



Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure

Love, Amelia has a safeguarding lead who is the responsible person for reporting abuse and neglect to the appropriate agency.

In addition, a member of our trustee board has the responsibility of overseeing safeguarding of our charity, including reporting of concerns to the Charity Commission for England and Wales, and making decisions on safeguarding matters involving our staff and volunteers, or children and adults at risk.

- Steph Capewell, Chief Executive, is Safeguarding Lead for Love, Amelia. Steph can be reached on 07394878432 or via email to steph@loveamelia.org.uk.
- Jen Archbold, trustee, is board of trustees safeguarding lead. Jen can be reached at jen@loveamelia.org.uk

Love, Amelia acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance, and complies with best practice.

This policy is mandatory to all paid staff and volunteers at Love, Amelia, including the board of trustees. This policy also applies to anyone who is working on behalf of Love, Amelia.

The policy aims to ensure that all aspects of Love, Amelia's activities are conducted in a manner that prioritises the safety and welfare of children. Love, Amelia believes that every child, regardless of age, disability, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or socio-economic background, has the right to equal protection from abuse and neglect. We acknowledge that some children are especially vulnerable, due to disability, communication needs, impact of previous experiences and trauma, level of dependency and other challenges. This principle guides all our interactions and activities, ensuring that every child involved with Love, Amelia receives equal safeguarding protection and has the opportunity to participate safely and fully in our activities.

Our responsibilities

Love, Amelia operates in an environment where safeguarding children is a collective responsibility, although there are no specific mandatory regulations in the UK requiring staff and volunteers to report concerns of child abuse directly to authorities. However, the

importance of vigilance and response cannot be understated, guided by expectations set out in both legislation and national guidance.

Under Sections 11 and 12 of the Children Act 2004, there is a statutory duty placed upon various agencies, including charitable organisations, to cooperate in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Love, Amelia can come into contact with children as part of our day-to-day operations. In some circumstances, this is incidental, such as an adult bringing their child when collecting or donating items.

Paragraphs 15 and 16 of the introduction to the government guidance 'Working together to safeguard children' state that "Everyone who works with children - including teachers, GPs, nurses, midwives, health visitors, early years professionals, youth workers, police, Accident and Emergency staff, paediatricians, voluntary and community workers and social workers - has a responsibility for keeping them safe".

In accordance with Regulatory and Risk Framework, the Charity Commission for England and Wales can hold trustees to account check that trustees followed their guidance and the law. The Charity Commission can look at how trustees have acted to protect beneficiaries, staff, volunteers and anyone else who comes into contact with Love, Amelia.

Definition of Safeguarding and Child Protection

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding is a broad term, and NSPCC definition includes:

- protecting children from abuse and maltreatment.
- preventing harm to children's health or development.
- providing support to meet children's needs when problems emerge.
- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care, within their family where possible.
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.

Definitions and Types of Abuse

Any child or young person can experience abuse or neglect. They may experience harm in a family environment, or in an institution or community setting such as a school or club. They may know the person who is abusing them or, more rarely, experience abuse from a stranger. Abuse can happen in person or online, or through a combination of the two.

Children can also experience more than one type of abuse, and this can have serious and long-lasting impacts on their lives. Child abuse can take a number of forms, below is a summary of the main types of child abuse. Additional information on signs and symptoms

<p>Physical abuse</p>	<p>Physical abuse is defined as deliberately hurting a child and causing physical harm. Physical abuse includes injuries such as, bruises, broken bones, burns, and cuts.</p> <p>It may involve, hitting, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, any other method of causing non-accidental harm to a child.</p>
<p>Sexual abuse</p>	<p>Child sexual abuse is when a child is forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities. This may involve physical contact or non-contact activities and can happen online or offline.</p> <p>Contact abuse involves activities where an abuser makes physical contact with a child, including sexual touching of any part of the body, whether the child is wearing clothes or not, forcing or encouraging a child to take part in sexual activity, making a child take their clothes off or touch someone else's genitals, rape or penetration by putting an object or body part inside a child's mouth, vagina or anus.</p> <p>Non-contact abuse involves activities where there is no physical contact. It includes flashing at a child, encouraging or forcing a child to watch or hear sexual acts, not taking proper measures to prevent a child being exposed to sexual activities by others, making a child masturbate while others watch, persuading a child to make, view or distribute child abuse images (such as performing sexual acts over the internet, sexting or showing pornography to a child), making, viewing or distributing child abuse images, allowing someone else to make, view or distribute child abuse images, meeting a child following grooming with the intent of abusing them (even if abuse did not take place), sexually exploiting a child for money, power or status (child sexual exploitation).</p>
<p>Sexual exploitation</p>	<p>Child sexual exploitation is a type 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</p>
<p>Emotional abuse / Psychological abuse</p>	<p>Emotional abuse is the ongoing emotional maltreatment of a child, which can have a severe and persistent negative effect on the child's emotional health and development. It's also known as</p>

