National Star
Realising the aspirations of people with disabilities

NATIONAL STAR Safeguarding Procedures Wales

General Principles of Safeguarding

- It is the responsibility of everyone within National Star to protect children and adults at risk (service-users) at risk of abuse or neglect including online.
- This includes children, young people and adults at risk from outside of National Star who are using our settings.
- **Staff should remain vigilant at all times.**
- **Staff should not assume that someone else will take action.**
- Staff must always act in the interest of the child or adult at risk.
- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 **do not** prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping people safe.
- Information can be shared without consent to keep an individual at risk safe from neglect or physical, emotional or mental harm, or if it is protecting their physical, mental, or emotional wellbeing.
- Where possible, consent should be sought from the individual before information is shared.

Safeguarding children

Child: A person who is under 18 years of age.
Safeguarding: Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children involves:

- 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 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.

Safeguarding adults at risk

Adult: A person who is aged 18 years or over
Safeguarding: Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

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

The aims of adult safeguarding are to:

- Stop abuse or neglect wherever possible.
- Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs.
- Safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live.
- Promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults concerned.
- Provide information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe and what to do to raise a concern about the safety or well-being of an adult; and address what has caused the abuse or neglect.
- In preventing or minimising the risk or experience of abuse or neglect of an adult, staff must promote the adult's wellbeing including where appropriate having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action.

National Star staff with specific safeguarding duties

National Star staff with responsibility for safeguarding and child protection:

- Marina Wheale, Head of Safeguarding/Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP)
- John Mann: Deputy Designated Safeguarding Person (DDSP)
- Margaret Goldie: Safeguarding Governor

National Star staff with responsibility for Allegations Management:

- Lynette Barrett: Chief Executive Officer
- Marina Wheale, Head of Safeguarding/Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP)
- Rachel Harber – Director of People

Governor with responsibility for Allegations Management:

- Nikki Richardson – Chair of Governors.

How to recognise abuse of children or adults at risk

To recognise signs and symptoms of abuse staff must be open to the possibility of non-accidental injury or other forms of abuse and share any concerns with the National Star safeguarding staff or a senior manager.

Staff should think, 'it could happen to a National Star service user and 'it could happen here'. **Staff should not assume that someone else will take action.**

All staff should be able to reassure victims of abuse that they are being taken seriously and will be supported. No service user should ever be made to feel ashamed or that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment.

Specific Safeguarding Issues and Recognised Forms of Abuse

Abuse comes in many forms. The following is not an exclusive list, and the signs and symptoms do not necessarily indicate abuse. Staff should also be aware of and report any conversations that they may overhear or have reported to them by a friend of the service-user. If appropriate, staff should inform the service-user involved in the safeguarding concern that a report has been made.

Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple and affect one person or more.

Type of Abuse	Examples / Possible Signs & Symptoms
Physical Abuse *Physical abuse is deliberately hurting a person causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.*	https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child- abuse-and-neglect/physical-abuse/ https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gsab/i-am-a- friend-relative-or-carer/types-of-abuse/
Sexual Abuse *Sexual abuse is when a person is forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities.* **Staff should be aware of the possible health needs that might arise following a sexual assault, such as physical, mental and sexual health problems.*	https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child- abuse-and-neglect/child-sexual-abuse/ https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gsab/i-am-a- friend-relative-or-carer/types-of-abuse/
Serious Violence *Serious violence is when a person is at risk from or involved with serious violent crime*	https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping- children-safe/staying-safe-away-from-home/gangs- young-people/ https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county- lines

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) *Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. Children in exploitative situations and relationships receive something such as gifts, money or affection as a result of performing sexual activities or others performing sexual activities on them.*	https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child- abuse-and-neglect/child-sexual-exploitation/
Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) - *County Lines* *Criminal exploitation is also known as 'county lines' and is when gangs and organised crime networks exploit children to sell drugs. Often these children are made to travel across counties, and they use dedicated mobile phone 'lines' to supply drugs*	What Is County Lines? | The Children's Society (childrenssociety.org.uk)
Emotional or Psychological Abuse *Emotional abuse is the ongoing emotional maltreatment of a person. It's sometimes called psychological abuse and can seriously damage a person's emotional health and development.*	What Is Emotional Abuse & Things You Should Know | NSPCC https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gsab/i-am-a-friend-relative-or-carer/types-of-abuse/
Financial or Material Abuse *Financial or Material abuse is limiting access to money or other resources, using a person's money for their own gain or by forcing all financial responsibility onto their victim while limiting their ability to provide this.*	http://www.lwa.org.uk/understanding-abuse/abusive-relationships/financial-abuse.htm https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gsab/i-am-a- friend-relative-or-carer/types-of-abuse/

