



# Maidstone Borough Council

## Policy for Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk

Version 2.0  
January 2019

Document Purpose:	Guidance
Document Name	Policy for Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk.
Author	Matt Roberts, Community Partnerships & Resilience Manager
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.
Cross Reference	This documents should be read alongside; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedures</li> <li>• Induction Procedure</li> <li>• DBS checks</li> <li>• Comprehensive Equalities Policy</li> <li>• Employee and Member Codes of Conduct</li> <li>• Health, Safety and Welfare Policy</li> <li>• Disciplinary Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• MBC Data Protection Policy</li> <li>• Whistleblowing Policy</li> <li>• Mental Health First Aider Policy</li> </ul>
Action Required	Read and embed Policy into normal practice.

### Document History

09.01.19	MBC Internal Safeguarding Board
12.02.19	Communities, Housing & Environment Committee

### 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.

## QUICK VIEW – REFERRAL PROCEDURE

What to do if you have witnessed, have concerns about or receive a disclosure regarding abuse or neglect involving a child or an adult at risk.

**Remember, Say Something if you See Something!**

Is there an immediate threat or risk of harm or is it an emergency?

Yes

No

Inform the Police immediately via **999**

Still have concerns?

Yes

No

Complete an [Incident Notification](#) form.

Discuss the matter with your Line Manager, your department [Safeguarding Champion](#) or the Designated Safeguarding Officer ([Matt Roberts](#)) for advice.

You may then be asked to call Kent County Council for further guidance and to make a referral for the child or adult who is the subject of the concern.

**Children 03000 41 11 11 / Adults 03000 41 61 61** or proceed directly to referral using the [Single Request for Support form](#) (for all child referrals) **or** [Adult Safeguarding Alert Form](#) (for adult referrals).  
(For *urgent* out of hours referrals call **03000 41 91 91**)

Have you received confirmation, via email or telephone, from Kent County Council within 72 hours that your referral has been accepted?

Yes

No

Discuss the matter with your Line Manager, your department Safeguarding Champion or the Designated Safeguarding Officer ([Matt Roberts](#)) for advice and complete an [Incident Notification](#) form on the [Safeguarding Portal](#).

Once a referral has been made you must seek confirmation that Kent County Council has received the referral. The onus is on you, as the referring officer, to ensure that Maidstone Borough Council fulfils its statutory obligation to receive confirmation from Kent County Council that they have actively considered your referral.

If you are still concerned and/or the referral has not been accepted please refer to the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

QUICK VIEW – REFERRAL PROCEDURE .....	3
1. POLICY STATEMENT & FRAMEWORK.....	6
Professional Curiosity .....	6
2. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE .....	7
3. SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK.....	8
4. ROLES AND ACCOUNTABILITY .....	8
5. SAFEGUARDING CHAMPIONS .....	10
6. TRAINING .....	11
7. CHILDREN: RECOGNISING ABUSE AND NEGLECT .....	11
Child Neglect and Abuse .....	12
Kent Support Levels .....	12
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) .....	13
Missing Children .....	13
8. SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK.....	14
Abuse and Neglect .....	15
Self-Neglect & Hoarding.....	16
Modern slavery .....	17
9. DOMESTIC ABUSE.....	17
One Stop Shop.....	17
Clare’s Law .....	18
10. EXTREMISM AND RADICALISATION.....	18
11. MENTAL HEALTH & SUICIDE AWARENESS .....	19
What is Mental Health?.....	19
About Suicide .....	20
12. SUICIDE PREVENTION GUIDANCE.....	20
Needs Assessment Indicator .....	21
13. MANAGING THE CONVERSATION.....	21
14. RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THOSE AT RISK OF SUICIDE .....	23
15. RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE .....	25
Information Gathering .....	25
Consent .....	26

	Mental Capacity .....	26
16.	MAKING REFERRALS FOR CHILDREN.....	27
17.	Making Referrals for Adults .....	28
18.	ESCALATING A REFERRAL.....	29
19.	ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE INVOLVING STAFF .....	29
20.	COMPLAINTS .....	30
21.	INFORMATION SHARING, DATA PROTECTION AND GDPR .....	30
	The Kent & Medway Information Sharing Agreement.....	31
22.	SAFE RECRUITMENT .....	31
	Disclosure Barring Service (DBS).....	31
23.	TRAINING .....	32
24.	EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES.....	33
25.	REVIEW AND OVERSIGHT .....	33
26.	CONTACT INFORMATION.....	33
	Maidstone Borough Council .....	33
	Kent County Council .....	33

# 1. POLICY STATEMENT & FRAMEWORK

- 1.1 As a public body, Maidstone Borough Council expects high standards of conduct from all of its employees and councillors, in line with the key principles of the constitution. Maidstone Borough Council aspires to the highest standards of excellence and professionalism in the people it employs, the education, training and development they receive and in the leadership and management of the organisation.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 It is important that all members of staff, councillors and those operating as part of a commissioned services, either at a strategic or operational level, understand that;
- 'Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility'***
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 It is not the responsibility of Maidstone Borough Council, its employees, elected members or contracted staff to determine whether abuse has or is 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 Maidstone Borough Council's responsibility.
- 1.6 Maidstone Borough Council also supports the Home Office Counter Terrorism strategy **CONTEST**, which includes a specific focus on **PREVENT** (preventing violent extremism / radicalisation). The safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk includes those who are at risk of becoming radicalised, either through their own action (becoming self-radicalised) or by an external agent.