	psychological abuse. Exposing a child to aggression, cruelty or abuse between others is also a form of emotional abuse.
Neglect	Neglect is not meeting a child's basic physical and psychological needs. It is a form of child abuse that can have serious and long-lasting impacts on a child's life - it can cause serious harm and even death.
Domestic abuse	Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between people who are, or who have been in a relationship, regardless of gender or sexuality. It can also happen between adults who are related to one another. Domestic abuse always has an impact on children. Being exposed to domestic abuse in childhood is child abuse. Children and young people may experience domestic abuse both directly and indirectly.
Online abuse	Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen across any device that's connected to the web, like computers, tablets and mobile phones. And it can happen anywhere online, including social media, text messages and messaging apps, emails, online chats, online gaming, live-streaming sites.
Bullying and cyber bullying	Bullying is when individuals or groups seek to harm, intimidate or coerce someone who is perceived to be vulnerable. It can involve people of any age, and can happen anywhere – at home, school or using online platforms and technologies (cyberbullying). This means it can happen at any time.
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It's also known as female circumcision or cutting. FGM is often performed by someone with no medical training who uses instruments such as a knife, scalpel, scissors, glass, or razor blade. Children are rarely given anaesthetic or antiseptic treatment and are often forcibly restrained.
Child trafficking and modern slavery	Child trafficking is child abuse. It's defined as recruiting, moving, receiving, and harbouring children for the purpose of exploitation. Child trafficking is a form of modern slavery.

Screening of staff and volunteers

Love, Amelia upholds a strict screening process for all staff, volunteers, and trustees to ensure the safety of the children we serve. This involves conducting Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all eligible individuals. Depending on the level of interaction with vulnerable groups, we require either a standard or enhanced DBS check, and in cases

where roles do not qualify for these levels, we may opt for a basic check to cover any unspent convictions.

Alongside DBS checks, we also require references for each candidate to further verify their suitability for working with children. No one is allowed to start their role until the results from both DBS checks and references have been satisfactorily reviewed. Specifically, any applicant with an unspent conviction for a sexual offence against a child or adult at risk is automatically disqualified from employment, volunteering, or being appointed to the board of trustees. Other convictions are considered on an individual basis, taking into account the nature of the offence, the relevance to the role, the time elapsed since the offence, and any other relevant circumstances.

Supervision and training

To uphold our commitment to safeguarding, Love, Amelia provides comprehensive induction training for all new staff and volunteers. This training ensures they are well-versed in good safeguarding practices, aligned with our service's core values and the importance of confidentiality. Additionally, we conduct regular supervision to monitor and support our staff and volunteers, assessing their ongoing training needs to ensure their knowledge remains current and effective.

Love, Amelia offers various training opportunities in safeguarding, which include internal policy awareness sessions, briefing sessions conducted by local authorities or other relevant bodies, and participation in training programs offered through partner agencies. This multi-faceted approach to training enables our team to stay informed on best practices and legislative changes, ensuring that they are equipped to provide a safe and supportive environment for all children we engage with.

Reporting staff, volunteers, and trustees

We take any safeguarding concerns regarding our staff, volunteers, and trustees very seriously. Should a situation arise where a member of our team is moved or dismissed due to actions or inactions arising from safeguarding concerns, we will inform the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and adhere to their guidance for such cases.

Although our operations do not primarily involve direct services to children, we are vigilant about any allegations that could impact child safety. In accordance with Working Together 2018, where it is alleged that a team member or volunteer has behaved in a way that has harmed or might harm a child, committed a possible criminal offence against a child, or behaved in a manner suggesting they may pose a risk of harm to children or be unsuitable to work with children, we will immediately contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and inform the Charity Commission for England and Wales. This ensures that all potential risks are managed according to legal requirements and best practices in safeguarding.