Neglect or Acts of Omission *Neglect and acts of omission include ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs. Failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.*	https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse- and-neglect/neglect/ https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gsab/i-am-a-friend- relative-or-carer/types-of-abuse/
Discrimination *Discrimination means treating a person unfairly because of who they are or because they possess certain characteristics i.e. a disability.*	https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gsab/i-am-a- friend-relative-or-carer/types-of-abuse/ Discrimination, hate crime and equality | Childline
Cyber Bullying / Online Safety *The use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature.* *Where appropriate, National Star use a robust web filtering system to support service users to keep safe online.* *It is the responsibility of all staff to report any concerns relating to online activity.*	https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child- abuse-and-neglect/bullying-and-cyberbullying/ Bullying advice and support | Family Lives Online Safety for Children - Tips & Guides | NSPCC https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/fake-news-and-misinformation-advice-hub/learn-about-fake-news-to-support-children/
Domestic Abuse / Familial Abuse *Domestic abuse as an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and / or violent behaviour, including sexual violence, in the majority of cases by a partner or ex- partner, but also by a family member or carer. It is very common.*	https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gsab/i-am-a- friend-relative-or-carer/types-of-abuse/ https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child- abuse-and-neglect/domestic-abuse/

Extra-Familial Abuse *Extra-familial abuse is linked to 'contextual safeguarding' or 'complex safeguarding'.* *These concepts refer to harm that occurs to children outside of their family system, often during the adolescent years because at this age their social networks widen.*	Contextual-safeguarding-breifing.pdf (cscp.org.uk) Contextual safeguarding | NSPCC Learning
Honour Based Abuse *Honour based abuse (HBA) is a form of domestic abuse which is perpetrated in the name of so called 'honour'. The honour code which it refers to is set at the discretion of male relatives and women who do not abide by the 'rules' are then punished for bringing shame on the family.*	What is Honour Based Abuse? – Karma Nirvana
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) *Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, but where there's no medical reason for this to be done.*	Female genital mutilation (FGM) - NHS
Self-Neglect *Self-neglect is when a person, by choice or lack of awareness or ability, disregards their health. It can also include when a person refuses needed care or help with daily activities.*	https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gsab/i-am-a-friend- relative-or-carer/types-of-abuse/

Organisational Abuse *Organisational Abuse includes neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment.*	Types of abuse | Safeguarding Adults in Gloucestershire
Modern Slavery *Someone is in slavery if they are:* *Forced to work through mental or physical threat.* *Owned or controlled by an 'employer', usually through mental or physical abuse or the threat of abuse.* *Dehumanised, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property'.* *Physically constrained or have restrictions placed on his/her freedom.*	Modern Slavery Information | Unseen (unseenuk.org)
Radicalisation *The process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.*	Radicalisation of young children online | Internet Matters

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment *Sexual violence is any unwanted sexual act or activity. There are many different kinds of sexual violence, including but not restricted to: rape, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, sexual harassment, rape within marriage / relationships, forced marriage, so-called honour-based violence, female genital mutilation, trafficking, sexual exploitation, and ritual abuse.* *Sexual harassment is any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that you find offensive or which makes you feel distressed, intimidated or humiliated.*	Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) or peer-on-peer sexual abuse | NSPCC Learning https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gsab/i-am-a- friend- relative-or-carer/types-of-abuse/
Up-skirting *Upskirting is a highly intrusive practice, which typically involves someone taking a picture under another person's clothing without their knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear).*	https://www.gov.uk/government/news/upsirting- know-your-rights
STOMP *Stopping the over medication of people with a learning disability, autism or both.*	https://www.england.nhs.uk/learning-disabilities/improving-health/stomp/

Mental Health *Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.*	https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/childrens-mental-health/ https://www.mind.org.uk/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIx5C-gcrH6wIVi4BQBh2C6wQ4EAAYASAAEgLZZPD_BwE
Sharing of Nude or Semi- nude images or videos *(under 18's or service users who lack capacity to make an informed choice)*	Sexting and sending nudes | NSPCC Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: how to respond to an incident (overview) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Incidents between service users (Child-on-Child Abuse) – Safeguarding or behaviour?

