



Purpose and Aim

KEYFORT works with children and families as part of its activities, this can include supporting people with disabilities who are parents/ carers of children or have children living in their family home. KEYFORT also directly support children with disabilities in order to provide respite for their parents or cares. KEYFORT's Education Service provides support within educational settings to children such as mentoring, personal assistance within settings, personal care etc.

This policy aims to;

- protect children who receive support from KEYFORT or who's parents/carers use our services,
- provide a safe environment for children,
- support staff to identify children who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm,
- provide clear direction to staff about how to respond to concerns about a child's welfare.

KEYFORT believes that:

- all children have the right to live their lives free from abuse and should never experience abuse of any kind,
- everyone has a responsibility to keep children safe,
- everyone has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children,
- the welfare of the child is paramount,
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse,
- working in partnership with children, their parents/carers and other agencies and organisations is essential in safeguarding children effectively.

The welfare of the child is paramount.

This policy applies to KEYFORT's whole workforce. This policy will be shared with all staff and stakeholders.

Policy definitions

KEYFORT and its staff have a duty to safeguard any children who use our services or who we come into contact with. A child is defined as; a boy or girl under the age of 18 years old.

Child abuse can be perpetrated in two ways, through Commission or Omission. Commission refers to deliberate actions taken that lead to harm e.g. hitting a child.

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Omission refers to a failure to meet a child's needs or a failure to act that leads to harm e.g. failing to provide adequate supervision.

Abuse/neglect can be a single or repeated act. It can also be deliberate acts or done unknowingly. Abuse/neglect can happen anywhere – in children's own homes, in hospitals, in residential settings etc.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities can be more at risk of experiencing abuse and may be less able to recognise when abuse is occurring, communicate with others to ask for help when abuse is occurring or protect themselves from abuse. It is therefore important that all staff working with children with special educational needs and disabilities are aware of the signs/symptoms of abuse and know how to report any concerns they have.

Abuse in relation to children is defined as; the persistent maltreatment of a child. There are 4 types of child abuse that can take place:

Physical – a form of abuse that causes physical harm e.g. hitting, shaking, poisoning, drowning, scalding etc. It can also include a parent/carer fabricating symptoms of or deliberately inducing illness, female genital mutilation (FGM) and 'honour-based' violence.

Emotional – persistent emotional maltreatment which causes severe adverse effects on the child's emotional development. This can include; conveying to a child they are worthless, unloved or inadequate, not giving the child an opportunity to express his/her views or making fun of what they say, bullying, inappropriate expectations, corruption, witnessing the ill treatment of another person.

Sexual – forcing or enticing a child to participate in sexual activities, this does not necessarily involve violence and the child may not initially be aware that they are being sexually abused. Sexual abuse can involve physical assault, non-penetrative acts of assault e.g. kissing, masturbation, rubbing or touching outside the clothes. It can also include non-contact acts e.g. involving the child in looking at or producing sexual images, watching pornography or sexual acts, encouraging sexually inappropriate behaviours or grooming in preparation for abuse.

Neglect – persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health and development. Neglect may involve failing to; provide adequate food, clothing or shelter, protect a child from physical or emotional harm, ensure a child is adequately supervised, respond to a child's basic emotional needs. Neglect can occur during pregnancy.



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Framework, Legislation and related KEYFORT Policies

This policy has been written based on legislation, policy and guidance that is in place to protect children in England. This includes;

- The Children's Act (1989), (2004)
- The Education Act (2002), (2011)
- The Adoption and Children's Act (2002), (2006)
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- The Children and Young Person's Act (2008)
- The Protection of Freedoms Act (2012)
- The Children and Families Act (2014)
- Working together to Safeguard Children (2018)

A summary of the key legislation is available from www.nspcc.org.uk/childprotection.

This policy works alongside a number of other KEYFORT policies and procedures which all contribute to keeping children safe, these include but are not limited to;

- Training and Competency policy.
- Complaints, compliments and feedback policy.
- Consent Policy.
- Medication policy and procedures.
- Health and Safety policy and procedures.
- Incident – Accident Reporting policy and procedures.
- On Call policy and service.
- Professional Relationships policy and training.
- Staff Code of Conduct.
- Recruitment and Selection policy and procedures.
- Disclosure of Offences policy.
- Whistleblowing policy.
- Confidentiality policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

EVERYONE is responsible for being vigilant for signs/symptoms of abuse and for reporting any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of abuse.

KEYFORT has two appointed individuals who are responsible for leading safeguarding within the organisation. In their absence the Heads of Operations and Deputy Director are available for staff to contact.

