



Maidstone Borough Council

Policy for Safeguarding  
Children and Adults at Risk

Version 3.0  
April 2021



Document Purpose:	Guidance
Document Name	Policy for Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk.
Author	Hannah Gaston, Housing & Inclusion Manager and Designated Safeguarding Officer
Target Audience	All staff and Members
Additional Audience	Contractors & commissioned services.
Description	This document sets out the requirements for Maidstone Borough Council to discharge its appropriate accountability to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk.
Action Required	Read and embed Policy into normal practice.

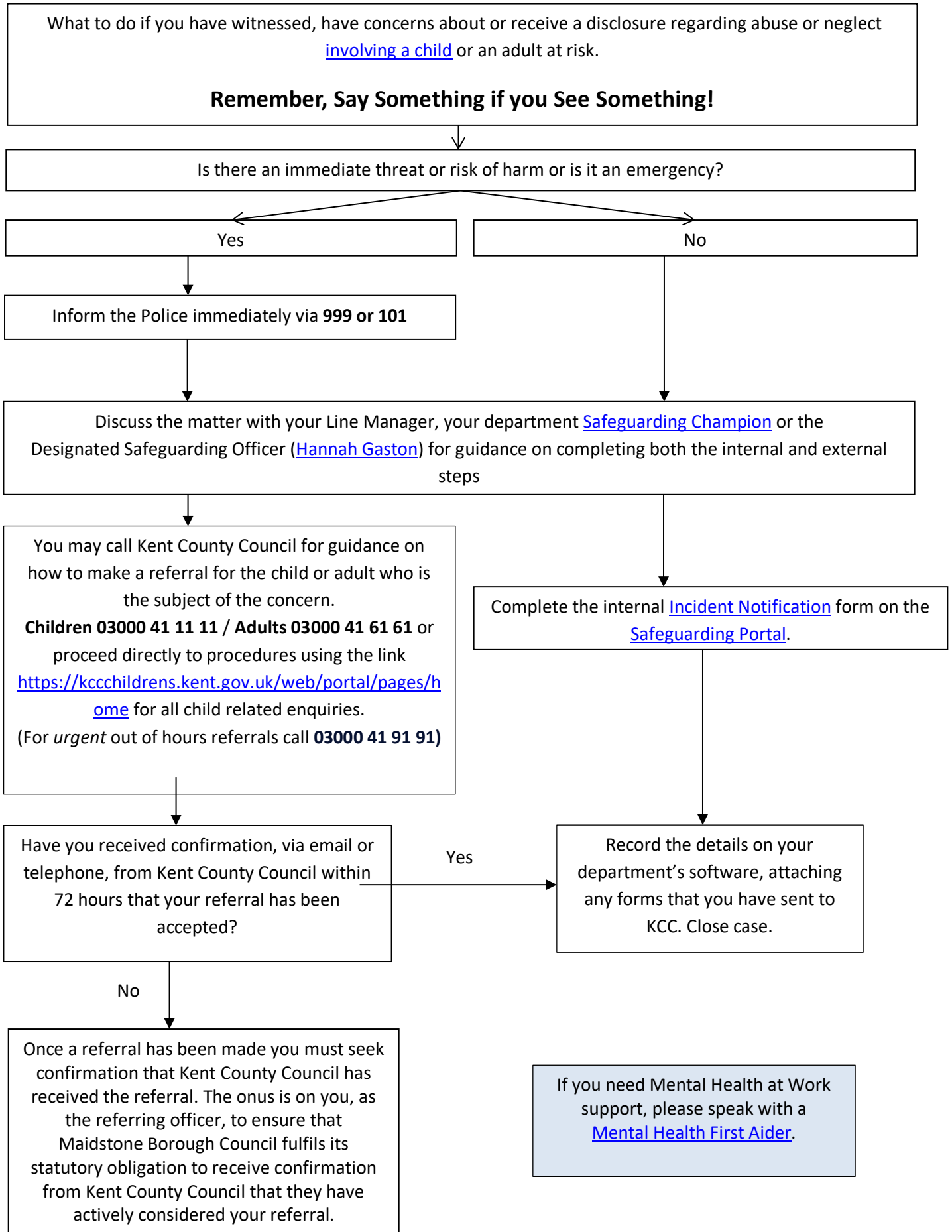
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#### Document Version

Version	Created By	Date	Main Changes
2.0	Matt Roberts	January 2019	New version including guidance on KCC's Integrated Front Door service, Mental Health, Suicide Awareness and Prevention guidance.
3.0	Hannah Gaston	January 2021	New version to accommodate changes within the procedure and staffing Agreed by CHE on 6 <sup>th</sup> April 2021

QUICK VIEW – REFERRAL PROCEDURE



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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This policy sets out Maidstone Borough Council's (MBC) commitment and intent towards its statutory and moral duties to safeguard children and adults who come into contact with its services and activities and ensure that they are protected from harm, exploitation and abuse. It follows the principles of the Kent Safeguarding Children's Board and the Kent & Medway Adult Safeguarding Board.