In line with Keeping Learners Safe, National Star have a duty to protect service-users against child-on-child abuse (peer-on-peer in the case of over 18's). There are many forms of abuse that can occur between peers, such as; physical abuse, sexually harmful behaviour/sexual abuse, bullying, cyber bullying, sexting, upskirting, initiation/hazing, sexual violence and sexual harassment and prejudiced behaviour.

All concerns around child-on-child or peer-on-peer abuse must be reported to the Safeguarding Team using a Significant Event Form. Several factors will be taken into consideration prior to appropriate next steps being formulated. Particular attention will be paid to how National Star are managing specific situations and whether there is a requirement for increased service-user support or a change to support plans to reduce or stop certain behaviours.

Prior to requesting the support of outside agencies, consideration will be given to whether the service-user is deemed at 'risk of significant harm'. In the case of allegations of sexual abuse and sexting (involving service-users under the age of 18 years), support from the police will be sought immediately and reported to the relevant Safeguarding Team.

The thresholds for physical abuse would be either persistent intentional harm, even if not causing significant or long-lasting injury to the service-user and which the organisation is unable to manage successfully, and/or intentionally leaving a mark or breaking the skin of another service-user. Persistent bullying of service-users that cannot be managed successfully internally and where there is a significant impact on the emotional wellbeing and mental health of the service-user will also be reported to relevant agencies.

The requirements for each incident will be carefully considered by the Safeguarding Team and relevant staff. The outcome may differ depending on the circumstances and the needs of each service-user.

Persistent unintentional physical harm should continue to be reported to the Safeguarding Team via a Significant Event Form and while these will be handled internally, there will be a clear emphasis on how staff can support in reducing these incidents.

National Star has a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse/peer-on-peer abuse. The organisation recognises that even if there are no reported cases, this does not mean it is not happening. Staff will remain vigilant, and report concerns immediately.

Low-level Concerns and Allegations

Low-level concerns and allegations are those that do not meet the 'threshold for harm' (i.e. may not be reported to external agencies such as social care or the police).

ALL low-level concerns must be reported to the Safeguarding Team and will be appropriately investigated.

Staff should feel confident to self-refer if they have found themselves in a situation which might be misinterpreted, or they have behaved in a way that falls below professional standards.

A low-level concern is any concern that an adult has acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work.
- Does not meet the allegations threshold or is not considered serious enough to refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Examples of low-level concerns could include:

- Being over-friendly with service-users
- Having favourites
- Taking photos of service-users on their mobile phones
- Engaging with a service-user one-to-one in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language whether this be with sinister intent or in jest / banter.

How to respond to a disclosure, allegation or concern for a National Star service-user

Disclosure: A service-user states they have been or are being abused by another, this includes online activity.

Allegation: A member of staff (including agency staff), governor, contractor or volunteer working with children or adults at risk at risk is accused of committing an abuse.

It is the responsibility of staff including volunteers to *report concerns* **not** to decide whether it is or is not abuse.

The need to protect the service-user at risk overrides any concerns about "false allegations"; even if you think a disclosure or allegation may be untrue you must still report it.

Abuse is usually discovered in three ways:

- The service-user makes a disclosure or allegation to someone that abuse has or may have occurred.
- Someone sees the abuse occur.
- Someone identifies signs and symptoms that may indicate abuse.

These principles are to be followed in all cases of disclosure or alleged abuse:

If you receive a disclosure or an allegation is made to you including concerns around online activity the following steps should be taken:

Respond

- Do not promise to keep it a secret
- Do not react – try not to show shock, disgust or disbelief
- Listen patiently and closely
- Only seek to clarify essentials – what, where, when, who
- Do not question the service-user about the incident – do not ask leading questions (any further questioning by staff could affect the validity of any statement collected by police at a later date).
- Do not make promises about the future or statements that are incorrect.

Assist

- If necessary, ensure the service-user receives medical treatment.
- Seek to ensure the service-users safety.
- Always encourage and allow the service-users to take any next steps on their own.
- Provide appropriate support to the service-user's needs and agree a course of action.

Preserve

- Do not confront the alleged perpetrator.
- If the abuse happened recently do not allow any access to any place where the abuse may have occurred.
- Look after any items given to you – place them in a clean plastic bag.

