. The time, purpose and rationale for use will be agreed in advance with a **Connecting** Line Manager and with the partnership organisation and/or parents of a young person.

Connecting practitioners WILL follow our culture, ethics and conduct policy when working online. A background screen will ALWAYS be used. Where possible, there will be an agreed safety mechanism established for a young person AND a practitioner e.g. presence of a parent or parent/ colleague, or in next room, confidential recording etc.

12. Roles & Responsibilities

The **Board of Trustees** is responsible for;

- Holding **strategic accountability** for safeguarding performance.
- Ensuring a named Trustee with significant oversight of **Connecting's** Safeguarding policy application.
- Reviewing safeguarding reports and risk themes provided at each board meeting.
- Ensuring the organisation meets statutory duties (e.g., Working Together, KCSiE).
- Approving policy updates and resource allocation.
- Commissioning external audits or support where appropriate.

The **Safeguarding Lead** (DSL) and the Clinical Lead (DDSL) are responsible for;

- Leading the **operational monitoring** of safeguarding practice.
- Dealing with Safeguarding concerns - swiftly, effectively and with the young person's best interests at the heart of ALL decisions.
- Reviewing all safeguarding concerns, referrals, and case notes for quality and compliance.
- Working in partnership with educational settings and other agencies.
- Conducting regular audits of:
 - Record-keeping
 - Threshold decisions
 - Escalation processes
 - Multi-agency communication
- Providing feedback and targeted support to practitioners.
- Identifying emerging themes, risks, or training needs.
- Reporting safeguarding data and analysis to the Board.

Clinical Supervisors and Line Managers are responsible for;

-
- Monitoring, safeguarding competence through supervision.
- Reviewing practitioners' safeguarding decisions, documentation, and risk formulations.
- Identifying patterns of concern, skill gaps, or unsafe practice.
- Ensuring safeguarding is a standing agenda item in supervision.
- Escalating concerns about practitioner performance to the DSL.

Practitioners (Therapists, Counsellors, Wellbeing Staff) are responsible for;

- Maintaining accurate, timely safeguarding records.
- Participating in audits, reflective reviews, and learning activities.
- Self-monitoring compliance with:
 - Training requirements
 - Policy expectations
 - Professional standards (BACP/UKCP/HPCP)
- Reporting any barriers to safe practice (e.g., workload, unclear thresholds).

13. Monitoring & Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation ensure that safeguarding practice is:

- **Consistent, effective, and legally compliant**
- Embedded across all therapeutic work
- Continuously improved through reflective practice and learning

These processes help **Connecting** to identify strengths, gaps, and risks, and ensure that young people receive safe, high-quality support.

Connecting undertakes the following monitoring and evaluation;

Monitoring Processes

Case File Audits

- Conducted termly
- Assessing: clarity and accuracy of records, decision-making, timeliness of actions. Evidence of a child centred approach, multi-agency communication.

Safeguarding Data Monitoring

- Conducted termly
- Tracking: number and types of concerns raised, pathways used, outcomes and responses from external agencies, repeat concerns or patterns, demographic trends (e.g., age, setting, presenting issues)

Supervision Monitoring

- Conducted bi-annually
- Reviewing safeguarding discussions in supervision and line management, identifying practitioners needing additional support or training, ensuring supervision and line management processes are reflective, robust and compliant with this policy.

Training Compliance Monitoring

- Conducted termly
- Tracking completion of:
 - Induction safeguarding training
 - Annual refreshers
 - Specialist modules (e.g., contextual safeguarding, online harm)
- Identifying staff overdue or requiring targeted development.

Incident Review and Learning

- Conducted through reflective practice during and after and at least termly
- Reviewing safeguarding incidents, near misses, or escalations:
 - Identifying systemic issues or gaps in practice.

- Implementing learning actions and track completion.

Evaluation Processes

Safeguarding Report

Prepared by the DSL for the Board, for each meeting, including:

- Audit findings
- Data trends
- Training compliance
- Practitioner feedback
- Multi-agency feedback
- Recommendations for improvement.
- Provides oversight and ensures actions are completed.
- Headlines regarding practitioners receiving feedback from audits and supervision.

The Board receives an **annual safeguarding evaluation and improvement plan**.

Policy Review

- Conducted annually or sooner if legislation changes.
- Informed by:
 - Audit outcomes
 - Incident reviews
 - Practitioner and service-user feedback
 - External inspection findings

Service-User Feedback

- Gathered through:
 - Young people's surveys
 - Parent/carers feedback (where appropriate)
 - Educational setting feedback
- Used to evaluate whether young people feel safe and supported.

External Audits

- Commissioned periodically to ensure independent scrutiny.

14. Staff & Safe Recruitment

Safer recruitment in therapeutic services is about **preventing unsuitable individuals from gaining access to children and young people**, and ensuring that those who are appointed are **competent, ethical, and safe practitioners**. For therapists, this requires a blend of safeguarding, clinical governance, and professional standards.

Most of the practitioners that work with and for **Connecting** will have been pre-selected because of the quality of their practice to date. However, this means that our safer recruitment practice is as thorough and robust as possible. This is outlined below:

15. CPD: Culture & Ethos (Training)

All staff, practitioners, partners and counsellors on placement have to attend an induction session which covers **Connecting's** culture and ethos, our vision and values and a thorough Safeguarding session.

Throughout an operational year- safeguarding updates are shared with all of the above through ½ termly memorandums- through 'face to face' team meetings and are standing agenda items for both the Trustees and the Steering Group.