1.2 It is important that all members of staff, councillors and those operating as part of commissioned services, either at a strategic or operational level, understand that;

**'Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility'**

1.3 So whether you are a permanent member of staff, are on a temporary contract, are a casual or agency worker, volunteer, contractor or an elected Member, everyone carrying out the business of MBC has the same duty to report any witnessed or suspected concerns of abuse or neglect.

1.4 It is not the responsibility of the Council, its employees, elected members or contracted staff to determine whether abuse, neglect or exploitation have or are taking place nor investigate any claims made, rather it is our duty to inform the most appropriate authority. This policy sets out the procedures that must be followed to report a suspicion or allegation to Kent Police or to Kent County Council or to another service in order to meet MBC's responsibility.

### Professional Curiosity

1.5 We ask that you be professionally curious in your role; if something seems out of place or does not feel right then seek to obtain enough information to reassure yourself that all is well. Maintain a good standard of documentation; record what you have seen or heard, be factual and avoid making assumptions. If you make use of paper records then ensure they are stored securely.

1.6 All concerns about safeguarding, and referrals made by MBC to KCC or other agencies and the responses received, need to be recorded centrally on the [Intranet Safeguarding Portal](#) and will be reviewed by the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).

1.7 This policy will be reviewed in line with any changes in legislation, Government guidance and the periodical reviews of the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Policy, Protocols and Guidance.

## 2. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW

2.1 **The Children Act 1989** (as amended) states that every child has a right to protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under the **Children Act 2004** came into force on 1 October 2005.

2.2 Maidstone Borough Council's duties under the Act are:

2.2.1 **To co-operate to improve children's wellbeing: Section 10 of the Act requires** as a relevant partner we will cooperate, so far as our statutory duties permit, to improving the child's wellbeing, as envisaged by Section 10 of the Act

2.2.2 **To safeguard and promote the welfare of children:** Section 11 requires a range of organisations (including district councils) to make arrangements for ensuring that their functions, and services provided on their behalf, are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

2.3 Expectations on Maidstone Borough Council include:

- The **commitment of the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT)** to the importance of safeguarding and the promotion of wellbeing and clear accountability for work on safeguarding and promoting wellbeing.
- A **clear statement of responsibility** to employees and elected Members (contained in this policy),
- Take the **voice of children and young people** into account to help shape services.
- **Safe recruitment** procedures for those who work with or come into contact with children and young people and vulnerable adults.
- Provide **appropriate training**, learning and development for employees.
- Ensure **effective working relationships** are in place, both within the authority and with other agencies to safeguard and promote wellbeing, and to share information effectively and appropriately.

### 3. SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK OVERVIEW

3.1 The legal responsibilities for safeguarding adults at risk of abuse or neglect are set out in Part 1 of the Care Act 2014 with Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued in 2014 to support implementation.

3.2 Kent County Council is the lead agency which provides social care services. Maidstone Borough Council is a key partner and has a duty to co-operate in order to protect adults from abuse or neglect. In exercising their duties Kent County Council must:

- **Make Safeguarding Enquiries:** or request others to make them, if an adult is subject to or at risk of abuse or neglect.
- **Establish a Safeguarding Adults Board:** which develops, shares and implements a joint safeguarding strategy
- Carry out **Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs):** when an adult dies as a result of abuse or neglect, whether known or suspected, and there is concern that partner agencies could have worked more effectively to protect the adult. Or if an adult has not died, it is known or suspected that the adult has experienced serious abuse or neglect.
- **Arrange an independent advocate:** to represent and support an adult who is subject to a Safeguarding Enquiry or Adult Review
- **Co-operate with its relevant partners:** in order to protect adults experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect.

3.3 All sectors, including district councils are expected to apply the following six key principles in their adult safeguarding role:

- **Empowerment:** people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and be able to give informed consent.
- **Prevention:** it is better and more cost effective to take action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality:** provide the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection:** support and representation for those in greatest need
- **Partnership:** local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse
- **Accountability:** accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding

3.4 Safeguarding activity should be person-led and outcome-focused. It is about engaging the person in a conversation about how best to respond to their safeguarding situation in a way that enhances involvement, choice and control as well as improving quality of life, wellbeing and safety.