Record

- Record what you see and what you are told as soon as possible or during the disclosure if appropriate – include the person's wishes about what action to take
- Use the alleged victims own words.
- Cross out mistakes, do not use correction fluid.
- All notes should be timed, dated and signed, with name printed alongside the signature, by the member of staff making the notes.

Report

In the case of a disclosure:

- Report to the DSP, Safeguarding Practitioner, Safeguarding Co-ordinator or a Deputy Safeguarding Person **within 2hrs**.
- In the absence of the DSP, Safeguarding Practitioner, Safeguarding Co-ordinator or a Deputy Safeguarding Person, report the matter to the on-call senior manager within 2hrs **if** you believe the on-call senior manager may need to take some action.
- If you believe some action may be needed and the DSP, Safeguarding Practitioner, Safeguarding Co-ordinator or a Deputy Safeguarding Person or on-call senior manager cannot be contacted report to **<u>any</u>** other senior manager.
- Complete a Significant Event Form.
- The form must be submitted within 24 hours and will be picked up by the DSP, Safeguarding Practitioner, Safeguarding Co-ordinator or a Deputy Safeguarding Person.

- Pass any notes or other record made of the disclosure to the DSL, Safeguarding Practitioner, Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy Safeguarding Person.

In the case of an allegation (a complaint against a member of staff including Agency and Supply Teachers):

Report **within 2 hours** to:

- Hayley Warren: Safeguarding Co-ordinator or
- Marina Wheale: Head of Safeguarding/DSP or
- Michelle Hutchesson: Safeguarding Practitioner or
- John Mann: Deputy Safeguarding Person
- In the absence of any of the above, report the matter to the on-call senior manager.
- If none of the above can be contacted, **report to any other senior manager**.
- **Where the allegation is against** the Designated Safeguarding Person, Deputy Safeguarding Person, Safeguarding Practitioner or the on-call manager and another of the above is not available, **report to any other senior manager**.

If you witness abuse including concerns around online activity:

- Seek to ensure the service-user's safety, without endangering yourself
- If necessary, seek medical assistance for the person.
- Report to the DSP, Safeguarding Practitioner, Co-ordinator a Deputy Safeguarding Person, on-call manager or other senior manager immediately.
- If necessary, contact the police – where someone is at severe risk of harm dial 999.
- Seek to ensure the victim has no contact with the alleged abuser. It may be necessary to inform other staff on duty that there has been an incident, but information passed to them must be kept to a minimum.

If you have concern that abuse is occurring or has or may have occurred:

- Discuss concerns with the DSP, Safeguarding Practitioner, Safeguarding Co-ordinator or a Deputy Safeguarding Person as soon as possible, or in their absence with the on-call manager **if** you believe the on-call senior manager may need to take some action.

The Victim's Wishes

When considering what action to take and what provision should be made to protect the service-user following a disclosure or a concern being raised, their wishes and feelings should be considered (where appropriate) when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Service-users should know that their concerns will be treated seriously and that they can safely express their views.

Staff must not promise confidentiality and must always act in the interests of the victim.

Note: In the case of an allegation, National Star must take action regardless of the victim's wishes.

Parent / Carer Communication

Any service-user that raises or is involved in a safeguarding concern who has capacity, will be offered appropriate support to decide whom they wish to be informed (i.e. parents / carers).

In the event of a safeguarding concern, parents / carers of service-users who lack capacity will be contacted at the earliest, most appropriate time - unless the parent / carer is directly implicated in the concern. Communication with parents / carers will be regular, open and transparent.

Where a parent / carer holds Deputyship i.e. Health & Welfare / Property and Affairs, information will be shared in accordance with the appropriate authorisation.

Confidentiality

National Star will work on a need-to-know basis. However, depending on the nature of the abuse and the action that may need to be taken the following people may be involved:

- The DSP, Safeguarding Practitioner, Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Person
- Human Resources Department
- The Local Authority Safeguarding Team or Local Authority Designated Officer
- The victim's social worker or Social Services teams
- The police

Depending on the circumstances other key staff may be informed; these could include:

- Nursing team / GP
- Service-user's Key Worker
- Other members of the Senior Management team
- Residential manager and key residential staff
- Counselling / psychology staff

Where a member of staff is the alleged abuser:

- The Human Resources Department
- The member of staff's representative (usually from the union)

All National Star staff are bound by National Star's policy on confidentiality; however, the needs and wellbeing of the person will take precedence over issues of confidentiality. On this basis, National Star reserves the right in certain circumstances to inform outside

agencies even when permission has not been given by the service-user or their parent or guardian.