## Professional Curiosity

- 1.7 It is important that all members of staff understand the need for 'Professional Curiosity'. This has been described as 'brilliant and professional people recognising how significant the seemingly insignificant might be<sup>1</sup>'.
- 1.8 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Chief Superintendent Nik Adams, National Police Prevent lead.

## 2. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

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** was published in August 2005 and 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** each local authority to make arrangements to promote co-operation between the authority, each of the authority's relevant partners and such other persons or bodies working with children in the local authority's area as the authority considers appropriate. The arrangements are to be made with a view to improving the wellbeing of children in the authority's area, which includes protection from harm or neglect.

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.

2.4 Other legislation and guidance relevant to safeguarding includes;

- Working together to Safeguard Children (revised 2018);
- Counter Terrorism Act 2015
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- The Care Act (2014).
- The Health and Social Care Act (2008)
- No Secrets (2000);
- The Public Disclosures Act 1998;
- The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) and;
- Housing Act 1996;

### 3. SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK

- 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 who 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 its 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 a number of key roles that partner agencies and employees within Maidstone Borough Council 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** the 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) In Maidstone Council the DSO is the Community Partnerships and Resilience Manager.
- 4.7. **MBC's Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)** is a senior officer who leads on all safeguarding issues and acts as the child and adult protection professional on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council. The DSOs 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 Maidstone Borough Council.
  - Provide 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 Maidstone Borough Council'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.
  - Maintain the intranet Safeguarding Portal and Safeguarding Reporting tool.
  - Represent Maidstone Borough Council at inter-agency meetings and liaise with other organisations as necessary.
- 4.8. **MBC Safeguarding Champions** work with the DSO 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 Board:** monitors this policy and any safeguarding referrals which are made by Maidstone Borough Council. Chaired by the CEO, this

group meets quarterly to discuss any reports of abuse or neglect raised through the reporting system, whilst ensuring that Maidstone Borough Council is taking its safeguarding responsibilities seriously and complying with legal requirements. Representative on this group include local managers for Kent County Council's Children's and Adult Social Care teams.

- 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:** ensures 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
- 4.12. **All employees, contractors, volunteers and Members:** ensures that the activities in 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 Designated Safeguarding Officer in ensuring the Council is compliant with its requirements.
- 5.2. Each Champion is required to be trained to be 'Designated Officers' and undertake a broad range of safeguarding training to meet the Level 3 requirements (set out in this policy) in order to undertake their role which includes;
  - 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 forum.
- 5.3. The training covers professional curiosity, the grooming line, 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 following people are currently Safeguarding Champions;

• Community Partnerships	Matt Roberts (DSO)
• Housing Services	Jill Rogers (CSE Lead)
• Housing Outreach Service	Allan Rooke-James
• Customer Services	Cerian Lythgoe
• Museum & Learning	Rosalind Meredith
• Maidstone Borough Services (Depot)	Daren Guess

- |                                  |              |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| • Bereavement Services           | Sharon Smith |
| • Revenues & Benefits            | Hina Nagar   |
| • Legal Services                 | Andy Bell    |
| • Planning & Development Control | TBC          |
| • Member Champion                | TBC          |

## 6. TRAINING

- 6.1. Maidstone Borough Council provides training and development opportunities to all members of staff, as a minimum level of training all staff are expected to complete the ELMS eLearning courses for Safeguarding Children, Safeguarding Adults and Prevent.
- 6.2. Managers are expected to ensure that staff have completed the eLearning packages and to themselves have complete the Safer Recruitment training.
- 6.3. 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.

## 7. CHILDREN: RECOGNISING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- 7.1. 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.
- 7.2. 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.

## Child Neglect and Abuse

- 7.3. Abuse of children can take many forms but is usually divided into four main categories; **physical, sexual, emotional and neglect**. These normally fall in to one of two case types managed by Specialist Children's Services;
- **Child in need (CHIN):** where the child is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development or development is likely to be significantly impaired (section 17 of the 1989 Children Act)
  - **Child protection (CP):** where a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm, through neglect, physical, emotional or sexual abuse (section 47 of the 1989 Children Act)