## 4. ROLES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- 4.1. Whilst safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, there are several key roles that partner agencies and employees within MBC hold.
- 4.2. **Kent County Council (KCC)** is the lead authority for safeguarding children and adults at risk. The Specialist Children's Services and Adult Care and Support Service are responsible for making enquiries in to allegations of abuse and neglect, determining whether it has or has not taken place and taking action to protect the child or vulnerable adult.
- 4.3. **Kent Safeguarding Children Board** sets out how different partner agencies should co-operate to safeguard children and has a role in making sure that arrangements work effectively for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- 4.4. **Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board** makes sure that all member agencies are working together to help keep adults safe from harm and protect their rights.
- 4.5. **Kent Police** has a duty to investigate criminal offences and refer any suspicion, allegation or disclosure that a child or vulnerable adult is suffering and likely to suffer significant harm to Kent County Council.
- 4.6. **Maidstone Borough Council's** Chief Executive Officer has ultimate accountability for safeguarding; this means ensuring that employees and elected Members comply with the principles contained in this policy and providing assurance that the Council complies with its statutory requirements. The CEO discharges these functions by appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) who is the Housing and Inclusion Manager.
- 4.7. **MBC's Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer (DDSO)** are senior officers who lead on all safeguarding issues and acts as the child and adult protection professional on behalf of MBC. Their responsibilities include:
  - Supporting the CEO and Wider Leadership Team to provide strategic direction for the safeguarding agenda including the protection of children and adults at risk.
  - Champion the importance of safeguarding and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk throughout the Council including providing quarterly updates to the Internal Safeguarding Board.
  - Ensure compliance with legislation including that contained within section 11 of the Children Act 2004, Part 1 of the Care Act 2014 and Government guidance.
  - Ensure that there is an up to date policy and procedure in place relating to MBC's roles and responsibilities for the safeguarding and protection of children and adults at risk.
  - Ensure that employee and Member training is both available, undertaken and refreshed as required.
  - Provide advice and support to staff to discuss concerns and ensure those concerns are respond to appropriately.
  - Represent MBC at inter-agency meetings and liaise with other organisations as necessary.
- 4.8. **MBC Safeguarding Champions** work with the Designated Safeguarding Officer to provide advice and support to colleagues to ensure that concerns are responded to quickly and correctly. Each Champion agrees to undertake additional training to be able to perform this role. The Champions meet on a quarterly basis to share best practice and awareness of current topics and issues.



- 4.9. **MBC's Internal Safeguarding Meeting:** monitors this policy and any safeguarding referrals which are made by the Council. Chaired by a senior officer, this group meets quarterly to discuss any reports of abuse or neglect raised through the reporting system, whilst ensuring that MBC is taking its safeguarding responsibilities seriously and complying with legal requirements.
- 4.10. **Human Resources:** works to ensure that stringent recruitment procedures are in place for ensuring safe working practices and that safe recruitment practices are followed for job roles that may involve working with children and adults.
- 4.11. **Line Managers:** ensure that appropriate checks are made for all job roles that involve working with children and adults at risk. They also carry out the correct induction process for all new employees including booking the appropriate training and ensuring they are made aware of this policy and have the appropriate ongoing training. Line managers will also be responsible for on-going discussions during day to day management of their teams.
- 4.12. **All employees, contractors, volunteers and Members:** ensure that the activities which they are involved in during the course of their work are carried out in accordance with this policy and that they follow any guidance relating to it and to have undertaken basic safeguarding training, such as the ELMS training packages.

## 5. SAFEGUARDING CHAMPIONS

- 5.1. Safeguarding Champions have been introduced across the authority to ensure that any safeguarding concerns are quickly and adequately responded to and to assist the DSO in ensuring the Council is compliant with its requirements.
- 5.2. Each Champion is required to be trained to a level which ensures they are competent and an understanding of Safeguarding with confidence. Their roles will include:
- Promoting awareness of good safeguarding practices in their department;
  - Be a source of advice and support to assist colleagues in responding to any concerns;
  - Ensure that referrals are made to the right agencies;
  - Ensure that an internal safeguarding notification is completed via the Safeguarding Portal on the intranet and;
  - Attend the quarterly Safeguarding Champions meetings as and when they're required.
- 5.3. The training covers professional curiosity, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and good practices, such as keeping suitable case notes and the thresholds required for a referral to be made to children's services, the practices being virtually identical for adults.
- 5.4. The log of current safeguarding champion's is found [here](#)

## 6. CHILDREN: RECOGNISING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- 6.1. Safeguarding children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 as:
- Protecting children from maltreatment
  - Preventing impairment of children's health or development
  - Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
  - Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

- 6.2. A child is anyone under the age of 18 years. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.
- 6.3. If you are worried for a child or become aware of a child in need, then please contact Kent County Council on 03000 42 23 40 or via email [MaidstoneEarlyHelp@kent.gov.uk](mailto:MaidstoneEarlyHelp@kent.gov.uk)
- 6.4. If you feel there is an urgent concern this should be addressed immediately please call the police on 999 or for non-emergencies 101.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

- 6.5. Sexual exploitation of children and young people involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities.
- 6.6. If you have any concerns in relation to CSE these should be discussed immediately with your Safeguarding Champion, Line Manager or the DSO within the Council. Appropriate follow up will then commence most probably with a report to the police or via the Kent Safeguarding Board. In Maidstone, the Community Safety Unit from the local police station sits within the Community Protection Team, so advice can be sought through this means too.

### **Missing Children**

- 6.7. Every situation is different and there are no set rules about when a child should be considered missing; however if you are concerned about a very young child you should contact the emergency services immediately via 999. For young people, if you have any doubts about whether to formally report them missing, for example, when a teenager fails to return after a time they have agreed, contact the police.