Safeguarding Procedure

Serious and imminent risk

If a staff member, trustee, or volunteer believe a child is in serious and imminent risk, or where there is threat to life, contact 999 immediately. Remain calm and advise the operator of the emergency.

Once 999 has been called and the immediate danger has been addressed, the staff member, trustee or volunteer involved must inform the Safeguarding Lead at Love, Amelia of the incident and the actions taken.

If the Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, the Board Safeguarding Lead should be contacted immediately.

The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring that a 'Safeguarding Concerns Recording Form' (found in Appendix 1 of this policy) is completed, detailing the nature of the incident and any interventions made. This document must be stored securely in accordance with the Love, Amelia Data Protection Policy, ensuring the confidentiality and safety of all information related to the incident.

Reporting a concern

There are instances where abuse might be suspected even though a child has not explicitly disclosed being abused. Children may not report abuse for various reasons (e.g. they might not recognise the abusive behaviour, they could be scared or believe they won't be believed, or barriers such as young age, language differences, or physical or mental disabilities may prevent them from communicating their experience).

Love, Amelia have a professional and moral obligation to act on any observed or suspected signs of abuse. Safeguarding concerns can be raised at any time and this procedure should be followed in all instances. Where the risk does not warrant an immediate call to 999 (or where a risk remains once the emergency has been dealt with), the following guidelines should be followed to ensure appropriate and sensitive handling of the situation:

Identify the issue: The safeguarding issue may be the result of a direct allegation of abuse made by a child or an adult, an allegation by a third party, a staff member or volunteer seeing or hearing something that prompts a concern.

Listen carefully: Give the child your full attention and do not display shock or disbelief. Allow the child to share their story in their own time and way, without pressing them for more information than they are willing to give.

Reassure the child: Let them know they did the right thing by telling you, affirm that it's not their fault, and assure them of their safety.

Avoid making promises: Avoid promising the child that you will keep the information confidential. Explain gently that you need to tell someone who can help. Avoid making promises about outcomes, such as promising that things will be resolved quickly or that everything will be okay. Focus on assuring the child that they have done the right thing in telling someone.

Do not investigate: Ask only enough questions to understand the context; do not probe or investigate—that is the role of trained professionals.

Do not confront the alleged abuser: It is critical not to confront the person who is suspected of abuse. This could lead to further harm to the child, jeopardise any potential enquiry, and put you at risk.

Do not discuss the matter widely: Only share the information with people who absolutely need to know, such as the designated safeguarding lead and emergency services. Avoid discussing the situation in an open setting or with individuals who do not have a safeguarding role.

Understand consent: If there are concerns about a child, it may not always be appropriate to obtain consent from the child or their caregiver to report the concern. This is particularly important if there are concerns that seeking consent could put the child in more danger.

Contacting the Safeguarding Lead

When you contact the Safeguarding Lead it would be helpful for them if you were able to advise them of the following:

Identifying Information:

- Name, date of birth, and contact details of the person at risk, if known.
- Address and local authority area where the person resides.
- Name, date of birth, and contact details of the alleged / suspected perpetrator
- Name and contact details of representative, if applicable.

Specific Concerns:

- Detail the specific concerns regarding the person at risk.
- Note any additional needs or disabilities the person may have, and if applicable, similar information about anyone responsible for their care.
- Indicate the first language of the person at risk and, if relevant, their parent or caregiver.
- Mention any current or past involvement with social services or any other professional agency.

Details of the Incident:

- Date and time of the observation or disclosure.

- Location and nature of the disclosure or observation.
- Identify who raised the concern and their relationship to the person at risk.
- Describe what was seen or heard that raised concerns.
- Identify any other witnesses who were present at the time.

Assessment of Risk:

- Provide your perspective on the likelihood of the risk materialising.
- Assess the potential impact if the concern does materialise.

it is crucial that staff, trustees, or volunteers contact the Safeguarding Lead without delay, even if not all above information is not available. The urgency of reporting takes precedence, and lack of complete information should not delay communication.