Sharing Information with other Agencies

The right to confidentiality is not absolute. Sharing relevant information with the right people at the right time is vital to good safeguarding practice.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 **do not** prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping people safe.

- It is inappropriate to give assurances of absolute confidentiality in cases where there is a concern regarding abuse and neglect, particularly when there may be others at risk.
- Confidentiality **must not** be confused with secrecy.
- Sharing information is necessary to protect children, young people and adults at risk at risk of abuse or neglect.
- Early sharing of information is key to providing an effective response.
- No professional should assume that someone else will pass on information.
- Informed consent must be obtained, however if this is not possible or will put the person or others at risk, it may be necessary to override this.

Raising alerts of abuse or concerns of abuse

When a disclosure or allegation of abuse or cause for concern is reported within National Star, The Safeguarding Team will:

- Consider if an alert should be made to the appropriate Safeguarding Team or relevant police force
- Report to the police where a concern could potentially lead to wilful neglect or ill treatment of someone who lacks capacity. This includes all concerns regarding care and support needs.
- Be directed by and work with the appropriate Local Authority Safeguarding Team or relevant police force to ensure an open and thorough investigation of the disclosure or allegation.

The ‘appropriate Local Authority Safeguarding Team’ or ‘relevant police force’ is the service responsible for the geographical area in which the alleged or suspected abuse occurred.

Note: it is mandatory to report any suspected abuse involving a child or young person under the age of 18 years.

Service-users may on occasions find themselves in situations that they are not comfortable with or may later regret. The result of these encounters, which may be physical, sexual or emotional, may not technically be termed as abuse or appear to cause significant harm. When incidents of this nature arise, the DSP, Safeguarding Practitioner, Safeguarding Co-ordinator or a Deputy Safeguarding Person will inform the

Local Authority Safeguarding Team and gather evidence if necessary in order to make a judgement about the most appropriate action to take.

Prevention of Abuse

National Star firmly believes in prevention and early identification of abuse or its precedents. To this end National Star promote a safe and open culture.

National Star uses the following systems to support the prevention of abuse:

- Respectful and non-abusive cultures
- Systems and structures within the workplace
- Person-centred care plans, needs and risk assessments and Key Worker/PLC relationships
- Inducting new staff
- Team meetings
- Advocacy and the empowerment of service-users
- Supervision and ongoing training of staff
- Handovers and reviews

Supporting service-users and staff following a disclosure or allegation

The organisation can provide support to service-users who make a disclosure or allegation and staff who assist service-users when they do so to cope with the psychological effects.

Service-users will be offered counselling through the Emotional Wellbeing Service.

All allegations will be investigated and where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation information will be shared with them when appropriate. At this time, they will be offered support through the Human Resources Team, Occupational Health and, if a member, through Westfield Health.

Professional Disagreement

If you have reported a concern, the Safeguarding Team should keep you informed as far as possible about developments and the outcome of the investigation of your concern.

If you do not consider the concern has been satisfactorily investigated or you disagree with the conclusion of the investigation, in the first instance speak with the Designated Safeguarding Person or Deputy DSP. If after this discussion you remain unsatisfied, speak with the Director or Head of your service area who will take the matter forward on your behalf.

Children in Care (CIC)

The relevant departmental manager is responsible for National Star students who are Children in Care and will ensure; the educational achievement of Children in Care is promoted; appropriate staff have the information they need about the Child in Care's legal status and contact and care arrangements. Details of the Child in Care's Social Worker will be available on StarData. Where possible, the Safeguarding team will hold confidential safeguarding information regarding the Child in Care.

Deputyship

Where a parent / carer holds Deputyship i.e. Health & Welfare / Property and Affairs for a National Star service-user, relevant information in accordance with the appropriate authorisation and terms of the order will only be provided at the prior request of the Deputy.

National Star should not have direct access to client funds such as receiving benefits/pension or any other sort of income. The organisation recognises that the Deputy is the only person legally authorised to directly manage service-user funds.

Where National Star is left with service-user funds to provide personal allowance for the service-user, the organisation will clearly document the use of these funds and provide relevant information as and when requested by the Deputy, so they are able to present a clear annual report to the Office of the Public Guardian.