## Kent Support Levels

- 7.4. Most children and young people have a number of basic needs that are well supported through a range of universal services. These services include schools, early years education and childcare, health, housing, youth services, leisure facilities and services provided by voluntary organisations.
- 7.5. However, some children have more additional or complex needs and may require access to additional, intensive or specialist services to support them. These are set out as support levels;
- **Universal Services;** are provided to or are routinely available to all children and families. These services are accessed in the local community and delivered by partners including schools, GPs, hospitals, community health services, children's centres, youth hubs, police, fire service and voluntary and community groups.
  - **Additional Support;** these are services are accessed in the local community and delivered by partners including schools, GPs, hospitals, community health services, children's centres, youth hubs, police, fire service and voluntary and community groups.
  - **Intensive Support;** can be offered to children and families where they have complex or multiple needs requiring local authority services to work together with universal services to assess, plan and work with the family to bring about positive change. Includes intensive family support, early help and child in need services.
  - **Specialise Support;** is for Children who are considered to have been harmed or are likely to suffer significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect/ removal from home/or will suffer serious lasting impairment without the intervention of local authority statutory services under high level concern Child in Need (CIN) or high-risk Child Protection (CP) Services and Specialist Youth Justice work. Children whose disability affects all aspects of development.
- 7.6. In order to be referred for support the threshold for accessing children's services must be reached whereby the child and family need either **Intensive** or **Specialist** support, the [Kent Support Levels Guidance Sheet](#) and [Kent Support Levels Process](#) includes illustrative examples about the threshold levels and process.
- 7.7. If you feel the needs of the family sit below Support Levels 3 or 4, and you would have previously considered completing an Early Help Notification, please contact the

Maidstone Early Help Team to discuss what support may be available via 03000 42 23 40 or by emailing [MaidstoneEarlyHelp@kent.gov.uk](mailto:MaidstoneEarlyHelp@kent.gov.uk).

- 7.8. Your request for advice should be responded to within 2 working days by an Early Help Manager and you will then be able to discuss the needs of a child, young person or family and be provided with advice about the most appropriate type of support available within the community at Support Levels 1 and 2.
- 7.9. Before making a referral or seeking advice it is important that you discuss your concerns with a Safeguarding Champion or contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer for advice. Any concerns must be recorded on the Safeguarding Portal on the intranet.

## Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

- 7.10. 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.
- 7.11. The Kent and Medway [Safeguarding Children Abused through Sexual Exploitation Procedures](#) can be used to respond appropriately to safeguard children who are or are at risk of being groomed and subjected to CSE.
- 7.12. If there are concerns about a child or young person being sexually exploited, employees should first discuss their concerns with their Line Manager, a Safeguarding Champion or the Designated Safeguarding Officer. The Kent and Medway [Child Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Toolkit](#) should be used to make an assessment of risk of harm to the child.
- 7.13. Any intelligence on CSE can also be shared using a new electronic CSE partner information sharing form: [eINTEL](#)
- 7.14. eINTEL has been set up by the Kent Safeguarding Children's Board to enable staff from any agency to share any information with regard to Child Sexual Exploitation that may be important and relevant for the Multi-Agency Child Sexual Exploitation Team (CSET) in order to build intelligence about CSE and better target the response to prevent and disrupt it.
- 7.15. The submission of an Information Report using the eINTEL system 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 any Information Reports and the appropriate referral/notification made.
- 7.16. For help completing the form contact the CSE Champion, a Safeguarding Champion or the Designated Safeguarding Officer. Any concerns must be recorded on the Safeguarding Portal on the intranet.

## Missing Children

- 7.17. 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.
- 7.18. Children and young people who regularly go missing from home or care have been found to be at significant increased risk of:
- Becoming involved in crime, from stealing to survive to criminal gang involvement;
  - Sexual exploitation and abuse;
  - Drug and alcohol misuse;
  - Mental and sexual health issues;
  - Exclusion from school and failure to meet educational milestones.
- 7.19. Children and young people may be absent from where they should be for many reasons, not least wanting to spend more time with their friends. But this could put them at risk of harm and any prolonged or repeated absence can be caused for concern.
- 7.20. In such circumstances parents and practitioners need to respond and act on concerns. Seek advice from a Safeguarding Champion or the Designated Safeguarding Officer if you have concerns about a child who maybe missing.

## 8. SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK

- 8.1. 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.
- 8.2. Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and; is experiencing, or 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.
- 8.3. Under the Care Act 2014 safeguarding concerns should be referred to Kent County Council Social Care departments as they have responsibility for agreeing that the s42 Duty to carry out enquiries are necessary.
- 8.4. If s42 enquiries are required, the local authority can carry out the enquiries or require another more appropriate agency /service to carry out the enquiries on their behalf. E.g. if a crime has or appears to have been committed the police will carry out a criminal investigation, other agencies/ services may contribute to the process to ensure that the s42 duties are met
- 8.5. Under section 42 of the Care Act 2014, safeguarding duties apply to adults who:

- Have needs for care and support (whether or not they are receiving any services); and
  - Are experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
  - As a result of those care and support needs are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect
- 8.6. Care and support needs is the mixture of practical, financial and emotional support for adults who need extra help to manage their lives and be independent – including older people, people with a disability or long-term illness, people with mental health problems, and carers.
- 8.7. Care and support includes the assessment of people’s needs, provision of services and the allocation of funds to enable a person to purchase their own care and support. It could include care home, home care, personal assistants, day services, or the provision of aids and adaptations.

