

Safeguarding Children Policy

Scope of Policy

This policy outlines the responsibilities and procedures for safeguarding children across all areas of Platform Housing Group (the Group) operations. It applies to:

- Colleagues, Board Members, Stakeholders
- Consultants, Sub-contractors, Partners
- Volunteers, Agents, and Customers

Any other individuals or agencies working with or on behalf of the Group (collectively referred to as “Workers”)

The policy sets out how concerns regarding actual, suspected or alleged abuse of a child should be reported and the steps we will take to respond appropriately.

All colleagues must understand that ‘safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility’. Every individual has a duty to act on concerns of abuse or neglect, regardless of their role.

For the purposes of this policy, abuse is defined as deliberate or unintentional actions or omissions which causes or may cause harm, distress, or neglect to a child. Abuse can take many forms, including physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

For the purposes of this policy, a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This includes unborn children. The definition applies regardless of the child’s living arrangements, nationality, or immigration status.

All concerns or incidents of suspected or actual abuse will be managed in accordance with this policy and its associated procedures.

The policy should be read in conjunction with the supporting procedure.

Applicability

The policy applies to all members of the Group.

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Group is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Abuse and neglect of children is never acceptable. Safeguarding means protecting a person's right to live in safety; free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to both prevent and minimise these risks.

1.2 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network, through a kinship care network, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the child(ren).
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework. (Working together to Safeguard Children 2026)

2. Overview and Context

2.1 In accordance with the:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Crime and Policing Act 2026

All colleagues have a responsibility to be vigilant and be able to identify and raise any safeguarding concerns they may have involving children.

In line with statutory guidance, safeguarding responsibilities apply to all children who may come into contact with the organisation, including those who are:

- Customers in their own right (who hold a licence or tenancy, this may include those who live within one of our supported living schemes)
- Children of customers living in our properties or receiving our services
- Visitors to any of our properties, offices or premises

It is essential that all colleagues remain vigilant and understand that safeguarding concerns may arise in any of these contexts. Prompt reporting of safeguarding concerns ensures that appropriate action can be taken to protect the child or young person from harm.

3. Aims and Objectives

3.1 The aims of this policy are to make sure we play our part to assist to:

- Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to children and young people.
- Protect all individuals working with or on behalf of the organisation—including colleagues, volunteers, contractors and agents (who have a responsibility towards children and young people).
- Raise awareness of the different types of abuse and the signs and indicators to look out for.
- Clarify the actions to be taken when abuse or inappropriate conduct is suspected, witnessed or disclosed.
- Provide accessible information and support to help individuals understand:
 - The different forms of abuse
 - How to stay safe
 - How to raise concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person
- Recognise and to the extent it is necessary respect cultural, ethnic and individual diversity in safeguarding practices.
- Work in partnership with multi-agency safeguarding partners to ensure a coordinated and effective response to safeguarding concerns.

3.2 Roles and Responsibilities

- **Our responsibility:** to recognise, record, and report any safeguarding concerns to appropriate bodies.
- **Statutory responsibility:** held by Children's Social Care to assess, investigate, and act on those concerns.
- **Duty of care:** while we do not take on investigative roles, our responsibility is not discharged once a referral has been made. We still have an ongoing duty to escalate, follow up, and continue to monitor any concerns as appropriate.

3.2.1 Designated Strategic Safeguarding Lead

- Our Director of Housing Operations holds strategic responsibility for safeguarding across the organisation.
- This role is supported operationally by our Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Manager, who has a dedicated team to help operationally support our teams in effectively managing and overseeing concerns of safeguarding.

3.2.2 All Workers (including colleagues, Board and Committee Members, volunteers, agents and contractors)

- Must comply with the organisation's Safeguarding Children Policy.
- Are required to complete mandatory safeguarding training in line with organisation expectations.
- Must understand the different types of abuse and how to recognise signs of harm or neglect.
- Are responsible for reporting any concerns or suspicions of abuse promptly in accordance with procedure.