Children Missing / Absent from Education

All staff should be aware that children and young people going missing or absent from education, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, familial and extra-familial abuse, sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage.

Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and the help prevent the risks of a child or young person going missing in future.

Where reasonably possible, the relevant departmental manager should hold more than one emergency contact number for each service-user. This goes beyond the legal minimum but is good practice.

The relevant departmental manager is responsible for monitoring the attendance of National Star students to identify and respond to a concern that a child is missing from education.

All staff should adhere to National Star's Missing Child / Young Person's Protocol.

Early Help

For children and young people, early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, including teenage years.

Any child or young person may benefit from Early Help, but all staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for Early Help for a child who:

- Is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
- Has a mental health need
- Is a young carer
- Shows signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- Is frequently absent or missing from education, home or care
- Has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit.
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- Has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- Is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- Is at risk of so-called ‘honour’-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- Is a privately fostered child

Where a concern is raised for a child, National Star will follow the guidance to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children contained in Working Together to Safeguard People (2022 version).

Safeguarding procedures in other areas of National Star work

- National Star Extended Projects
- LIFT Project
- National Star staff working with external groups
- Others working in association with the College

Where a member of staff working with service-users from schools or other colleges or with other service-users is made aware of an existing safeguarding issue they should inform the DSP or Deputy Safeguarding Person.

Notification to Funding Authorities

The funding authority of a service-user subject to a safeguarding concern that involves another service-user of National Star, or a member of National Star staff, must be informed of the issue within 24hrs of it coming to the attention of National Star.

The DSP, Safeguarding Practitioner, Deputy Safeguarding Person or on-call senior manager will pass relevant details to National Star's Funding Co-ordinator who will make the report to the funding authority.

Notification to the Care & Social Services Inspectorate (Wales) (CSSIW)

National Star must inform the CSSIW without delay of the occurrence of:

- The death of any service-user
- Serious injury to a service-user
- Abuse or allegations of abuse involving a service-user
- Incidents reported to or investigated by the police

The relevant Registered Manager is responsible for making the notification and must be informed of an incident involving the above.

Referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 place a duty on employers of people working with children or adults at risk (adults at risk) to make a referral to the DBS when an employer has dismissed or removed a person from working with children or adults at risk (or would or may have if the person had not left or resigned etc.) even if the person's future employment was not in regulated activity, because the person has:

- Been cautioned or convicted for a relevant offence; or
- Engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children and/or adults at risk at risk [i.e. an action or inaction (neglect) that has harmed a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm]; or
- Satisfied the Harm Test in relation to children and/or adults at risk at risk. [i.e. there has been no relevant conduct (i.e. no action or inaction) but a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult still exists].

Relevant offence:

A relevant offence is a serious offence that will, subject to consideration of representations where permitted, automatically bar a person from working with children or adults at risk at risk.

Relevant conduct is conduct (an action or inaction / neglect) that:

- Endangers a child / vulnerable adult or is likely to endanger a child / vulnerable adult. A person's conduct endangers a child / vulnerable adult if they:
    - Harm a child / vulnerable adult
    - Cause a child / vulnerable adult to be harmed
    - Put a child / vulnerable adult at risk of harm

- Attempt to harm a child / vulnerable adult
- Incite another to harm a child / vulnerable adult
- If repeated, against or in relation to a child / vulnerable adult would endanger the child / vulnerable adult or be likely to endanger the child / vulnerable adult
- Involves sexual material relating to children (including possession of such material)
- Involves sexually explicit images depicting violence against human beings (including possession of such images)
- Is of a sexual nature involving a child / vulnerable adult

The harm test:

A person satisfies the harm test if they may have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child / vulnerable adult or may have harmed a child / vulnerable adult.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child / vulnerable adult
- Behaved towards a child / vulnerable adult in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children or adults at risk at risk

DBS Referral Procedure:

- If National Star is made aware an employee has been convicted of a relevant offence the DSP must be advised to consider a referral to the DBS as soon as possible, even if the person is not seeking employment in regulated activity.
- Before making other referrals to DBS, National Star will:

Follow the safeguarding procedures set out above including informing the police and / or making an alert to the appropriate LADO or Adult Safeguarding Service.

- Undertake an investigation to establish if the allegation has foundation.
- Where an allegation has foundation, gather evidence to support the allegation.
- Review the evidence to decide if the criteria for making a referral to the DBS has been met. The DSP and a member of the Human Resources Team will be responsible for conducting the review.
- Provide DBS with supporting evidence of the referral.
- As far as possible, complete the investigations even if the person has left National Star employment.
- If additional relevant information becomes available after making a referral, provide this to the DBS.

