**Purpose of this document**

This document summarises St Lukes Advice Service’s (SLAS) policy statement, policy and procedures for safeguarding children. It outlines SLASs commitment to the welfare of children, the principles underlying this commitment, the action which will be taken and the procedures to be followed, if any concerns are identified or suspected. Although SLAS does not offer services directly to children it does deliver services to adults who may be parents or care for children. Through these services it can assist families and/or may become aware of abuse or welfare issues facing children.

A child is defined as an individual who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. For older individuals see Safeguarding Policy and Procedure for Adults.

**What does safeguarding mean?**

Safeguarding means protecting an individual’s right to live in safety, free from abuse, harm and neglect. It is about working together to support people to make decisions about the risks they face in their own lives and protecting those unable to make those decisions. A list of types of abuse and indicators to help you identify abuse is included in appendix 1 of this document.

This document is for staff, volunteers and trustees at SLAS. It focuses on ensuring a proportionate, timely and professional approach is taken to safeguarding issues. If you have any concerns, or suspect abuse is taking place you must report this immediately to the Service Development Manager, who is SLAS’s designated safeguarding lead.

**This Policy is based on the following principles:**

Although SLAS does not offer services directly to children we recognise that the welfare of children is everyone’s responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting them from abuse or harm.

* The welfare of adults assisted by SLAS and their children is a primary concern for SLAS.
* All children have the right to protection from abuse, harm or neglect.
* It is everyone’s responsibility to report any concerns about abuse, harm or neglect and it is the responsibility of Social Services and the Police to conduct, where appropriate, an investigation.
* All incidents of alleged poor practise, misconduct, abuse or the potential for harm to children will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
* All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.

**Recognising the different types of abuse or harm**

Abuse or harm to a child’s well-being can take a range of forms and can sometimes be hidden or difficult to spot. Appendix 1 lists different types of abuse and harm and some of the indicators which may point to abuse. If you have any concern you should discuss the issues as soon as possible with the Service Delivery Manager, who is the safeguarding lead and will determine action.

**St Luke’s Advice Service will:**

* Promote the well-being and welfare of children by providing opportunities, for those responsible for them, to access advice and information through our service.
* Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and protect them from abuse and harm. See Appendix 2 for details of procedure to be followed.
* Ensure staff, volunteers and trustees are adequately checked and cleared through the application and recruitment process, including reference and DBS checks, to ensure their suitability for working with potentially vulnerable individuals;
* Recruit, train, support and supervise staff, volunteers and trustees to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse and minimise risk.
* Require staff, volunteers and trustees as part of induction and on-going training to adopt and abide by this Policy. This Policy will form part of Induction and in-service training for all staff whether paid or volunteers.
* Report any concerns over the welfare of a child to the Service Delivery Manager, who is the designated safeguarding lead for SLAS. These concerns of abuse or neglect will then be raised with Front Door for Families. Tel: 01273 290400. Email:  FrontDoorForFamilies@brighton-hove.gcsx.gov.uk. Front Door For Families is part of Brighton and Hove City Council.
* Respond to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children in line with this Policy and Procedure as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.

# Radicalisation and safeguarding

If you are concerned about a child at risk becoming radicalised, note your concerns and raise them with the Service Delivery Manager at the earliest opportunity.

The government has a counter-terrorism strategy that includes supporting vulnerable people to prevent them being drawn into terrorism. Please speak to the Service Delivery Manager as soon as possible if you have any concerns arising from discussions with clients, or client behaviour.

All staff and volunteers at SLAS will be mindful of radicalisation and report any concerns using the appropriate safeguarding children policies and procedures. See Appendix 2 and links to procedures below.

**Policy Review**

SLAS will review and evaluate this Policy and Procedure on an annual basis or as required following any relevant issues or concerns raised or changes in legislation relating to the protection of children (whichever is soonest).

**For further information on safeguarding children contact the Service Delivery Manager who is SLASs designated safeguarding lead. The following organisations have statutory duties in this area, and can supply information and advice. If you believe a child is in immediate danger contact the relevant Child Protection Team or phone 999, ask for the appropriate service and explain the issue.**

**For children in Brighton and Hove:**

### Child protection - Brighton & Hove City Council

https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk › child-protection

and then follow the links to Front Door For Families.

**For children in East Sussex:**

### Children and families | East Sussex County Council

https://new.eastsussex.gov.uk › children-families

**The policy should be reviewed at least annually to ensure its effectiveness.**

**Date Policy Adopted by the Management Committee: Jan 2022. Reviewed and updated Sept 2022. Next review: March 23**

# Appendix 1

# Recognising the different types of abuse and risk

The indicators provided below are not an exhaustive list of signs and symptoms of someone suffering abuse and neglect. Further information about possible signs and symptoms can be found online by visiting the [NHS webpage on safeguarding](https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/safeguarding/) or the [Social Care Institute of Excellence webpages on safeguarding](http://www.scie.org.uk/adults/safeguarding/).