## Abuse and Neglect

- 8.8. 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
  - Isolation or withdrawal from services or support networks
  - Neglect and acts of omission
  - Self-neglect and self-injurious behaviour
  - Modern Slavery (this encompasses Human Trafficking etc.)
  - Domestic Abuse
  - Female Genital Mutilation
- 8.9. **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.
- 8.10. **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

- 8.11. **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.
- 8.12. 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.
- 8.13. By not engaging with individuals who are not looking after themselves (whether they have a mental condition or not) may have a profoundly detrimental effect on, an individual's health and wellbeing and can also have an impact the individuals family and the local community.
- 8.14. Public authorities, as defined in the Human Rights Act 1998, must act in accordance with the requirements of public law. In relation to adults perceived to be at risk because of self-neglect. Instead, authorities are expected to act within the powers granted to them. They must act fairly, proportionately, rationally and in line with the principles of the Care Act 2014, the Mental Capacity Act (2005) and consideration should be given to the application of the Mental Health Act (1983) where appropriate.
- 8.15. The [Kent and Medway Multi-Agency Policy and Procedure to Support People who Self-Neglect](#), should be referred to for procedures on how to respond to cases of self-neglect. Under this, the identifying agency will need to co-ordinate a multi-agency meeting at which the lead agency will be identified and agreed. If the adult at risk is in need of care and/or support then Kent County Council is likely to be the lead agency.
- 8.16. If you identify someone who you believe is self-neglecting seek advice from a Safeguarding Champion or the Designated Safeguarding Officer. 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

- 8.17. 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.
- 8.18. 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.
- 8.19. The Home Office [Guidance: duty to notify the Home Office of potential victim of slavery](#), should be referred to and the [MS1 Notification of Potential Victim of Modern Slavery Form](#), should be used to submit a notification via secure GCSX email to [dutytonotify@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:dutytonotify@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk).
- 8.20. Or call the Modern Slavery Helpline: 0800 0121 700
- 8.21. 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.

## 9. DOMESTIC ABUSE

- 9.1. 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.
- 9.2. Other forms of domestic abuse can include so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.
- 9.3. 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.
- 9.4. The Kent and Medway [Multi-Agency Protocol for Dealing with Cases of Domestic Abuse to Safeguard Adults at Risk](#), provides guidelines on dealing with cases of domestic abuse where this affects adults with care and/or support needs.

### One Stop Shop

- 9.5. 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. 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.

- 9.6. 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. It is staffed 24hrs a day by fully trained female helpline support staff. Translation facilities for callers whose first language is not English and a service for callers who are deaf or hard of hearing are also available. All calls are completely confidential.

### Clare's Law

- 9.7. 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.
- 9.8. 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.
- 9.9. The aim is to help people to make a more informed decision on whether to continue a relationship and provide help and support when making that choice. The decision to reveal this information is also called making a 'disclosure', this will usually be directly to the person at risk. This is unless, in the circumstances, someone else is better placed to use the information to protect the person at risk from abuse.
- 9.10. There may be occasions when the police will not confirm to the person making the application whether a disclosure has or hasn't been made. Any disclosure will be made in person; none of the disclosure is made in writing and you won't be given any documents.
- 9.11. To make an application contact Kent Police, either visit a police station or phone 101. You can also report domestic abuse online at [www.kent.police.uk/services/report-online](http://www.kent.police.uk/services/report-online). If you believe there is an immediate risk of harm to someone, or it is an emergency, you should always call 999.

## 10. EXTREMISM AND RADICALISATION

- 10.1. 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.
- 10.2. The Prevent duty is addressed through a multi-agency approach to identify and provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into committing acts of terrorism through a process known as 'Channel'. A 'Channel Panel' comprising of agencies who have a role in the Prevent process look at putting into place interventions and a tailored support package to safeguard those at risk based on an assessment of their vulnerabilities.
- 10.3. 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 a Designated Safeguarding Officer. The DSO should also be consulted to assist the Community Safety Unit with intelligence gathering.

- 10.4. A Channel [Referral Form](#) should be used to make a referral to the Kent Channel Panel, via secure GCSX email to [prevent.referrals@kent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:prevent.referrals@kent.pnn.police.uk). The submission of a referral to the Channel Panel should not replace a safeguarding referral and should not be relied upon to safeguard an individual at risk. The safeguarding processes, as set out in this policy, should therefore still be followed in tandem with a referral to the Channel Panel.

## 11. MENTAL HEALTH & SUICIDE AWARENESS

### What is Mental Health?

- 11.1. 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.
- 11.2. In essence good mental health is;  
  
*"...the emotional and spiritual resilience which allows us to enjoy life and survive pain, disappointment and sadness. It is a positive sense of well-being and an underlying belief in our own, and others', dignity and worth."*<sup>2</sup>
- 11.3. A mental health issue is a broad term including both mental illness and symptoms of mental illness that may not be severe enough to warrant the diagnosis of a mental illness, as well as a mental health related crisis such as having thoughts of suicide.
- 11.4. Mental illnesses are common and often occur in combination. It is not unusual for a person with anxiety disorder to develop depression, or for a person who is depressed to misuse alcohol or other drugs, perhaps in an effort to self-medicate. Terms used to describe having one or more mental health illness include dual diagnosis, comorbidity and co-occurrence.
- 11.5. Some people who are distressed deliberately harm their bodies, usually secretly, using self-harm as a way of dealing with intense emotional pain. They may cut, burn, scald or scratch themselves, injure themselves, pull their hair or swallow poisonous substances.
- 11.6. Many people with mental illnesses or mental health issues don't receive any professional help. While those with severe mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorders, will generally get professional help eventually, it can sometimes take years before they are correctly diagnosed and receive effective treatment.