## **7. SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK**

- 7.1. An adult is anyone aged 18 or over. Where someone is 18 or over but is still receiving children's services and a safeguarding issue is raised, the matter should be dealt with through adult safeguarding arrangements. For example, this could occur when a young person with substantial and complex needs continues to be supported in a residential educational setting until the age of 25.
- 7.2. Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who has care and support needs (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and is experiencing or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.
- 7.3. If you are concerned about an Adult please speak to your Safeguarding Champion, the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Kent County Council, contact details are in section 22 (Page 19) of this policy.

### **Abuse and Neglect**

- 7.4. The [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy, Protocols and Practitioner Guidance for Kent & Medway](#), provides a guide to the various categories of abuse and details the indicators. The main categories of abuse include:
  - Physical
  - Sexual
  - Psychological
  - Financial or material
  - Discriminatory
  - Exploitation
  - Female Genital Mutilation

- Isolation or withdrawal from services or support networks
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Self-neglect and self-injurious behaviour
- Modern Slavery (incl. Human Trafficking)
- Domestic Abuse

7.5. **Abuse** is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse can happen to anyone, regardless of age, gender, class or ethnicity. Abuse may be a single act or repeated over a period of time and affect one person or more. It may take one form or a multiple of forms or follow a pattern of abuse. The lack of appropriate action can also be a form of abuse.

7.6. **Neglect** is a failure to care for someone with whom you have a responsibility to care for or represent, for example, by failing to provide adequate food, clothing, medical aid or accommodation. It can be a form of abuse if it is intentional, however, not all incidents of neglect are intentional and may be because a care giver is finding it hard to cope or is not receiving sufficient help.

### **Self-Neglect & Hoarding**

7.7. **Self-neglect or self-injurious behaviour** covers a wide range of behaviour where a person neglects to care for one's own personal hygiene, health or surroundings, this can often have a negative effect on the wider community and sometimes exhibits as anti-social behaviour, while not exhaustive the list includes behaviours such as;

- Obsessive hoarding;
- Living in very unclean, sometimes verminous circumstances;
- Neglecting household maintenance, thereby creating hazards within and surrounding the property;
- Erratic or eccentric behaviour/lifestyles;
- Declining or refusing prescribed medication and / or other community healthcare support;
- Repeated episodes of anti-social behaviour – either as a victim or perpetrator.

7.8. An individual may be considered as self-neglecting and therefore maybe at risk of harm where they are:

- Either unable, or unwilling to provide adequate care for themselves,
- Not engaging with a network of support,
- Unable to or unwilling to obtain necessary care to meet their needs,
- Unable to make reasonable, informed or mentally capacitated decisions due to mental disorder (including hoarding behaviours), illness or an acquired brain injury,
- Unable to protect themselves adequately against potential exploitation or abuse,
- Refusing essential support without which their health and safety needs cannot be met, and the individual lacks the insight to recognise this.

7.9. If you identify someone who you believe is self-neglecting seek advice from a Safeguarding Champion or the DSO. A referral to Adult Social Services may be needed. Any concerns or referrals must be recorded on the Safeguarding Portal on the intranet.

### **Modern slavery**

7.10. This encompasses slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking. Traffickers and slave drivers coerce, deceive and force individuals against their will into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

7.11. From 1 November 2015, public authorities have a duty to notify the Secretary of State of any individual identified in England and Wales as a suspected victim of modern slavery. This duty includes district

councils and applies to both children and adult victims. The information provided in a notification will be used to build a better picture of modern slavery in England and Wales, and to improve law enforcement response, by sharing the information with the National Crime Agency and other law enforcement agencies.

- 7.12. The Home Office [Guidance: duty to notify the Home Office of potential victim of slavery](#), should be referred to and a notification to [dutytonotify@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:dutytonotify@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk) made via email or call the Modern Slavery Helpline: 0800 0121 700.
- 7.13. This notification does not replace a safeguarding referral and should not be relied upon to safeguard an individual at risk. The existing safeguarding processes, as set out in this policy, should therefore still be followed in tandem with a notification.

## 8. DOMESTIC ABUSE

- 8.1. The term domestic abuse has replaced domestic violence, because it includes any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse.
- 8.2. Other forms of domestic abuse can include so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.
- 8.3. Maidstone Borough Council has trained employees who are able to complete the Risk Indicator toolkit (DASH) where it is identified that an adult at risk is in a domestic abuse situation. Contact a Safeguarding Champion or the DSO for advice.

### One Stop Shop

- 8.4. A person who maybe the victim of domestic abuse can be signposted to the **One Stop Shop (OSS)** Which operates every Tuesday morning between 09:30 and 11:30 at the Salvation Army, Union Street, Maidstone. **(Currently this service is not operational due to Covid-19)**. The OSS offers free advice, information and support from a range of agencies including legal advice from a qualified solicitor, specialist police officers, housing advice and signposting to counselling and therapeutic services.
- 8.5. The **National Domestic Violence Helpline (0808 2000 247)** is a 24hr helpline for women experiencing domestic abuse, their family, friends, colleagues, and others calling on their behalf. The Helpline can give support, help and information wherever the caller might be in the Country.