3.2.3 Managers

- Are accountable for ensuring that safeguarding concerns are reported appropriately.
- Must ensure safeguarding is effectively managed within their teams and areas of responsibility.
- Should support colleagues in raising internal concerns, referrals and liaising with safeguarding leads when necessary.

3.2.4 All Colleagues

- Must raise an internal safeguarding concern for suspected or actual abuse as soon as possible after becoming aware of it.
- If a child or young person is believed to be at immediate or significant risk, colleagues must:
 - Contact emergency services immediately.
 - Take steps to ensure the child or young person is safe.
 - In serious cases, colleagues should consult with their line manager or Safeguarding team to determine whether a referral to the local authority Safeguarding team is needed.
 - The Children's Emergency Duty Team (EDT) must be contacted if an emergency occurs outside of office hours. EDT consists of a team of social workers who provide an out of hours response to situations which occur outside of normal social care hours.

Our levels of involvement may vary depending on the services we are providing. As a social landlord, we provide accommodation to a diverse range of customers who may live within our general needs, retirement or supported living accommodation (i.e., our Foyer for Young People in Malvern). Dependent on the needs of the child or young person and the services provided to them, we will make appropriate support referrals to other agencies as required.

We understand colleagues may not be sure whether a matter is a safeguarding issue or not and we encourage them to raise concerns internally so that these can be fully investigated and we can ensure children are protected. We would much rather explain why something is not a safeguarding issue than take no action which

risks abuse that could have been prevented. Colleagues need to contact the Safeguarding team for guidance if they are unsure of how to proceed with/navigate a safeguarding concern.

The Executive Team receive quarterly safeguarding reports from the Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Manager plus an annual safeguarding report is provided to the Executive Team and Group Board.

3.3 The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA)

Mental capacity refers to an individual's ability to make informed decisions about their own life from the age of 16 years; the provisions of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 apply. Note: only young people 16 years and above are covered by Mental Capacity Act – children under 16 years are subject to a different assessment (Gillick Competency).

The MCA was established to:

- Empower individuals to make their own decisions wherever possible.
- Protect those who lack the capacity to make certain decisions for themselves.

3.3.1 The Five Key Principles of the MCA:

1. Presumption of capacity – Every person aged 16 years and over has the right to make their own decisions unless it is proven on the balance of probabilities that they lack capacity.
2. Support to make decisions – Consideration must be given to what practical help can be provided to assist someone to be capacitous before it is determined they cannot make their own decisions.
3. Right to make unwise decisions – Making a decision that others may consider unwise does not mean the person lacks capacity.
4. Best interests – Any decision made on behalf of someone who lacks capacity must be in their best interests.
5. Least restrictive option – Any action taken should be the least restrictive of the person's rights and freedoms.

Where colleagues have concerns about a child or young person, or their ability to make an informed decision relating to an abuse allegation or concerns around abuse, we will:

- Liaise with the most appropriate support agency
- Request a mental capacity assessment takes place
- Ensure advocacy is provided where necessary

If the person at risk has an allocated social worker or care coordinator, they should be contacted as the first point of call.

3.3.2 Gillick Competency

Although primarily used in the context of making medical decisions, Gillick Competency is a way of assessing a child's mental capacity to make decisions themselves.

Professionals will consider a number of factors when assessing a child's capacity to consent, including:

- the child's age, maturity and mental capacity
- their understanding of the issue and what it involves - including advantages, disadvantages and potential long-term impact
- their understanding of the risks, implications and consequences that may arise from their decision
- how well they understand any advice or information they have been given
- their understanding of any alternative options, if available
- their ability to explain a rationale around their reasoning and decision making

Consent is not valid if a young person is being pressured or influenced by someone else.

4. Policy Outline

4.1 Identifying Signs of Abuse and Neglect

Under the Children Act 1989, harm is defined as the ill-treatment or impairment of health and development. It recognises four primary categories of child abuse and significant harm:

- Physical Abuse: Deliberately hurting or injuring a child, which can include hitting, shaking, burning, or poisoning.
- Emotional Abuse: The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, such as humiliating, ignoring, isolating, or intimidating them, or exposing them to domestic abuse.
- Sexual Abuse: Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. This includes physical contact, non-contact activities like grooming, or involving a child in watching or producing explicit material.
- Neglect: The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional, educational, or medical needs, which impairs their development

Children may be vulnerable to other forms of neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their day-to-day lives.