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<sup>2</sup> Health Education Authority. Mental Health Promotion: A quality framework. London: Health Education Authority; 1997.

- 11.7. 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

- 11.8. 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.
- 11.9. It is estimated that for every completed suicide there are between 10-25 attempts.
- 11.10. Suicide is preventable. Most suicidal people do not want to die; they simply do not want to live with the pain they are experience 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.
- 11.11. **Openly talking about suicidal thoughts and feelings can save a life.** Although the seriousness of the topic can make it easy to shy away from, for fear of doing the wrong thing, we should not underestimate our ability to help a suicidal person, and possible save a life.
- 11.12. Suicide should not be viewed as attention seeking but a sign that someone needs help to cope. Any indication that someone is considering suicide should be treated respectfully.
- 11.13. Suicide is not an illegal act and so is no longer 'committed', it is instead referred to as 'completed' when someone takes their own life.
- 11.14. 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).
- 11.15. Internally trained Mental Health First Aiders' primary role is to give a mental health first aid service to internal staff. The role will also equip them to do deal with mental health situations with external customers/general public, however this is not the primary purpose of the role.
- 11.16. MHFA is the help offered to someone developing a mental health problem, experiencing a worsening of an existing mental illness or a mental health crisis. The first aid is given until appropriate professional help is received or the crisis resolves.
- 11.17. More information on MHFA can be found on the intranet or read the [MHFA Policy](#).

## 12. SUICIDE PREVENTION GUIDANCE

- 12.1. 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.

- 12.2. If you can do so without breaking communication with the person contact a MHFA, a Safeguarding Champion or the Designated Safeguarding Officer for advice. However if you suspect the person is actively seeking to take their own life and is at imminent risk call 999.
- 12.3. If you are on the phone to the person at the time then ask a colleague to support you by phoning 999 while you continue to speak to the person
- 12.4. The needs assessment indication below has been created to help establish the level of need for someone who may be thinking or is talking about taking their own life. It includes questions to assess risk and whether there are any protective factors in place.

### Needs Assessment Indicator



Thoughts but no intent	Thoughts & Intent	Intent & Plan to Complete
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- 12.5. **Thoughts but no intent:** if you suspect someone is in crisis, suffering from mental health issues, having feelings that could lead to or are having suicidal thoughts;
- Reassure them that there is support out there for them, manage the conversation using the techniques below;
  - Suggest that the person speak to their GP about the way they are feeling and to make an urgent appointment.
  - Offer contact details for the Samaritans (freephone **116 123**) and other support services (see information below);
  - Encourage contact with Mind.
- 12.6. **Thoughts and intent:** if someone tells you that they have had suicidal thoughts ask if they intend to act on these feelings;
- Ask if they intend to act on their thoughts, if yes try to manage the conversation using the steps below;
  - Give them the contact details for the Samaritans (freephone **116 123**) or Release the Pressure (**0800 107 0160**) or one or more of the agencies listed in the Helpful Resources section below;
  - Contact the Crisis Team (CRHT) on **0300 22 0123**.
- 12.7. **Intend and a Plan to Complete:** The person may be at imminent risk. If you suspect or have reason to believe that someone is at immediate risk of taking their own life or has attempted to take their own life, stay with them and take one of the following steps;
- If they are on the phone to you keep them talking, ask a colleague to call **999** and ask for the police or an ambulance, and stay on the line with the person until the emergency services arrive;
  - Contact the Crisis Team (CRHT) on **0300 22 0123**.

## 13. MANAGING THE CONVERSATION

- 13.1. It is untrue that using the term 'suicide' will escalate the situation. Allow the client to talk freely; listen. Do not use language that could be perceived as judging and avoid responses such as "cheer up" and "it'll be alright"
- 13.2. Don't refer to previous attempts as failed/unsuccessful as this could suggest that death is preferable. Try to avoid the term 'commit suicide' as it could make it sound like they are about to commit a crime.
- 13.3. Keep the person engaged and ensure you are listening to their needs, do not ask leading questions instead let them guide you. They need to be complicit in their recovery.
- 13.4. Try to establish what protective factors they have in place, have they thought about discovery (who will find their body)? Use C.P.R.;
  - **C**urrent Plan,
  - **P**rior attempts or exposure,
  - **R**esources.
- 13.5. **Risk Questions:** these can help to establish the persons need, if they answer yes to any of the following then they have a higher level of need;
  - Have you made a plan to end your own life?
  - Have you set a date or location for your suicide?
  - Do you have the equipment you need?
  - Have you had suicidal intentions before?
  - Have you made an attempt before?
  - Have any family or close friends completed suicide?
- 13.6. **Protective Factor Questions:** if they answer yes to the following they may indicate a lower level of need;
  - Do you have anyone you can talk with?
  - Are you accessing any support services?
  - What has stopped you attempting up to now?
  - Do you have any life plans or current commitments in place (such as visiting friends or family or taking a holiday)?
  - Do you have any effective coping strategies?
- 13.7. Someone answering yes to the many of the Risk Questions is likely to have a higher need and may be at imminent risk, consider calling the Crisis Team on **03000 222 0123** or Kent Police on **999**.
- 13.8. If they answer yes to the protective factor questions you will need to judge whether there are more risk factors than protective factors. Consider referring the person to one of the services in the Resources to Support Those at Risk of Suicide below.