### Clare's Law

- 8.6. The [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme \(DVDS\)](#) is often called '**Clare's Law**' after the landmark case that led to it. Clare's Law gives any member of the public the right to ask the police if their partner may pose a risk to them. Under Clare's Law, a member of the public can also make enquiries into the partner of a close friend or family member.
- 8.7. Once an application is made, police and partner agencies will carry out a range of checks. If these reveal that their partners has a record of abusive offences, or suggest a risk of violence or abuse, the police will consider sharing this information.

## 9. EXTREMISM AND RADICALISATION

- 9.1. The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on authorities to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism, referred to under the term 'Prevent'. This statutory duty includes district councils and applies to both children and adults. Prevent forms part of Contest, the Governments plan for tackling terrorism; Prevent, Prepare, Protect and Pursue.
- 9.2. If a child or adult are identified as being at risk radicalisation, either by themselves, the actions of others, or drawn into committing act of terrorism, then employees should first discuss their concerns with their Line Manager or the Safeguarding Champion. The DSO should also be consulted to assist the Community Safety Unit with intelligence gathering. Please also follow the link for up to date advice on who to contact. <https://www.kscmp.org.uk/procedures/prevent>

## **10. MENTAL HEALTH & SUICIDE AWARENESS**

### **What is Mental Health?**

- 10.1. The term mental health can be defined in a number of ways, some centre on a person's positive psychological wellbeing; others describe it as the absence of mental illness or mental health issues.
- 10.2. There are different types of mental illness, some of which are common, such as depression and anxiety disorders, and some which are not as common, such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. However, mental illness, as with any health difficulty, cause disability, which is sometime severe. This is not always well understood by people who have never experienced a mental illness.

### **About Suicide**

- 10.3. Suicide is a major public health issue, each year people of all ages, ethnicities and backgrounds die as a result of taking their own life. Many more experience suicidal thoughts at one time or another.
- 10.4. Suicide is preventable. Most suicidal people do not want to die; they simply do not want to live with the pain they are experiencing any longer. We can learn to spot the warning signs so we can help identify and support someone experiencing suicidal thoughts and sign post them to agencies and services who can help them.
- 10.5. The Council is committed to ensuring that all employees are fully supported with mental health therefore in partnership with Mental Health England the Council has trained some staff in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA). The MHFA will also help them to deal with mental health situations with external customers/general public, however this is not the primary purpose of the role. The first aid is given until appropriate professional help is received or the crisis resolves.
- 10.6. More information on MHFA can be found on the intranet or read the [MHFA Policy](#).
- 10.7. A list of MHFA providers can be found in the kitchen area within Maidstone House or online [here](#). At this time with staff working predominately from home, due to Covid 19, colleagues should email or ring first aiders for support and guidance.

## **11. SUICIDE PREVENTION**

- 11.1. It is important to act promptly if you think that a client or someone you are in communication with is suffering from mental health issues and who may be considering suicide. Tell the person your concerns about them however understand the person may not want to talk to you, in this situation offer to help find them someone else to talk to. See Appendix 1

- 11.2. If you can do so without breaking communication with the person contact a MHFA, a Safeguarding Champion or the DSO for advice. However if you suspect the person is actively seeking to take their own life and is at imminent risk call 999.

## **12. RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE**

- 12.1. If anyone discloses abuse or neglect, tell the person that:
- You will treat the information seriously;
  - Reassure them that they did the right thing to tell you;
  - You have to inform an appropriate person;
  - You/the service will take steps to protect and support them;
- 12.2. Pass on the information to those with a legitimate need to know, such as your Line Manager, a Safeguarding Champion or the DSO.

### Information Gathering

- 12.3. Any referrals made must be as comprehensive as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed report at the time of the disclosure/concern. Information included should cover the following as a minimum:
- The nature of the allegation and a through account of the risk concern raised
  - The child or adult at risk's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred,
  - Witnesses to the incident(s),
  - Any times, dates or other relevant information,
  - A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- 12.4. When recording the incident of abuse or neglect:
- Note what was said,
  - Describe the circumstances in which the disclosure came about,
  - Note the setting and anyone else who was there at the time,
  - Be aware that your report may be required later as part of a legal action or disciplinary procedure,

### Consent

- 12.5. If you are making a referral to access Kent County Council's Children's Services then consent should be obtained from the parent or guardian, unless there is an immediate or urgent risk concern. Should a parent or guardian refuse to consent to a referral being made, consideration should be given to the impact this may have on the level of concern for the child's welfare, and the parent's or guardian's ability to meet the child's needs. If the child is likely to be placed at increased risk by the lack of a referral then one should be made despite the lack of consent.
- 12.6. If you are making a referral, immediate advice should be sought from either a Safeguarding Champion or the Designated Safeguarding Officer on whether to advise the parent or carer about the referral. If you remain unsure you should seek a consultation from the KCC Integrated Front Door service.
- 12.7. Remember that the safety of the child is of paramount importance and consider whether informing a parent or guardian may place the child at increased risk or may compromise evidence gathering.