The abuse can take place in a variety of different forms, including domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, female genital mutilation, exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime group, trafficking and modern-day slavery, forced

marriage, online abuse, sexual exploitation, and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation.

We also acknowledge the increase in County Lines' activities and the impact on children and young people forced into transporting illegal drugs.

Full definitions can be found at the end of this policy.

4.2 **Information Sharing**

The Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) allow for the sharing of personal information without consent in safeguarding contexts, provided certain conditions are met.

Information can be shared without consent when:

- The public interest in protecting the individual outweighs the interest in maintaining confidentiality.
- There is a lawful basis for sharing, such as:
 - Safeguarding children or individuals at risk
 - Preventing neglect or physical, mental, or emotional harm
 - Protecting the well-being of an individual

When sharing information, it must be:

- Necessary and proportionate
- Shared only with those who need to know
- Accurate and up to date
- Shared in a timely manner
- Shared securely
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Prioritising Safety

- If a child or young person is suffering or at risk of abuse or neglect, their safety is the overriding priority.
- Information must be shared with statutory authorities in such cases, regardless of consent.

Transparency and Cooperation

- It is good practice to inform parents/carers (or the individual if aged 16 years or over) that information is being shared, and to work cooperatively with them where it is safe to do so. Sometimes informing parents/carers may not be appropriate if there is an increased risk of harm to the child arising from the sharing of such information.

Record Keeping

Clear factual and transparent records must be kept of:

- The decision to share information
- What was shared
- With whom it was shared
- The purpose of sharing

Communication

- When sharing information, where appropriate we will explain to the child or young person (or their guardian if under 16 years):
 - What information is being shared
 - Who it is being shared with
 - How the information will be shared

4.3 Recording Safeguarding Concerns

All incidents, allegations, or concerns of abuse, harm or neglect involving children or young people must be recorded in a clear, accurate, and timely manner using the organisation's case management system.

Recording Safeguarding Concerns

- All safeguarding concerns are logged in the organisation's Case Management System. Cases are triaged within one working day of them being logged and a full risk assessment completed.
- Training is provided to ensure colleagues understand how to record concerns appropriately.
- Access to logged cases is restricted due to the sensitive nature of the information.

Standards for Reporting

- Reports must be written using factual, objective, and professional language.
- Reports must not include blame and should resist including speculation, individual opinions and assumptions unless necessary.
- Colleagues must always maintain the appropriate level of confidentiality when handling safeguarding information.

Investigating Concerns

- A visit will be completed for each safeguarding concern raised.
- If after making contact the reported concerns are confirmed by the case officer these should be fully documented on dynamics. A referral may be

raised with the relevant Local Authority Safeguarding Team, or the individual may need to be signposted to other organisations for specialist support.

- The organisation will respond to any reported incidents in a way that does not compromise ongoing police or local authority investigations.
- We work proactively and collaboratively with partner agencies to safeguard children and young people.
- Information is recorded and shared appropriately with other professionals and statutory agencies involved in safeguarding.

Colleagues should not assume or depend on another person or agency to report the concern and must ensure we make our own referrals.

4.4 Prevent

- The Government Prevent programme highlights that some children and young people may be vulnerable to radicalisation and involvement in terrorism. Prevent is the Government's strategy to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, in all its forms. Prevent works with individuals and communities by using voluntary early intervention to encourage them to challenge extremist and terrorist ideology and behaviour. Terrorism is an action or threat designed to influence the government or intimidate the public. Its purpose is to advance a political, religious or ideological cause. Extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, that aims to negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the above.
- We recognise that it supports children and young people who may be at risk of radicalisation, and we will work closely with local voluntary and community groups as well as local authorities and the police to engage with and co-deliver support to customers who might be at risk of radicalisation.
- In line with procedure, the following form should be completed and submitted to the local police force for the relevant area when it is suspected that radicalisation is a risk: National Prevent referral form
- Concerns can also be raised via local authority reporting pathways. Please note, due to our extensive geography these will differ depending on the local authority in question.