The information generally requested forms the basis of the 'Safeguarding Concerns Recording Form' (Appendix 1). This form is designed to capture critical details that are instrumental in assessing and addressing the concern effectively. Where possible staff, trustees, or volunteers should use this form to record their thoughts and concerns. However, if the formal recording form is not accessible at the moment a concern arises, it is imperative that staff, trustees, or volunteers make written notes detailing their observations and concerns as accurately as possible. These notes are vital for conveying the nature of the concern to the Safeguarding Lead and ensuring that no crucial details are overlooked or forgotten. Handwritten notes should be kept securely on file in accordance with our data protection and confidentiality policies.

Action of the Safeguarding Lead

The responsibility to determine whether a reported safeguarding concern meets the necessary threshold for further action rests with the Safeguarding Lead. In their absence, this decision will be made by the Board Safeguarding Lead, or, if neither is available, by the most senior member of the team. The following steps and considerations guide the decision-making process:

Assessment of Information: The Safeguarding Lead will carefully consider all information provided by the individual raising the concern, focusing on the specific reasons for their worries.

Child-Centred Decision Making: Central to all decisions is the safety and welfare of the child. Each action taken must prioritise the child's best interests.

Handling Internal Concerns: If the concern involves a staff member, trustee or volunteer, the Safeguarding Lead may consider suspending the individual pending a thorough investigation to ensure objectivity and safety.

Seeking External Advice: Although not mandatory, the Safeguarding Lead has the option to consult externally, such as with the NSPCC Helpline (0808 800 5000), for guidance on whether the concern meets the reporting threshold. In these interactions, the identity of the involved parties remains confidential, while the nature of the concern is discussed openly to seek appropriate advice.

Decision Making: Following the initial assessment and any external consultation, the Safeguarding Lead evaluates all available information, including advice received from specialists if applicable. A decision is then made on whether to formally report the concern.

Documentation: The outcome of this decision, whether the concern is escalated or not, must be documented meticulously on the Safeguarding Concerns Recording Form.

Record Keeping: A centralised record of all safeguarding concerns is maintained by the Safeguarding Lead to ensure transparency and accountability. Records will be stored securely in line with Love, Amelia Record Keeping and Retention Policy and Data Protection Policy.

CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Together For Children – Sunderland City Council Children’s Services

0191 520 5560 (Monday to Thursday 8:30am - 5pm, Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm)

0191 520 5552 (Out of Hours including Saturday and Sunday)

Sunderland LADO - designatedofficer@togetherforchildren.org.uk.

South Tyneside Children’s Services:

0191 424 5010 (Monday to Thursday 8:30am - 5pm, Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm)

0191 456 2093 (Out of Hours including Saturday and Sunday)

South Tyneside LADO – lado@southtyneside.gov.uk

Newcastle Children’s Services

0191 277 2500 (Monday to Friday 8:45am - 5pm)

0191 278 7878 (Out of Hours including Saturday and Sunday)

Newcastle LADO – lado@newcastle.gov.uk

North Tyneside Children’s Services

0345 200 0109 (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm)

0300 333 7475 (Out of Hours including Saturday and Sunday)

North Tyneside LADO - 0345 2000 109 or online form available at:

<https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/884/local-authority-designated-officer>

Gateshead Council Childrens Services

0191 433 2653 (Monday to Friday 8:30am-5pm)

0191 477 0844 (Out of Hours including Saturday and Sunday and bank holidays)

Gateshead LADO – lado@gateshead.gov.uk

County Durham Children’s Services

03000 267 979 (24 hour service)

Durham LADO - 03000 268835

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

In an emergency always call 999

Access to support

Love, Amelia recognising the emotional impact that identifying safeguarding concerns can have on individuals, and ensures that staff members, trustees, and volunteers are supported throughout the process. It is crucial that those who report safeguarding issues do not feel personally responsible for the outcomes of any actions taken. The Safeguarding Lead is tasked with ensuring that emotional support is readily available. Upon a safeguarding report being filed, the Safeguarding Lead will inform their line manager about the situation. This enables the line manager to provide necessary emotional support to the reporting individual. This approach helps maintain a supportive environment, ensuring that everyone involved is adequately supported and that the focus remains on the wellbeing of those affected by safeguarding concerns.

This policy should be used in conjunction with the following policies/procedures:

- Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary and Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Whistleblowing Policy
- IT policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Confidentiality Policy