## Mental Capacity

- 12.8. Every adult has the right to make their own decisions and it is assumed they have mental capacity unless it is proved otherwise by a formal mental capacity assessment undertaken by a trained professional.
- 12.9. Mental capacity is the ability to understand and retain the information relevant to a specific decision, to use the relevant information as part of the process of making that specific decision, to weigh up potential consequences and to communicate the decision, at the time the decision needs to be made. When in communication with someone you must establish, to the best of your ability, whether the person understands what you are telling them and the risks that may apply to them.

## 13. MAKING REFERRALS FOR CHILDREN

- 13.1. The Kent County Council Integrated Front Door brings together the Central Duty Team and Early Help Triage Team into a single integrated team that has been established to seek to ensure that KCC sends service requests to the appropriate destination and get the service need right first time for the majority of families.
- 13.2. The telephone number for the Integrated Front Door is **03000 41 11 11**. Out of Hours Services can be contacted on **03000 41 91 91**. The KCC website with pertinent information is <https://www.kscmp.org.uk/guidance/worried-about-a-child>
- 13.3. **If there are concerns that a child may be suffering significant harm**, or where seeking consent for a referral from the parent or guardian and discussing the concerns may place the child at an increased risk of harm, the information must be **telephoned directly through on 03000 41 11 11 or to Kent Police via 999**.

## 14. Making Referrals for Adults

- 14.1. [The Kent and Medway Multi-agency Safeguarding Adults Policy, Protocols and Guidance](#) document has been re-developed to meet and work within the safeguarding adult lawful requirements set out in the [Care Act 2014](#).
- 14.2. To check whether an adult at risk is known to Social Care Health and Wellbeing, please call the Central Referral Unit for a consultation: **03000 41 61 61**. They will be able to confirm whether the adult is already has a Case Manager or Care Coordinator.
- 14.3. It is expected that professionals who raise a concern will complete the KASAF Stage 1 as fully as possible using all of the prompts provided within the form, to support the timely evaluation of the risks. Failure to do so may impede the process.
- 14.4. The Kent Adult Safeguarding Alert Form (KASAF) can be found on this link <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/information-for-professionals/adult-safeguarding/adult-protection-forms>
- 14.5. If the adult is already known to Kent County Council, they will send the referral directly to the relevant Case Management Team, either the Learning Disability, Mental Health or Older Persons and Physical Disability Team.
- 14.6. Reporting a concern should not be delayed by an attempt to obtain more information. A summary of any consultation with, or referral to, the Central Referral Unit will be issued to the referring officer.

This needs to be held on file and included on the alert raised on the Safeguarding Portal. Speak to a Safeguarding Champion or the DSO if you have any questions about how to do this.

- 14.7. If your concerns require urgent attention outside of normal office hours (8.30am-5.00pm Monday-Friday, excluding bank holidays) and cannot wait until the next working day contact the **Out of Hours Team on 03000 41 91 91**.
- 14.8. If a response is not received within 72 hours of making a referral, the referring officer should follow up with the Central Referral Unit or the relevant case management team. If a case has been referred to the Police due to an immediate risk of harm or emergency, the Police crime report number should be noted and included in case notes and on the Safeguarding Portal.
- 14.9. Before making a referral consider speaking to a Safeguarding Champion or the DSO for advice (see section 5.4 above). Any referrals made need to be recorded on the [Safeguarding Portal](#).

## **15. ESCALATING A REFERRAL**

- 15.1. On rare occasions MBC employees may feel that the response to a referral does not represent, in their opinion, the best course of action in relation to the referred case. If so, then concerns should be raised with the DSO.
- 15.2. The DSO will make the final decision as to whether a case will be referred back to Kent County Council, expressing MBC's continuing concerns in relation to the welfare of the individual(s) concerned and may bring the case in question to the attention of the Internal Safeguarding Board members.

## **16. ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE INVOLVING STAFF**

- 16.1. Any accusation made about an employee, volunteer or member being involved in abuse towards a child or adult should be reported to their Line Manager, a Head of Service, Corporate Leadership Team or the Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately. Alternatively concerns may also be reported according to MBC's Whistleblowing Policy. At times Kent Police, Kent County Council or the regulatory authorities may be alerted regarding the suspected abuse.
- 16.2. Formal HR and investigative procedures will be followed if an allegation of abuse is made. Irrespective of the findings of the Kent County Council or of Police inquiries, MBC will assess all individual cases under disciplinary procedures to decide whether an employee has breached MBC policy and will reach a decision based on the available information and decide on a balance of probability whether an allegation is founded. The welfare of the child or adult at risk will always remain paramount.