- A member of the Human Resources Team will make the referral to DBS on behalf of National Star.

Maintaining Records

The DSP and Safeguarding Practitioner are responsible for maintaining records relating to safeguarding issues that are reported in the organisation.

The records will be kept in a secure location and confidentiality will be maintained.

To comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 the records will be accurate, relevant and secure and there will be justification for holding the information. Information will be shared but only where appropriate and in compliance with the Act.

Training

National Star acknowledges the value of staff training in supporting a respectful and non-abusive culture and in the identification of abuse.

Everyone joining National Star, in a paid or unpaid capacity, will undergo an induction which will involve an explanation of the Safeguarding policy and the Guidance for Safer Working Practice (Code of Conduct), and an introduction to the DSP and Deputy DSP.

All National Star staff will attend training during induction on the identification and prevention of abuse, action in case of a disclosure and reporting and recording (Foundation training) and in Safer Working Practice and Boundaries. In addition, all residential staff will undertake induction and foundation training in accordance with Skills for Care Standards.

All National Star staff will receive refresher training every three years.

The DSP, Safeguarding Practitioner, Deputy Safeguarding Person, Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Designated Governor for Safeguarding will undertake relevant Safeguarding Multi-Agency training for both Children and Adults at risk every 2 years.

Review of Safeguarding

Staff / Team Meetings

Safeguarding will be a standing item on the agenda at all staff/team meetings/S&D's/1:1's.

The chair of the meeting will be responsible for ensuring that:

- If a safeguarding concern regarding a service-user is raised by a member of staff at the meeting a report of the concern is made to the DSP or Safeguarding Practitioner.
- Any matters raised regarding safeguarding, such as risks that have been identified or suggested changes to safeguarding procedure are passed to the DSP.

The Safeguarding Strategy Group

The Safeguarding Strategy Group will take an overview of the organisation's safeguarding strategy as informed by the work of the Safeguarding Operational Group, changes in legislation and developments in safeguarding practice to ensure that the Organisation meets its commitment and duty in relation to safeguarding.

The group meet once each term.

The group is made up of the Governor Safeguarding representative, Chief Executive Officer, DSP and senior members of staff from the organisation.

The Safeguarding Operational Group

The Safeguarding Operational Group is made up of relevant operational heads of department and is a forum to consider safeguarding requirements at an operational level, discuss relevant case studies to inform next steps, lessons learned and disseminate good practice and significant legislative information to teams. This group actively feeds into the Safeguarding Strategy Group.

The group meet once each term.

Contact numbers and further information

To Report a Safeguarding Concern:

safeguarding@nationalstar.org
Teams: Safeguarding
Out of Hours: On-call Manager

To Report an Adult at Risk:

Blaenau Gwent
Tel: 01495 315700
Email: DutyTeamAdults at risk@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Caerphilly
Tel: 0808 1002500
Email: povateam@caerphilly.gov.uk or IAAAdults at risk@caerphilly.gov.uk

Torfaen
Tel: 01495 762200
Email: socialcarecalltorfaen@torfaen.gov.uk

Newport
Tel: 01633 656656
Email: firstcontact.adults at risk@newport.gov.uk or pova.team@newport.gov.uk

Monmouthshire
Tel: 01291 638928
Email: MCCadults at riskafeguarding@monmouthshire.gov.uk

If it is an emergency and you need to make contact outside of office hours, please call the Emergency Duty Team on 0800 3284432

To Report a Child at Risk:

Blaenau Gwent
Tel: 01495 315700
Email: DutyTeam@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Caerphilly
Tel: 0808 1001727
Email: contactandreferral@caerphilly.gov.uk

Torfaen
Tel: 01495 762200
Email: socialcarecalltorfaen@torfaen.gov.uk

Newport
Tel: 01633 656656
Email: children.duty@newport.gov.uk

Monmouthshire
Tel: 01291 635669
Email: ChildDuty@monmouthshire.gov.uk

If it is an emergency and you need to make contact outside of office hours, please call the South East Wales Emergency Duty Team on 0800 3284432

Police – **999 / 101**

Disclosure and Barring Service - **0300 0200 190** - customerservices@dbs.gsi.gov.uk

Procedures for DSP/on-call managers in relation to disclosures or causes for concern for National Star service-users

Where a child or adult at risk is in serious danger contact the emergency services via 999 immediately to seek urgent assistance.

