



Safeguarding Children (Wales)

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Safeguarding Children (Wales)

Introduction

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. VES Recruitment (VES) acknowledges the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice that reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice requirements. All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

This policy applies to all internal staff and candidates and will be widely promoted and is mandatory for everyone involved in VES. Failure to comply with this policy and the company's safeguarding procedures may result in disciplinary action being taken, including termination of employment and/or contract.

All candidates placed by VES are expected to familiarise themselves with arrangements for safeguarding children in the organisation where they are placed and to have a clear understanding of abuse and neglect in all forms; including how to identify, respond and report.

Here at VES we expect all staff and candidates to follow and promote good practice in safeguarding. In order to do so, they should:

- Read, understand, accept and act in accordance with this policy.
- Be vigilant and follow professional codes of conduct to maintain professional boundaries and safe working practices.
- Report any concerns or disclosures related to the protection and safety of children.
- Undertake mandatory safeguarding training and awareness sessions where provided.
- Help to educate learners/service users in placements regarding matters of keeping safe, including acting as a good role model.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our other relevant safeguarding policies, such as:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Allegations Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment
- Whistleblowing Policy

Definitions

Child: According to the Education Act 2002 and Section 3 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 a 'child' is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

In this policy, the terms 'child' and 'young person', or 'children' and 'young people', are used interchangeably to refer to any individual under the age of 18.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Harm: The Children Act 1989 defines 'harm' as "ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development". 'Development' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development; 'health' means physical or mental health; and 'ill-treatment' includes sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical. As a result of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, the definition of harm also includes "impairment suffered by hearing or seeing the ill-treatment of another"

Abuse may be perpetrated by an individual from the child's school, community, family, those in a position of trust or another child.

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse). This is most likely to include but may not be limited to: bullying (including cyberbullying), physical abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment, up-skirting, sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (previously referred to as youth-produced sexual imagery); and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Child abuse can be one of the following categories as laid out in [Wales Safeguarding Procedures](#) and in [Working Together to Safeguard People: Volume 5 – Handling Individual cases to Protect Children at Risk](#).

Physical Abuse: Physical abuse is a form of abuse aiming to deliberately hurt a child or young person. It includes physical restraint (such as being tied to a bed, locked in a room), inflicting burns, cutting, slapping, punching, kicking, biting, choking, stabbing or shooting, withholding food or medical attention, drugging, denying sleep, inflicting pain, shaking or hitting babies, fabricating or inducing illness (which occurs when a carer actively promotes the sick role of a child by exaggeration, non-treatment of real problems, fabrication (lying) or falsification of signs, and/ or induction of illness.

In severe cases, some of the behaviours by a carer that may result in harm include:

- deliberately inducing symptoms by administering medication or other substances (this includes non-accidental poisoning), or by intentional suffocation;
- interfering with treatments by over-dosing, not administering medication, or interfering with medical equipment such as infusion lines;
- claiming the child has symptoms which are unverifiable unless observed directly, such as pain, frequent passing of urine, vomiting, or fits, resulting in unnecessary investigations and treatments;

- exaggerating symptoms, again resulting in unnecessary investigations and treatments;
- falsifying test results and observation charts;
- obtaining specialist treatments or equipment for children which are not required; and
- alleging unfounded psychological illness in a child.

Psychological/Emotional Abuse: Psychological/Emotional abuse is the ongoing psychological and emotional maltreatment of a child. It can seriously damage a child's emotional health and development. Psychological/Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare or humiliate a child or isolating or ignoring them. Children who are emotionally abused are often suffering another type of abuse or neglect at the same time. Emotional abuse includes but is not limited to:

- humiliating or constantly criticising a child;
- threatening, shouting at a child or calling them names;
- making the child the subject of jokes, or using sarcasm to hurt a child;
- blaming, scapegoating;
- making a child perform degrading acts;
- not recognising a child's own individuality, trying to control their lives;
- pushing a child too hard or not recognising their limitations;
- exposing a child to distressing events or interactions such as domestic abuse or drug taking;
- failing to promote a child's social development;
- not allowing them to have friends;
- persistently ignoring them;
- being absent;
- manipulating a child;
- never saying anything kind, expressing positive feelings or congratulating a child on successes;
- never showing any emotions in interactions with a child, also known as emotional neglect.

Sexual Abuse: There are 2 types of child sexual abuse. These are called contact abuse and non-contact abuse.