## **17. COMPLAINTS**

- 17.1. On occasions members of the public, partner agencies or MBC employees may feel that insufficient action has been taken by MBC in relation to a specific case or concern.
- 17.2. **Members of the public and partner agencies:** should be encouraged to first raise their concerns directly with the staff member they have been dealing with or contact our Customer Services team if they are unsure who they have been dealing with. If the matter is not resolved informally then they should be directed to [Maidstone Borough Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure](#).
- 17.3. **Maidstone Borough Council employees:** should report their concerns to their Line Manager or the Designated Safeguarding Officer. Alternatively, employees may also report this through MBC's Whistleblowing Policy.



- 17.4. If employees do not wish to raise their concerns internally they can report their concerns to the national Child Abuse Whistleblowing Helpline (0800 028 0285 or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)).

## **18. INFORMATION SHARING, DATA PROTECTION AND GDPR**

- 18.1. MBC is committed to complying with the data protection principles when processing personal data and special categories data or sensitive data under the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA).
- 18.2. MBC also have a privacy notice setting out the parameters of when information will be shared if a safeguarding concern is raised <https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/privacy-and-cookies/service-level-privacy-notice/safeguarding>
- 18.3. Both the GDPR and the Human Rights Act (1998) (HRA) Article 8, make it clear that the processing of personal data must respect the rights and freedoms of the data subject (the individual), but at the same time be adequate enough for the council to carry out its functions effectively.
- 18.4. The sharing of information is vital to safeguarding, a key factor in many case reviews has been a failure to record information, to share it or to understand its significance and then take appropriate action.
- 18.5. Government guidance, [Safeguarding Practitioners: Information Sharing Advice \(July 2018\)](#), highlights the seven golden rules for information sharing regarding children, young people, parents and carers. This advice is for all frontline practitioners and senior managers who have to make decisions about sharing personal information on a case-by-case basis.
- 18.6. The first of these rules is to remember that **the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing**, but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.

### **The Kent & Medway Information Sharing Agreement**

- 18.7. MBC is a signatory of the [Kent & Medway Information Sharing Agreement](#) (ISA) which provides a framework to enable a number of organisations and public bodies across Kent and Medway to share personal information. Their form can be used to record and evidence why information sharing was necessary for audit purposes.
- 18.8. The Agreement provides for openness and transparency in information sharing, as well as appropriate governance and support, in order to assist signatory organisations and public bodies to share personal information lawfully, safely and securely and reflects the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the UK Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018).

## **19. SAFE RECRUITMENT**

- 19.1. All MBC employees will be appointed in accordance with its Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedures and its policy on Disclosures Barring Service (DBS) checks on employees. These are designed to provide a rigorous and thorough selection process and to carry out all necessary checks, particularly on individuals seeking to work with children, young people and adults at risk.
- 19.2. There are three types of Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks: standard, enhanced and enhanced with a barred list check. MBC requires employees to have an enhanced DBS check if they have unsupervised contact with children, young people and adults at risk or fulfil a safeguarding role such as a Designated Safeguarding Officer.

- 19.3. Line Managers are responsible for deciding which of their employees require a DBS check and for ensuring that DBS checks are kept up to date, through liaising with Human Resources.
- 19.4. For contractors and agency staff, MBC has a policy of requiring all relevant contractors and agency staff who have access/contact with children, young people and adults at risk to undergo an enhanced DBS check. The contract must stipulate whether a current DBS disclosure is required.

## **20. TRAINING**

- 20.1. Employees must accept and be able to recognise their responsibilities with regard to their own good practice and the reporting of signs of suspected abuse or neglect to either the Police or Kent County Council and understand MBC's statutory obligation to ensure confirmation is received from Kent County Council that any referrals made are being actively dealt with.
- 20.2. MBC provides training and development opportunities to all members of staff and Members. As a minimum level of training all staff are expected to complete the ELMS eLearning courses for Safeguarding Children, Safeguarding Adults and Prevent. Managers are expected to ensure that staff have completed the eLearning packages and that they themselves have completed the Safer Recruitment training.
- 20.3. More in-depth training is available which is provided through the Kent Safeguarding Children's Board. This training is set over four levels as set out below;

Level 0 – No contact with children/young people, vulnerable adults and/or their parents or carers.

Level 1 - Limited contact with children/young people, vulnerable adults/and/or parents/carers with no unsupervised contact.

Level 2 - Regular contact with children/young people/vulnerable adults and/or parents/carers or any unsupervised contact

Level 3 - Professional advisers and designated leads for children's and/or vulnerable adults safeguarding irrespective of the level of contact with children/young people/vulnerable adults and/or parents/carers.

- 20.4. Staff acting as Safeguarding Champions will be required to refresh their training every two years, and should be documented within their appraisals.

## **21. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

- 21.1. The Equality Act 2010 places a legal obligation on public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; to advance equality of opportunity; and to foster good relations, between persons with different protected characteristics.
- 21.2. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 21.3. Maidstone Borough Council will have full and proper regard to the Equality Act 2010 when making safeguarding referrals under this policy, so to avoid any possible indirect discriminatory impact on particular groups.