## What Not To Do

- 13.9. Do not minimise the intensity of their feelings, analyse their motives, argue or lecture them or try to use guilt to prevent them from attempting suicide.
- 13.10. Do not try to solve all of their problems or give them therapy, you are not expected to be professional counsellors.

13.11. Do not relate to what they are going through, you can't and it may devalue their feelings and emotions. Try to empathise 'I am sorry to hear that you feel that way', 'it sounds like what you are going through must be really difficult'.

### What Can Help

13.12. Help them to design a mini safety plan, try to get the client to focus on what they "should do" to make themselves safe. They don't have to act on suicidal thoughts. Try to help the person to feel hope and optimism as even in small amounts these can make a big difference. **Reassure them that help is available.**

## 14. RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THOSE AT RISK OF SUICIDE

<b>Services for Adults</b>	
<p><b>The Samaritans</b></p> <p>Freephone <b>116 123</b> or email <a href="mailto:jo@samaritans.org">jo@samaritans.org</a> These services are available 24/7 all year round.</p> <p>Visit <a href="https://www.samaritans.org/">https://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></p> <p>A webchat is also available at; <a href="https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/release-the-pressure">https://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>For people already receiving support call the <b>Medway and Swale Crisis team: 01634 833738</b> or <b>01634 830000</b></p>
<p><b>The Hope Café Maidstone</b></p> <p>Hope Café is an out-of-hours crisis support service in Maidstone for anyone who may be experiencing a mental health or emotional health problem.</p> <p>It operates from Fridays 5pm to 8:45pm &amp; Sundays 1pm to 4:45pm At the Maidstone and Mid Kent Mind wellbeing center: 23 College Road, Maidstone, ME15 6YH Contact Maidstone &amp; 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></p> <p><a href="https://www.thesilverline.org.uk/">https://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="https://www.thecalmzone.net/help/webchat/">https://www.thecalmzone.net/help/webchat/</a></p>
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## Services for Children

### Papyrus

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.

Call **0800 068 41 41**  
Monday to Friday 10am to 10pm,  
Weekends 2pm to 10pm,  
Bank holidays 2pm to 5pm.

You can also text 07786 209 697 or email [pat@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org)

### Grassroots

Grassroots is a small charity focused on suicide prevention.

Email: [office@prevent-suicide.org.uk](mailto:office@prevent-suicide.org.uk)

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.

[https://www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/stay\\_alive\\_suicide\\_prevention\\_mobile\\_phone\\_application.html](https://www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/stay_alive_suicide_prevention_mobile_phone_application.html)

### Student Minds

Student Minds is the UK's student mental health charity.

Email: [info@studentminds.org.uk](mailto:info@studentminds.org.uk) or visit [www.studentminds.org.uk](http://www.studentminds.org.uk)

### Childline

For children and young people under 19.  
Call **0800 111**

The number will not show up on a phone bill.

### Place 2 Be

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.

Call: **0207 923 5500** or Email: [enquiries@place2be.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@place2be.org.uk)

### Young Minds

Young Minds is the UK's leading charity championing the wellbeing and mental health of young people.

They offer a parents helpline, call: **0808 802 5544**  
Mon-Fri. 09:30am to 4pm  
Email: [ymentquiries@youngminds.org.uk](mailto:ymentquiries@youngminds.org.uk)



## 15. RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE

- 15.1. If anyone discloses abuse or neglect, stay calm and try not to show shock or disbelief. Listen carefully to what they are saying, be sympathetic ('I am sorry that this has happened to you') and be aware of the possibility that evidence might be needed by the police, including medical evidence.
- 15.2. Tell the person that:
- You will treat the information seriously;
  - Reassure them that they did the right thing to tell you;
  - The alleged abuse was not their fault;
  - You have to inform an appropriate person;
  - You/the service will take steps to protect and support them;
- 15.3. Use open questions, such as 'can you tell me what happened / can you tell me what was said / can you describe that to me?' Write down what was said as soon as possible and report the abuse.
- 15.4. Do not:
- Press the person for more details; this will be done at a later date
  - Stop someone who is freely recalling significant events, as they may not tell you again
  - Ask leading questions that could be interpreted as putting words or suggestions to the person
  - Promise to keep secrets. You cannot keep this kind of information confidential
  - Make promises you cannot keep
  - Contact or confront the alleged abuser
  - Start an investigation on your own
  - Be judgmental e.g. 'why didn't you run away?'
- 15.5. Pass on the information to anyone other than those with a legitimate need to know, such as your Line Manager, a Safeguarding Champion or the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

### Information Gathering

- 15.6. 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,
  - A description of any visible bruising or other injuries,
  - The effect on the child or adult at risk,
  - 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.
- 15.7. When recording the incident of abuse or neglect:
- Note what was said, using the exact words and phrases with ink that can be photocopied,
  - 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,
- Make every effort to preserve any evidence which may be relevant to a Police investigation, however taking into account that the wellbeing of the child or adult at risk is your first priority.