4.5 Children Affected by Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines domestic abuse as occurring where the victim and perpetrator are over 16 years of age. Abusive behaviour directed at a person under 16 years of age would be dealt with as child abuse rather than domestic abuse.

However, the Act defines a child as a victim of domestic abuse if:

- They see, hear, or experience the effects of domestic abuse
- They are related to a person carrying out domestic abuse or the victim of domestic abuse.

The Act defines a child being related to a person if the:

- Person is a parent of, or has parental responsibility for, the child; or
- Child and the person are relatives.

4.6 Partnership Working

- We recognise that successful outcomes for children and young people depends on strong partnership working and understand collaboration is key for all practitioners working with the same child and family share information to get a complete picture of what life is like for the child. Collectively, they ensure the child's voice is at the centre of any agreed plan and the right support is provided.
- Everyone who interacts with children and families should work together and has a role to play. Providing a child will not be put at further risk, where our colleagues will discuss concerns with the child's family to gain consent to make referrals to ensure trust is maintained and the process is transparent, and it is clear to all concerned what action is being taken.
- We will work actively within a multi-agency framework with agencies such as social services, health professionals, family, and the police to prevent, assess and investigate allegations of abuse. Where appropriate we ensure that Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships and the police are given all assistance in pursuing investigations into safeguarding incidents, and we actively participate in such investigations where required.
- We will attend multi agency meetings such as Child in Need (CiN) or Child Protection (CPP) meetings to ensure that relevant information is shared appropriately and risks are clearly understood. Our attendance will support timely decision-making, promote effective communication between agencies, and help ensure that the child's welfare remains central to all actions and interventions.
- We will liaise with police regarding Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) for high-risk offenders and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing (MARAC) with regards to incidents of domestic abuse. Local agencies, including the police and health services, have a duty under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 to ensure that they consider the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people when carrying out their functions.

4.7 Escalating Concerns

If there is a case involving death or serious harm to a child or young person living in our properties or receiving a service from us that could lead to reputational, financial, or regulatory risk, colleagues must report this to the Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Manager who will immediately alert the Safeguarding Lead and the Executive Team.

4.8 Safer Recruitment

We are committed to ensuring no child or young person is placed at risk where our recruitment practice could have reasonably foreseen and prevented the risk occurring.

Our Recruitment and Selection Policy covers our approach to recruiting: ensuring that we take all reasonable steps to protect vulnerable individuals from harm such as the use of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and enhanced DBS checks. When recruiting to roles requiring working with, and/or contact with, children and young people recruiting managers will observe additional safer recruitment practices which are also detailed in the Recruitment and Selection Policy.

- Robust recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to help prevent unsuitable people from working with children and young people.
- We require an enhanced DBS check for those working with children and young people.

4.9 Whistleblowing

If a concern or allegation is raised about an employee, one of our agents or a contractor; then we will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports a concern relating to a child or young person at risk (see our Whistleblowing Policy, Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy). In such cases the relevant Director and the Safeguarding Lead should be informed as well as the senior manager in the agency/contracting company as appropriate and statutory authorities. We will ensure that the employee is treated fairly and honestly and supported throughout the process.

Should we receive any calls, emails, or any other form of communication with safeguarding concerns where a colleague may be the perpetrator, please collect all necessary information and email this to secureinformationrequests@platformhg.com.

We will ensure that allegations regarding inappropriate conduct of colleagues, in or outside the workplace, are investigated thoroughly and with urgency, through the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure with our Employee Relations colleagues.

Where such allegations are made in relation to children or young people, the Safeguarding Lead and Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse Manager must be notified on the same day in the first instance.

We will follow the policies of the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is responsible for overseeing allegations of abuse or misconduct against people who work with children. The LADO's role is to ensure these allegations are managed appropriately and that children and young people are protected. The LADO for the local authority in question will be contacted within one working day of an incident arising by either the Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse Manager.