## 22. CONTACT INFORMATION

Maidstone Borough Council

John Littlemore
Chair of the MBC Internal Safeguarding Board
Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, ME15 6JQ
Tel: 01622 60 2019
Email: <a href="mailto:Johnlittlemore@maidstone.gov.uk">Johnlittlemore@maidstone.gov.uk</a>
Hannah Gaston – Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

Housing Inclusion Manager,
Housing & Communities
Tel: 01622 60 2262
Email: <a href="mailto:HannahGaston@maidstone.gov.uk">HannahGaston@maidstone.gov.uk</a>
Sarah Ward – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer (DDSO)
Housing & inclusion Team Leader
Email: <a href="mailto:sarahward@maidstone.gov.uk">sarahward@maidstone.gov.uk</a>
Tel: 01622 602157

Kent County Council – <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/report-abuse>

Appendix 1 – Suicide Prevention Information

<p><b>The Samaritans</b></p> <p>Freephone <b>116 123</b> These services are available 24/7 all year round. Visit <a href="http://www.samaritans.org/">www.samaritans.org/</a></p>	
<p><b>Release the Pressure</b></p> <p>A 24/7 helpline with trained professionals. Call <b>0800 107 0160</b> A webchat is also available at; <a href="http://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/release-the-pressure">www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/release-the-pressure</a></p>	
<p><b>Maidstone Community Mental Health Team</b></p> <p>Call <b>01622 766900</b> or email <a href="mailto:Kamnascpt.maidstonecmht@nhs.net">Kamnascpt.maidstonecmht@nhs.net</a></p>	<p><b>CRISIS Team</b></p> <p>Call <b>0300 222 0123</b> for urgent support for someone who is not already open to services.</p>
<p><b>The Hope Café Maidstone</b></p> <p>Hope Café is an out-of-hours crisis support service in Maidstone. It operates from Fridays 5pm to 8:45pm &amp; Sundays 1pm to 4:45pm At the Mid Kent Mind wellbeing center: 23 College Road, Maidstone, ME15 6YH Contact Mid-Kent Mind <b>01622 692 383</b> or email <a href="mailto:mindhelp@mmkmind.org">mindhelp@mmkmind.org</a></p>	
<p><b>The Silver Line</b></p> <p>Helpline for older people, they offer a service which is available 24/7.</p> <p>Call <b>08004 708090</b> <a href="http://www.thesilverline.org.uk/">www.thesilverline.org.uk/</a></p>	<p><b>Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)</b></p> <p>CALM is a charity dedicated to preventing male suicide.</p> <p>Call <b>0800 58 58 58</b> 5pm to midnight every day.</p> <p>They also offer a live webchat; <a href="http://www.thecalmzone.net/help/webchat/">www.thecalmzone.net/help/webchat/</a></p>
<p><b>Papyrus</b></p> <p>Are the national charity for the prevention of suicide by young people (people under 35), they run HOPE Line UK, a dedicated suicide prevention hotline for anyone up to the age of 35 who maybe feeling suicidal or anyone who is concerned about a young person.</p> <p>Call <b>0800 068 41 41</b> Monday to Friday 10am to 10pm, Weekends 2pm to 10pm, Bank holidays 2pm to 5pm.</p> <p>You can also text 07786 209 697 or email <a href="mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org">pat@papyrus-uk.org</a></p>	

<p><b>Grassroots</b></p> <p>Grassroots is a small charity focused on suicide prevention.</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:office@prevent-suicide.org.uk">office@prevent-suicide.org.uk</a></p> <p>They have developed a mobile app for those at risk of suicide and people worried about someone. Available from the Apple Apps store or Google Play.</p> <p><a href="http://www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/stay_alive_suicide_prevention_mobile_phone_application.html">www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/stay_alive_suicide_prevention_mobile_phone_application.html</a></p>	
<p><b>Student Minds</b></p> <p>Student Minds is the UK’s student mental health charity.</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:info@studentminds.org.uk">info@studentminds.org.uk</a> or visit <a href="http://www.studentminds.org.uk">www.studentminds.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Childline</b></p> <p>For children and young people under 19. Call <b>0800 1111</b></p> <p>The number will not show up on a phone bill.</p>
<p><b>Place 2 Be</b></p> <p>Place2Be is a children's mental health charity providing school-based support and in-depth training programmes to improve the emotional wellbeing of pupils, families, teachers and school staff.</p> <p>Call: <b>0207 923 5500</b> or Email: <a href="mailto:enquiries@place2be.org.uk">enquiries@place2be.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Young Minds</b></p> <p>Young Minds is the UK’s leading charity championing the wellbeing and mental health of young people.</p> <p>They offer a parents helpline, call: <b>0808 802 5544</b> Mon-Fri. 09:30am to 4pm Email: <a href="mailto:ymentquiries@youngminds.org.uk">ymentquiries@youngminds.org.uk</a></p>