Contact abuse involves touching activities where an abuser makes physical contact with a child, including penetration. It includes:

- sexual touching of any part of the body whether the child is wearing clothes or not
- rape or penetration by putting an object or body part inside a child's mouth, vagina or anus
- forcing or encouraging a child to take part in sexual activity making a child take their clothes off, touch someone else's genitals or masturbate.

Non-contact abuse involves non-touching activities, such as grooming, exploitation, persuading children to perform sexual acts over the internet and flashing. It includes:

- encouraging a child to watch or hear sexual acts
- not taking proper measures to prevent a child being exposed to sexual activities by others
- meeting a child following sexual grooming with the intent of abusing them
- online abuse including making, viewing or distributing child abuse images allowing someone else to make, view or distribute child abuse images showing pornography to a child
- sexually exploiting a child for money, power or status (child exploitation)

Neglect: Neglect is the failure to meet a child's basic and essential needs including physical, emotional and medical needs. It can include a failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, failure to protect a child from physical and emotional harm and failure to provide adequate medical care or treatment. It can occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. It can also occur before a child is born where a parent fails to prepare appropriately for the child's birth, fail to seek ante-natal care, and/or engage in behaviours that place the baby at risk. Neglect can take different forms, ranging from obvious physical signs such as being inadequately clothed to young children being left alone in their home or on the streets for long periods of time. Children may lack parental support to go to school, miss health appointments, and be ignored when distressed.

There are a range of parenting behaviours that can be described as neglect:

- medical neglect: a failure to seek and provide appropriate medical, dental and optical care;
- nutritional neglect: occurs when the carer fails to pay sufficient attention to the diet for the child who may become obese or fail to thrive;
- supervisory neglect: happens when the carer fails to provide the level of guidance and supervision that ensures the child is safe and protected from harm;
- educational neglect: is more than securing school attendance it includes a failure on the part of the carer to provide an environment allowing the child to achieve their cognitive potential;
- physical neglect: happens when the child does not receive appropriate physical care necessary for their age and development and/or where the child lives in a physical environment that is not conducive to their health and development healthy and/or is unsafe; and
- identity neglect: occurs when a parent or carer fails to recognise or address the child or young person's needs in terms of, for example, culture, religion, gender and sexuality.

For detailed guidance on the signs which may indicate abuse and neglect see [All Wales Practice Guide - Safeguarding children from neglect \(2021\)](#).

Our Commitment to Safeguarding

This policy is designed to meet the above principles by ensuring that:

- VES has robust safer recruitment processes that ensure that those who are known to be a risk to children do not gain access to them; those whose actions suggest that they are a risk to children are detected at the earliest stage and prevented from continuing to work with children; and that those who intend to do harm are prevented at every possible stage from entering the workforce.
- Staff and candidates understand their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and are provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children.
- There is an open and transparent culture which enables staff and candidates to raise concerns around children, those that work with children, and processes within VES.
- It is as simple as possible for an individual to report concerns about harm or risk, and clear procedures are implemented where safeguarding and child protection issues arise. Where concerns are reported VES will ensure that individuals are supported.
- VES has robust policies and procedures in place, which are reviewed and updated at least every 12 months.
- VES stays up to date with developments on safeguarding best practice, reporting and auditing safeguarding activities annually and addressing any areas for improvement.
- VES will report any concerns regarding any individual, or any potential safeguarding situation that it becomes aware of as soon as practicable to the appropriate authority and will co-operate in any ongoing investigations or assessments.
- VES will work in partnership with other services (including local authority children's social care) to ensure that those who are identified as being at risk of abuse are protected.
- VES will ensure that staff have access to all relevant training that meets local and national safeguarding requirements.
- Confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Person

The Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) is a senior member of staff of VES with the necessary knowledge, experience, and training to take the lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.

The DSP is the point of contact for anyone in the business who is concerned about a child.

The role of the DSP includes:

- Receiving and responding appropriately to all reports of safeguarding concerns, issues or abuse which are raised by staff members, partner agencies or candidates.
- Referring any safeguarding concerns where necessary to the Local Authority and managing immediate actions required to ensure the individual at risk is safe from abuse.
- Recognising and identifying the signs of abuse, neglect and other types of harm, irrespective of whether it is online or offline, and know when it is appropriate to make a report to the local authority.
- Being supported to manage the emotional impact of their role and provided with an opportunity for reflection on their practice. This could be done on an individual or group basis but the DSP should be provided with an opportunity for individual support where necessary.
- Providing advice and support to other staff, record-keeping, working with family members or carers, making referrals to children's services and attending statutory meetings, as well as liaising with the Regional Safeguarding Board and working with other agencies as necessary.
- Keeping senior management apprised of any safeguarding incidents and their outcome.
- Considering how safeguarding more widely can be addressed and ensure preventative measures are adopted in the education setting. This part of the role will include building relationships with other agencies, as well as ensuring staff and learners are informed about risks and how to access support.
- Policy development (or overseeing this), including ensuring that all safeguarding policies are updated as required and, in any event, reviewed at least annually.
- Liaising with Designated Safeguarding Person in partner organisations.
- Ensuring that all relevant staff and candidates have received safeguarding training appropriate to their role and continue receiving training to enable the development of skills and good practice when working with children. The DSP must keep a record of all staff training, including the dates, details of the provider and a record of staff attendance.
- Reporting concerns to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This may be where a staff member or candidate has been dismissed or left, where serious concerns have been raised about their conduct or behaviour, and the company believes they pose a risk to children. The DSP will complete the necessary referral documents to the DBS and liaise with them thereafter if they have any further questions regarding the staff member or candidate.
- The DSP should ensure that everyone working in the education setting is aware of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures and knows how to access a copy of the procedures.



Recruitment and Selection Process

VES is also committed to protecting children through a careful recruitment and selection process (Safer Recruitment), a Whistleblowing Policy and guidance on appropriate behaviour (Code of Conduct). These policies should be read alongside this policy.

VES' rigorous procedures, following APSCo's Compliance+ process ensures that any candidate found to have a history of unacceptable conduct or practice, will not be placed.

Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

All staff have a responsibility to protect children. This includes:

- Observing VES policies and processes including any Code of Conduct
- Reporting any concerns arising from meeting candidates or carrying out pre-placement checks to the DSP without delay and making a clear written record of all relevant information to be passed to the DSP
- Reporting any concerns arising from organisation visits/placements to the Designated Safeguarding Person at the relevant organisation and confirming that this has been done to VES' DSP
- Taking action, such as following the process detailed in the Whistleblowing Policy where there are concerns about practice.
- Working with local authorities, the police, health services and other relevant services to promote the well-being of children and protect them from harm.

All candidates working through VES are expected to keep children safe by:

- following the VES policies including the Code of Conduct.
- following the Safeguarding Policy of each placement, including any Code of Conduct
- making the Designated Safeguarding Person at the placement aware of any concerns regarding any children or any adults caring for or working with those children.
- seeking advice and support from VES' DSP when they have reason to believe that their concerns have not been responded to appropriately or they have concerns about practice in the placement.
- understanding the importance of sharing information about children, young people and their families in order to safeguard children.

Dealing with allegations of abuse made against candidates

All candidates placed on assignment are responsible for supporting safe behaviour and have responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies, such as the Code of Conduct.

In accordance with [Working Together to Safeguard People](#) and Keeping Learners Safe (2022), where an organisation has received an allegation that a volunteer, supply staff, contractor or member of staff who works with children has:

- 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 they may pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children.

A referral should be sent to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day, giving as much detail as possible.

Duty to make a referral to the DBS

Where there is evidence that anyone has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, there is a legal duty on VES to report that person to the DBS using the relevant DBS referral guidance. The DBS has statutory authority to bar a person from working in regulated activity with children in the UK.

A referral to the DBS will also be made if the person resigns prior to an investigation being carried out or reaching its conclusion. If the accused person resigns, or ceases to provide their services, this should not prevent an allegation being followed up in accordance with this guidance.

VES will not make any compromise/settlement agreement in the case of a person deemed unsuitable to work with children. Any such agreement which contained a condition of not referring the case to the DBS would constitute a criminal offence.

Anyone who is concerned about a child's welfare or who believes that a child may be at risk of abuse should pass any information to the appropriate authority as soon as possible and no longer than 24 hours after the initial concern.

Whistleblowing

Staff and candidates may find it difficult to raise concerns about colleagues, managers, people in placement or concerning how safeguarding concerns are responded to within a setting. VES has a specific Whistleblowing Policy which encourages candidates to raise concerns and also provides details of outside organisations that candidates can approach for support and advice. VES aims to have an open and honest culture where safeguarding is responded to effectively, and both staff and candidates feel safe, supported and able to voice any concerns that they have in the knowledge that they will be responded to.

Summary

VES will make clients and candidates aware of the Safeguarding Policy through the following means:

- VES Website
- Registration Confirmations
- Registration Portal

All staff, temporary workers, candidates, contractors and volunteers must be aware that they have a professional duty to share information with relevant organisations and agencies where appropriate in order to safeguard children. The public interest in safeguarding children may



override confidentiality interests. However, information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only, as judged by VES.