4.10 Training of Colleagues and Volunteers

Our induction process for new colleagues and volunteers includes information on all relevant policies and procedures, including this Safeguarding Children Policy.

Every employee will undertake safeguarding training at the level appropriate to their role. Additional training will be sourced dependant on job role.

Online mandatory safeguarding training modules are completed every 2 years. Completion of mandatory training is reported to the Group Audit and Risk Committee (Board level).

All colleagues and volunteers will have a designated supervisor who will provide appropriate on-going support, supervision or signposting.

All colleagues will be trained to recognise the symptoms of abuse and neglect and made aware of their duty to report any concerns or evidence that they have of alleged abuse or neglect of a child, young person or adult at risk.

Policies are disseminated across the Group through internal communications and on our intranet pages. A read and sign acknowledgment will be completed by colleagues to state that they have read, understood, and agree to uphold the principles and responsibilities outlined in our safeguarding policies.

5. Equality and Diversity

- 5.1 We are committed to fairness and equality for all regardless of age, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy, disability, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation as referred to in our relevant Group policies. Our aim is to ensure that our policies and procedures do not create an unlawful disadvantage for anyone, either directly or indirectly.

- 5.2 An equality impact assessment has been undertaken in respect of this policy and which concluded that there is no negative impact on any person or group with a protected characteristic.

6. Complaints

- 6.1 We aim to meet the needs of our customers by providing an excellent service. However, it is acknowledged that occasionally things go wrong and customers may wish to complain. Should the need arise to make a complaint, please refer to our Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy.

7. Monitoring and Review

- 7.1 The Executive Team receive quarterly safeguarding reports from the Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Manager plus an annual safeguarding report is provided to the Executive Team and Group Board.

This policy will be reviewed every three years or on the introduction of new legislation, best practice guidelines or required operational changes, whichever is the sooner.

- 7.2 We may update this policy from time to time to reflect changes in the law, regulations, or how we operate.
- 7.3 Approved documents are valid for use after their approval date and remain in force beyond any expiry of their review date until an updated version is available.

8. Associated Documents

- 8.1 List of documents - associated policies, procedures and publications:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- Care Act 2014
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Equality Act 2010
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)
- Housing Act 1985 and Housing Act 1996
- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Amendment) Regulations 2003
- Safeguarding Adults – National Framework of Standards 2005

- Every Child Matters: Change for Children (2004)
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Regulator for Social Housing – Consumer Standards
- Local Authority Guidelines as appropriate

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Safeguarding Definitions and Glossary

The information below details safeguarding measures that can be instigated through partnership working.

Child	A child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This includes unborn children. The definition applies regardless of the child's living arrangements, nationality, or immigration status.
Child Abuse	Child abuse refers to any action or lack of action by another person—adult or child—that causes significant harm to a child. It can occur in any setting and often involves a breach of trust or power. Abuse may be a single incident or a pattern of behaviour over time. Indicators include unexplained injuries, fearfulness, withdrawal, or developmental delays.
Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs)	CSPRs are formal reviews conducted in the UK when a child dies or is seriously harmed due to abuse or neglect. These reviews aim to identify lessons to improve safeguarding systems and prevent future harm.
Child Protection Plan (CPP)	A CPP is a formal plan developed after a Child Protection Conference when a child is considered at risk of significant harm. It outlines actions to keep the child safe, promote their welfare, and support the family in making necessary changes.
Child in Need (CiN)	Under the Children Act 1989, a child is considered 'in need' if they require additional support from local authority children's services to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development, or to prevent significant harm. This includes children with disabilities.
Safeguarding Children Partnerships	These are statutory bodies responsible for ensuring that agencies work together effectively to protect and promote the welfare of children in a local area. They replaced Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) in 2019.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026	This is statutory guidance from the UK Government that outlines how organisations and agencies should collaborate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It emphasizes a child-centred approach and strong multi-agency working.
Early Help	Refers to the support provided to children, young people, and their families as soon as problems emerge, or when there is a strong likelihood that problems will emerge in the future. The aim is to prevent issues from escalating into more serious safeguarding concerns.
Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)	Statutory frameworks in the UK used by police, probation, and prison services to assess and manage the risks posed by violent and sexual offenders in the community. They ensure information sharing and create risk management plans, often involving housing, health, and social services, with three levels of management ranging from single agency to active, multi-agency oversight.
Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)	Regular local meeting in the UK where agencies — including police, health, child protection, and housing — share information to create safety plans for victims at high risk of serious harm or murder due to domestic abuse. It focuses on improving victim safety and holding perpetrators accountable.