## Consent

- 15.8. If you are making a referral to access Kent County Council's Children's Services and the necessary threshold has been met then consent should be obtained from the parent or guardian. 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 a referral not being made then it should be
- 15.9. 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.
- 15.10. 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

- 15.11. 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.
- 15.12. 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.
- 15.13. It is important to consider whether the person has the capacity to give consent to a referral. Where there is any doubt around capacity and/or their ability to consent, further advice should be sought from your Line Manager, a Safeguarding Champion or the Designated Safeguarding Officer or via a consultation with Adult Social Services.
- 15.14. Where an adult who is deemed to have capacity has made a decision that they do not want action taken to address the alleged abuse or neglect, whether caused by others or themselves, this should be respected unless failure to act will leave them at greater risk or where they are or are likely to become a repeat victim of anti-social behaviour or a crime has or will be committed.
- 15.15. Care Act Guidance states: "Where the adult who is or is at risk of abuse or neglect has capacity and is still refusing an assessment, local authorities must undertake an assessment so far as possible and document this. They should continue to keep in contact with the adult and carry out an assessment if the adult changes their mind, and asks them to do so".

15.16. The outcome of any consultation, any advice provided and any subsequent referral that is made should be recorded on the safeguarding portal.

## 16. MAKING REFERRALS FOR CHILDREN

16.1. The Quick View referral procedure at the beginning of this policy outlines the referral procedure for reporting a safeguarding concern regarding children and/or adults at risk and contains links to the referral forms.

16.2. The Kent County Council Integrated Front Door has now replaced the Central Referral Unit. The 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.

16.3. The Integrated Front Door is responsible for dealing with all Request for Support at an Intensive Level and above (Kent Support Levels 3 and 4).

16.4. The old Inter-Agency Referral Form (IAR) and Early Help Notification (EHN) have been replaced by a single Request for Support Form. To view the new Request for Support Form and accompanying guidance please visit: <http://www.kscb.org.uk/procedures/child-in-need-chin>

16.5. The decision making around the most suitable services to meet the needs of children who are referred on a Request for Support will now take place within the Front Door.

16.6. Support Level Guidance (previously the Threshold Document) has been developed to assist partner agencies when considering where children and young people sit within the continuum of need. The guidance sheet is colour coded for ease of use; [Kent Support Levels Guidance Sheet](#) and the accompanying [Kent Support Levels Process](#).

16.7. 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**.

16.8. For advice and guidance on local resources for families living in Maidstone at Kent Support Levels 1 or 2, please email: [MaidstoneEarlyHelp@kent.gov.uk](mailto:MaidstoneEarlyHelp@kent.gov.uk). Or speak to a Safeguarding Champion or the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

16.9. You will be expected to have had a discussion with the parent, carer or young person regarding the concerns and sought consent to a referral being made prior to contacting the Integrated Front Door. This discussion may lead to a greater understanding of the concerns and enable identification of appropriate support for the child, young person or family without the need for seeking a consultation.

16.10. **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**.

## 17. Making Referrals for Adults

- 17.1. [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](#).
- 17.2. 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.
- 17.3. If you have had a consultation and they have advised you to raise a safeguarding concern, you must do so within 48 hours of the discussion to avoid any increased risk.
- 17.4. It is expected that professionals who raise a concern will have completed 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.
- 17.5. The Kent Adult Safeguarding Alert Form (KASAF) can be found on [Kent County Council's website](#).
- 17.6. If the adult is already known to Kent County Council, the referral will need to be sent directly to the relevant Case Management Team, either the Learning Disability, Mental Health or Older Persons and Physical Disability Team.
- 17.7. 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 Designated Safeguarding Office if you have any questions about how to do this.
- 17.8. 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**.
- 17.9. 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.
- 17.10. Referrals made need to be sent securely, password the document and send the password via a separate email, do not include it in the body or heading of the email containing the file.
- 17.11. If you have access to a secure GCSx email then that should be used in preference of password protecting the file or ask the DSO to forward the referral on their behalf. The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) should be copied into the email for all safeguarding referrals via their secure GCSx email: [matt.roberts@maidstone.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:matt.roberts@maidstone.gcsx.gov.uk)
- 17.12. Before making a referral consider speaking to a Safeguarding Champion or the Designated Safeguarding Officer for advice. Any referrals made need to be recorded on the Safeguarding Portal.

## 18. ESCALATING A REFERRAL

- 18.1. On rare occasions Maidstone Borough Council 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 Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- 18.2. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will make the final decision as to whether a case will be referred back to Kent County Council, expressing Maidstone Borough Council'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.