Under 18:
On receiving report of disclosure or other cause for child welfare concern -
Alert a social work practitioner in the appropriate Local Authority Safeguarding Team and seek further advice if required.

Alerts should be made immediately where the concern is about physical or sexual abuse, immediate danger to the victim or another or has been reported to the police
Other matters should be reported within 24 hours.

Referrals and concerns should be using the relevant contact details above.

Note: In line with good practice, the referrer should usually, but not exclusively, (and not where this will place the young person at increased risk of significant harm) discuss the matter with the family of a young person and where possible seek their agreement to the referral.

18 years and over:
On receiving report of disclosure or other cause for concern for an adult at risk –
Alert a social work practitioner in the appropriate Local Authority Safeguarding Team and seek further advice if required.

Alerts should be made immediately where the concern involves sexual abuse, serious physical abuse, immediate danger to the victim or another or has been reported to the police.

Other matters should be reported within 24 hours.

Referrals and concerns should be using the relevant contact details above.

Procedure for Senior Manager / Governor with Safeguarding Responsibilities in the case of an allegation or concern about the behaviour of a member of staff (including agency staff, governor, contractor or volunteer)

If an allegation or a concern is received that a member of staff working or volunteering with a service-user has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a service-user, or may have harmed a service-user;

or

- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a service-user;

or

- behaved towards a service-user or service-users in a way that indicates that person would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with vulnerable people;

Regardless of where the alleged abuse took place; the Allegations Management Procedures must be implemented.

Note: If it is decided by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or Adult Safeguarding Team that a Strategy Meeting is to be called the Organisation should **not** carry out an investigation until the Strategy Meeting has taken place.

The most senior person not implicated in the allegation with responsibility for Allegation Management or if the complaint is against the Chief Executive Officer, the Governor with Safeguarding responsibilities must be immediately contacted.

They should:

- If a serious criminal offence is suspected inform the police
  and / or
- Ensure a written record is completed

- Inform the Local Authority Designated Office for Allegations (LADO) using the relevant contact details above
- Adult Safeguarding Team using the relevant contact details above
- Follow the advice given by the LADO or Adult Safeguarding Team

The LADO / Adult Safeguarding Team and senior person/governor will decide if the allegation meets the criteria for a strategy meeting based on whether the member of staff has:

- Behaved inappropriately in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a service-user; or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a service-user; or
- Behaved towards a service-user in a way that indicates he / she is unsuitable to work with children / young people or adults at risk at risk

Where an allegation is made against another person not a member of staff, governor, volunteer or contractor at the organisation, but who the college has reason to believe is a person who works or is a volunteer with children or adults at risk at risk, then the college will inform the LADO or Adult Safeguarding Team.

Disciplinary Procedure

The senior person/governor will take advice from the LADO or Adult Safeguarding Team, however, where there is reasonable suspicion that the allegation is serious and the outcome of an investigation could result in the action being gross misconduct, the organisation will consider suspending the member of staff in accordance with its disciplinary procedures.

Staff suspension is not in itself a disciplinary action and will be used for the following reasons:

- To protect the service-user or others from possible further abuse
- To allow a full investigation without the danger of influence by the member of staff
- To protect the member of staff from further allegations

National Star recognises that this can be a very uncomfortable experience for the member of staff involved and will seek to support that member of staff either through the Human Resources department, Occupational Health Department, if a member, Westfield Health or if appropriate an external agency.

Staff are reminded that a member of staff who is suspended is not guilty of anything at that stage, neither should they discuss the issues with others in the organisation. This should be respected and staff returning from suspension should be supported and treated professionally.

The organisation has a statutory duty to refer the individual to the Disclosure and Barring Service where it withdraws permission for an individual to engage in regulated activity, or would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred to a position which is not regulated activity because they think that the individual has engaged in relevant conduct, satisfied the Harm Test or received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence.

The DSP will be responsible for ensuring the Organisation meets this duty.

Staff with responsibility for Allegations Management:

- Marina Wheale – Head of Safeguarding/DSP
- Lynette Barrett – Chief Executive Officer
- Rachel Harber – Director of People

Governor with responsibility for Allegations Management:

- Nikki Richardson - Chair of Governors

Reviewed by Marina Wheale – September 2025