Types of Abuse - Children	
Physical Abuse	Deliberate physical harm or injury to a child. Examples include hitting, shaking, burning, poisoning, or suffocating. Indicators may include bruises, burns, bite marks, or fear of adults.
Emotional Abuse	Persistent emotional maltreatment that impacts a child's emotional development. Examples include humiliation, threats, rejection, or excessive criticism. Signs may include low self-esteem, withdrawal, or developmental delays.
Sexual Abuse	Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. This includes grooming, exploitation, or exposure to inappropriate content. Indicators include

	sexualized behaviour, fear of certain people, or physical discomfort.
Neglect	Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or emotional needs. Examples include lack of food, shelter, supervision, or medical care. Signs include poor hygiene, malnutrition, or frequent absences from school.

Further Types of Abuse	
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	A form of sexual abuse where children are manipulated or coerced into sexual activity in exchange for something. Examples include gifts, money, affection, or status. Indicators include unexplained gifts, relationships with older individuals, or going missing.
Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)	Exploiting children to commit crimes, often for financial gain. Examples include county lines drug trafficking, theft, or gang involvement. Signs include unexplained money, new possessions, or association with gangs. Grooming: Building an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, exploitation, or trafficking. Can occur online or in person. Indicators include secrecy, withdrawal, or sudden changes in behaviour.
Gang Exploitation	Involves peer groups, street gangs, or organised crime groups. Children may feel a sense of belonging and not recognise the exploitation. Signs include gang-related language, unexplained injuries, or fear of leaving the gang.
Cuckooing	A criminal befriends a vulnerable person and uses their home to conduct illegal activities which the tenant has no involvement with, often ousting the legal tenant. Children may be present or involved. Indicators include unfamiliar individuals at the property or changes in behaviour.
Domestic Abuse	Exposure to violence or abuse in the home. Can cause emotional trauma and long-term psychological harm. Signs include anxiety, aggression, or reluctance to go home.

Online Abuse	Abuse that occurs via the internet or digital devices. Examples include cyberbullying, grooming, sextortion, or exposure to harmful content. Indicators include secrecy around devices or changes in online behaviour.
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	Partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. Illegal in the UK and considered a form of child abuse. Signs include difficulty walking or sitting, or reluctance to undergo medical exams.
Forced Marriage	A marriage where one or both parties do not consent. Often involves coercion, threats, or abuse. Indicators include sudden travel abroad, withdrawal from education, or family pressure.
Honour Based Abuse	Violence committed to protect perceived cultural or religious honour. May include physical violence, forced marriage, or restrictions on freedom. Signs include fear of family, isolation, or injuries.
Radicalisation and Extremism	The process by which a child is drawn into extremist ideologies. Under the Prevent Duty, professionals must act to prevent this. Indicators include changes in behaviour, isolation, or expressing extremist views.
Human Trafficking	Children are tricked, forced, or persuaded to leave their homes and are then exploited. This includes domestic slavery, forced labour, or sexual exploitation. Signs include lack of freedom, fearfulness, or poor living conditions.
Self-Harm	When a person intentionally hurts themselves to cope with emotional distress. Methods include cutting, burning, or hitting oneself. Indicators include unexplained injuries, wearing long sleeves, or withdrawal.
Suicide	Involves a person intentionally ending their own life. Suicidal feelings may include thoughts of death, hopelessness, or planning suicide. Warning signs include talking about death, giving away possessions, or sudden calmness after depression.