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| Type of abuse  | Indicators of abuse |
| **Physical abuse**: This type of abuse involves hitting, kicking, spitting and biting. It can also involve restraining someone, making someone intentionally uncomfortable or withholding food, water or medication | These could include if someone has physical injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns and is unable to provide a consistent explanation of the injuries they have.  |
| **Domestic violence or abuse**:This type of abuse not only applies to physical abuse but also includes the following:* psychological
* sexual
* financial
* emotional

It includes any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or 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. It also includes so-called 'honour’-based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage | These could include the following:* low self esteem
* feeling that the abuse is their fault when it is not
* physical evidence of violence such as bruising, cuts, broken bones
* verbal abuse and humiliation in front of others
* fear of outside intervention
* damage to home or property
* isolation – not seeing friends and family
* limited access to money
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| **Sexual abuse:** This type of abuse includes rape, any inappropriate touching, indecent exposure, sexual acts to which the individual has not consented or lacks the capacity to consent, sexual photography or forced use of pornography or the witnessing of sexual acts | It may be more difficult to pick up on indicators for this type of abuse as they can include physical symptoms such as bruising or bleeding in places covered by clothing. However the following may be noticeable:* bruising to the upper arms and marks on the neck
* unusual difficulty in walking or sitting
* self harming
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| **Psychological and emotional abuse**: This type of abuse includes including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks | The indicators of this type of abuse can include the following:* an air of silence when a particular person is present
* withdrawal or change in the psychological state of the person
* insomnia
* low self-esteem
* uncooperative and aggressive behaviour
* a change of appetite, weight loss/gain
* signs of distress: tearfulness, anger
* apparent false claims, by someone involved with the person, to attract unnecessary treatment
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| **Financial or material abuse**:This type of abuse can involve theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an individual’s financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits | These could include the following:* unexplained lack of money or inability to maintain lifestyle
* unexplained withdrawal of funds from accounts
* power of attorney or lasting power of attorney (LPA) being obtained after the person has ceased to have mental capacity
* the person allocated to manage financial affairs is evasive or uncooperative
* the family or others show unusual interest in the assets of the person
* signs of financial hardship in cases where the person’s financial affairs are being managed by a court-appointed deputy, attorney or LPA
* recent changes in deeds or title to property
* rent arrears and eviction notices
* disparity between the person’s living conditions and their financial resources, e.g. insufficient food in the house
* unnecessary property repairs
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| **Modern slavery**: This type of abuse encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude | These could include the following:* signs of physical or emotional abuse
* appearing to be malnourished, unkempt or withdrawn
* isolation from the community, seeming under the control or influence of others
* living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation and/or living and working at the same address
* lack of personal effects or identification documents
* always wearing the same clothes
* avoidance of eye contact, appearing frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers
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| **Discriminatory abuse**:Including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment because of age, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity | * the person appears withdrawn and isolated
* expressions of anger, frustration, fear or anxiety
* the support on offer does not take account of the person’s individual needs in terms of a protected characteristic
 |
| **Organisational or institutional abuse:**Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one’s own home. This may range from one-off incidents to ongoing ill-treatment | These could include the following:* inadequate staffing levels
* people being hungry or dehydrated
* poor standards of care
* lack of personal clothing and possessions and communal use of personal items
* lack of adequate procedures
* poor record-keeping and missing documents
* absence of individual care plans
* lack of management overview and support
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| **Neglect and acts of omission:**Including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating | These could include the following:* failure to provide or allow access to food, shelter, clothing, heating, stimulation and activity, personal or medical care
* providing care in a way that the person dislikes
* failure to administer medication as prescribed
* refusal of access to visitors
* not taking account of the person’s cultural, religious or ethnic needs
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| **Self neglect:**This covers a wide range of behaviour that is neglecting to care for one’s personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding | These could include the following:* very poor personal hygiene
* unkempt appearance
* lack of essential food, clothing or shelter
* malnutrition and/or dehydration
* living in squalid or unsanitary conditions
* neglecting household maintenance
 |

**Appendix 2**

**Procedure**

1) SLAS has an appointed Safeguarding Lead it is Grace Smyth the Service Delivery Manager. This person has received training in safeguarding which is updated when required. At Trustee level Safeguarding will be led by the Chair, Martin Poole or in his absence a trustee nominated to act in this capacity.

2) All staff, trustees and volunteers who come in to contact with clients and their children have been checked as appropriate to work with vulnerable adults and will have had an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.

3) Concerns

Any worker, volunteer or trustee in SLAS may have concerns about the welfare, abuse, or possible abuse of a child.

Examples of when a concern is raised would be:

* A client tells you they have abused a child
* A client speaks about the abuse of a child by someone else
* A client’s child is seen with unexplained bruising/injuries
* During discussions about money with a client, it becomes apparent that food is not bought for children
* During a home visit you become aware of housing conditions that impact adversely on children
* During a home visit you notice images of children that give you cause for concern
* A parent only speaks negatively about their child

To assist colleagues to recognise abuse examples of indicators of abuse are laid out in Appendix 1. Actual evidence of abuse is not required for there to be a concern.

4) Recording

All concerns and any actions taken will be recorded.  Incidents must be case noted factually and objectively. All referrals to social services will be kept on a central file.

5) If immediate action is required to keep a child safe, the worker should call for the appropriate help. This would be emergency services -an ambulance or police.

6) Normally immediate action would not be required and the worker with concerns should speak at their earliest opportunity with the SLAS Safeguarding Lead, or if unavailable their line manager.

7) Normally any subsequent action would be agreed with the client concerned, and the child and parents will be notified of this policy & procedures as appropriate. Client’s details or confidential information about a child would not be passed to any other agency without consent from the client and/or the child’s parent or guardian, as appropriate. This is over-ridden if the child’s safety would be compromised by this. SLAS confidentiality procedure will be followed.

8) Action taken could include:

* Calling social services for advice without passing on confidential information
* Referrals to other agencies
* Speaking again with the client for more information

Whenever there is concern that a child has been abused or neglected a referral must be made without delay according to the procedures for each local authority area. For East and West Sussex and Brighton and Hove, see contact details and links above. For other local authority areas, search for their website.

9) Responsibilities

* All workers are responsible for flagging up any concerns about the welfare or abuse of a child. They should do this by speaking to the Service Delivery Manager who is the Safeguarding Lead, or if unavailable their line manager.
* The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for speaking to the worker with concerns and agreeing a course of action
* The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring their own training in safeguarding children is up to date. This must be reviewed annually.