Our Safeguarding Leads attend full training every 2 years and this is tracked and monitored.

All of the above have line management and regular supervision in place to handle, check and manage Safeguarding concerns.

Annual Safeguarding sessions are held for ALL staff, practitioners, partners and counsellors thereafter.

All of the above have to complete (sign) an online tool to share their learning, their gaps, their strengths, experiences and having talked about and fully read and understood Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1- this is done in September every year.

16. Appendices

Child-on-child Abuse - child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse).
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence).
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery).

- Up skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, intending to view their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Self-harm - Self-harm is a broad term that can be used to describe various behaviours that lead to physical harm. These include self-cutting or scratching the skin, burning/branding with cigarettes/lighters, scalding, overdose of tablets or other toxins, tying ligatures around the neck, punching oneself or other surfaces, banging limbs/head and hair pulling (Mental Health Foundation, 2006). It may also include risk-taking behaviours where the child / young person is careless for their own safety and there is a risk of physical harm. It also includes neglect of physical health, for example young people with insulin dependent diabetes who intentionally miss insulin doses. Self-harm usually occurs in response to emotional distress.

Suicide / Suicide Ideation - The term 'suicide' means an act that is intended to end one's life. Suicidal ideations, often called suicidal thoughts or ideas, is a broad term used to describe a range of contemplations, wishes, and preoccupations with death and suicide (PubMed, 2021). These issues can be caused by many factors, including depression and mental illness, stress, financial problems, relationship breakdown, bereavement and abuse.

So-called 'Honour'-Based Abuse - The term 'honour' crime or 'honour'-based abuse refers to an incident or crime involving violence, threats of violence, intimidation, coercion or abuse (including psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse) which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the 'honour' of an individual, family and/or community for alleged or perceived breaches of the family and/or community's code of behaviour. It is estimated that around 76% of victims of 'honour' based abuse are female, but people of all genders are at risk.

Domestic Abuse - As highlighted above, Domestic Abuse is generally treated as falling under emotional abuse. The cross-government definition (2014) of domestic violence and abuse is as follows:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 brought about some key changes to the way domestic abuse is responded to, those changes include:

- A legal definition of domestic abuse which recognises children as victims in their own right;
- A Domestic Abuse Commissioner to stand up for survivors and life-saving domestic abuse services;
- A legal duty on councils to fund support for survivors in 'safe accommodation';
- New protections in the family and civil courts for survivors – including a ban on abusers from cross-examining their victims, and a guarantee that survivors can access special measures (including separate waiting rooms, entrances and exits and screens);
- New criminal offences – including post-separation coercive control, non-fatal strangulation, threats to disclose private sexual images;

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) - As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited, even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

An example of CCE is **County Lines** - As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, county lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) - 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. The victim may have been sexually exploited, even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Contextual safeguarding - Contextual safeguarding recognises that as young people grow and develop, they are influenced by a whole range of environments and people outside their family. For example, in school or college, in the local community, in their peer groups or online. Children and young people may encounter risk in any of these environments. Sometimes the different contexts are inter-related and can mean that children and young people may encounter multiple risks. Contextual safeguarding looks at how we can best understand these risks, engage with children and young people and help to keep them safe.

Extremism and Prevent Duty - Any concerns about radicalisation and extremist views or behaviours in children and young people must be reported as a safeguarding concern. Connecting works in line with Prevent Duty 2015 guidance and will consult local Prevent Coordinators where necessary. Extremism is defined in the Prevent strategy as the 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. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces (Working Together, 2023).

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) - Concerns that a child has been, or may be about to be, subjected to FGM, fall under this policy and must also be reported as a safeguarding concern. FGM is a collective term for a range of procedures which involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genitals for nonmedical reasons. It is sometimes referred to as female circumcision, or female genital cutting. The practice is medically unnecessary, is extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out, and in later life.

Forced Marriage - A forced marriage is where one or both people do not, or cannot, consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used to force them into the marriage. In England and Wales, it is also when anything is done to make someone marry before they turn 18, even if there is no pressure or abuse (Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022). The pressure put on people to marry against their will may include; threats or physical/sexual violence and/or emotional or psychological abuse for example making someone feel they are bringing shame on their family. Forced disproportionately affects females, but people of all genders can be victims. In the England and Wales in 2023, 69% of cases that came to the awareness of the Forced Marriage Unit involved female victims, 25% involved children aged 17 and under, and 34% those aged 18-25.

Grooming - Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them. Children and young people who are groomed can be sexually abused, exploited or trafficked. Anybody can be a groomer, no matter their age, gender or race. Grooming can take place over a short or long period of time – from weeks to years. Groomers may also build a relationship with the young person's family or friends to make them seem trustworthy or authoritative.

Young Carers – A young carer is defined as a young person under the age of 18 who helps to look after a relative with a disability, illness, mental health condition, or drug or alcohol problem. This may involve young people doing extra jobs around the house, such as cooking, cleaning or helping someone get dressed and move around. It may also involve a young person providing a lot of physical help to a parent, brother or sister who is disabled or ill. Without appropriate support, young carers are at risk of having lower self-esteem and heightened anxiety, feeling isolated, being bullied, and being stressed by the responsibility.

17. References

[Leicestershire Local Authority](#)

[NSPCC](#)

As our work is primarily in Leicestershire-

Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership Policy, Procedures and Practice Guidance link:
<https://llrscb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>