## 19. ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE INVOLVING STAFF

- 19.1. Any accusation made about an employee being involved in abuse towards a child or adult should be reported to their Line Manager, a Head of Service or the Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately. Alternatively concerns may also be reported according to Maidstone Borough Council's Whistleblowing Policy.
- 19.2. If the allegation involves a senior member of staff, such as the persons Line Manager, Head of Service or if the Designated Safeguarding Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made directly to a Director and Human Resources.
- 19.3. Kent Police, Kent County Council or the regulatory authorities may be consulted at any time regarding suspected abuse.
- 19.4. Advice will be sought from the Kent County Council Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who may involve Kent Police. A disciplinary investigation team will be formed to oversee the internal investigation.
- 19.5. Any employee accused of abuse will, if necessary, be suspended or redeployed pending further investigation by Kent Police, Kent County Council and/or the internal investigation team formed to address the concern.
- 19.6. Irrespective of the findings of the Kent County Council or of Police inquiries, Maidstone Borough Council will assess all individual cases under disciplinary procedures to decide whether an employee has breached Maidstone Borough Council 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.

## 20. COMPLAINTS

- 20.1. On occasions members of the public, partner agencies or Maidstone Borough Council employees may feel that insufficient action has been taken by Maidstone Borough Council.
- 20.2. **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](#).
- 20.3. **Maidstone Borough Council employees:** should report their concerns to their Line Manager or the Designated Safeguarding Officer. Alternatively, employees may also report this through Maidstone Borough Council's Whistleblowing Policy.
- 20.4. 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)).

## 21. INFORMATION SHARING, DATA PROTECTION AND GDPR

- 21.1. Maidstone Borough Council (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).
- 21.2. 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.
- 21.3. 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.
- 21.4. 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.
- 21.5. 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

- 21.6. Maidstone Borough Council 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.
- 21.7. 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).
- 21.8. The ISA contains a form which can be used to record and evidence why information sharing was necessary and can be used as part of an audit trail.
- 21.9. Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate, up-to-date and is shared in a timely fashion. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.
- 21.10. Consider using the mnemonic **JAPAN** to help frame your thinking:
- **J**ustified, is what you are considering the right thing to do?
  - **A**uthorised, are you authorised to do it?
  - **P**roportionate, is the action proportionate to the issue? i.e. not using a sledge hammer to crack a nut.
  - **A**uditable, is there an audit trail to evidence your decision making? And is it
  - **N**ecessary, do you NEED to do it, are there other ways to achieve a positive outcome?

## 22. SAFE RECRUITMENT

- 22.1. All Maidstone Borough Council employees will be appointed in accordance with its Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedures and its policy on Disclosures Barring Service 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.

### Disclosure Barring Service (DBS)

- 22.2. There are three types of Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks: standard, enhanced and enhanced with a barred list check;
- 22.3. **Standard DBS checks:** are for people entering certain professions, such as members of the legal and accountancy professions. Standard checks contain the following: Convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings held in England and Wales on the Police National Computer (PNC), relevant convictions in Scotland and Northern Ireland may also be included. Standard checks no longer include a check of the old or new barred lists from 12 October 2009.
- 22.4. **Enhanced DBS Checks:** Also referred to as an enhanced disclosure. These are for posts that involve a far greater degree of contact with vulnerable groups including children. In general the type of work will involve regularly caring for, supervising, training or being in sole charge of such people. Examples include a Teacher, Scout or

Guide leader. Enhanced checks are also issued for certain statutory purposes such as gaming and lottery licences.

- 22.5. This level of check involves an additional level of check to those carried out for the Standard DBS check - a check on local Police records. Where local Police records contain additional information that may be relevant to the post the applicant is being considered for, the Chief Officer of Police may release information for inclusion in an enhanced check.
- 22.6. Enhanced DBS Check with barred list check – (child), (adult), (child and adult): Enhanced checks with information from the DBS' children and adults barred list is only available for those individuals engaged in regulated activity with vulnerable groups including children and a small number of posts as listed in the Police Act regulations, for example prospective adoptive parents.
- 22.7. Source of information [Guidance](#) and [Disclosure and Barring Service](#).
- 22.8. Maidstone Borough Council 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.
- 22.9. 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.
- 22.10. For contractors and agency staff, Maidstone Borough Council 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.

## 23. TRAINING

- 23.1. 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 Maidstone Borough Council's statutory obligation to ensure confirmation is received from Kent County Council that any referrals made are being actively dealt with. Everyone with access to children and adults at risk shall have regular training.
- 23.2. Training needs and opportunities relating to child and adult safeguarding and protection issues will be identified and addressed through Maidstone Borough Council's Induction and Appraisal Procedures, and in response to any changes in legislation. Training may include internal courses/workshops, externally accredited courses/seminars or workshops.
- 23.3. Staff acting as Safeguarding Champions will be required to refresh their training every two years.



## 24. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 24.1. 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.
- 24.2. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 24.3. Maidstone Borough Council will have full and proper regard to the Equality Act 2010 when making safeguarding referrals under this policy, so as to avoid any possible indirect discriminatory impact on particular groups.

## 25. REVIEW AND OVERSIGHT

- 25.1. All referrals made by Maidstone Borough Council and the responses that they receive from Kent County Council, need to be recorded centrally on the [Intranet Safeguarding Portal](#) and will be reviewed by the Safeguarding Champions Group and the Internal Safeguarding Board.
- 25.2. 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.

## 26. CONTACT INFORMATION

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