The designated Child Safeguarding Leads for KEYFORT are;

Vincent Cara (North East CQC Registered Manager)

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VCara@keyfortgroup.co.uk

0191 491 1735

Lisa Marshall (North West CQC Registered Manager)

LMarshall@keyfortgroup.co.uk

01228 564 512

Outside of office hours safeguarding concerns must be reported to regional On Call Managers who will then inform the necessary Safeguarding Lead/ Senior Manager.

On Call (North East and North West): 07525 917600

On Call (Education Services): 07891 217301

KEYFORT's Child Safeguarding Leads are responsible for;

- Ensuring that all staff are aware of this policy and are trained in recognising and responding to signs/symptoms/concerns/suspensions of abuse or neglect;
- Ensuring that any reported concerns or suspicions of abuse/neglect are acted upon, clearly recorded and reported to the relevant Local Authority Safeguarding Children Teams and the Care Quality Commission (CQC);
- Following up on any safeguarding referrals to ensure the issues have been addressed;
- Manage/oversee any investigations involving allegations of abuse/neglect made against KEYFORT staff members;
- Review the effectiveness of relevant KEYFORT practices and policies in relation to safeguarding referrals;
- Ensuring staff working with children who have experienced abuse/neglect are well supported and receive appropriate supervision;
- Ensuring staff reporting concerns/suspensions of abuse or neglect are supported and protected under KEYFORT's whistleblowing and confidentiality policies.

Preventing Abuse/Neglect

KEYFORT have a number of policies and practices that contribute to minimising the risk of abuse/neglect taking place, these include but are not limited to;

- Child Safeguarding Training for all staff who work with or regularly come into contact with children as part of their work duties.
- Pre-employment checks, including Child and Adult workforce DBS checks and references, completed before new employees have contact with the people and children we support.
- Safeguarding discussed during staff supervisions, appraisals and team meetings.
- Ensuring all stakeholders have a copy of the policy.
- Appointed Safeguarding Leads for the company.
- Valuing, listening to and respecting the children we support and come into contact with.

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Please see the section of this policy entitled 'Framework, legislation and related KEYFORT policies' for a list of company policies that also contribute to preventing abuse.

Recognising potential abuse/neglect

KEYFORT staff working with and coming into contact with children during their work, receive training in Safeguarding Children which includes recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse. These can vary depending on the individual, the circumstances and the type of abuse being experienced.

Signs/ Symptoms of abuse.

Physical Abuse

- Delay in parents/carers seeking medical help or not seeking medical help for serious injuries.
- Vague or changing accounts from parents/carers or the child for how injuries occurred or no explanation offered when asked.
- Parents/carers preventing the child from being able to tell you how an injury occurred.
- Repeated injuries or types of injuries that don't usually occur accidentally.
- Suspicious areas of bruising – accidental injuries usually result in bruising to places such as knees and elbows. Accidental injuries very rarely result in bruising to places such as the outer ear.
- Suspicious patterns of bruising – bruising from being grabbed (fingertip bruising), slapped or hit with an open palm, or from being hit with a weapon such as belt will leave clear bruising patterns and will usually be in specific places. E.g. finger tip bruising usually occurs on the upper arms/chest wall, slap marks on the cheeks (usually the left cheek if the abuser is right handed)/buttocks.
- Fabricated or Induced illness (previously referred to as Munchausen's Syndrome by proxy) can be indicated by frequent injuries/illnesses, numerous investigations of physical, psychological and educational problems over a period of time. As one problem is diagnosed or an investigation comes to an end another problem develops. Serious medical problems occurring only when the potential abuser is present e.g. blood in the urine, vomiting blood, seizures, episodes where the child stops breathing.

Emotional Abuse

- In infants/babies emotional abuse can result in; impaired social skills, withdrawn, developmental delay, acts of self-stimulation (e.g. head banging, rocking) and lack of responsiveness towards others.
- In pre-school aged children emotional abuse can result in; developmental delay, delay in learning to talk, behavioural problems such as reduced attention span,

hyperactivity and aggression. The child having indiscriminate relationships with adults e.g. seeking physical attention from strangers.

- In school aged children emotional abuse can result in; difficulty learning, poor concentration, overactivity, disruptive behaviour, aggression, inappropriate or unusual toileting patterns/habits, low self-esteem, poor social interactions, self-stimulating behaviours and self-harm.

Sexual Abuse

- Sexually transmitted diseases.
- Pregnancy – there may be difficulty in getting the child to identify the father either through refusal or the child not knowing.
- Local trauma and/or infection e.g. bruising, lacerations, bites, burns, scratches or soreness to the inner thighs, breasts, genitals and/or anal region.
- Emotional difficulties such as loss of concentration, poor academic performance.
- Enuresis (bed wetting at an inappropriate age).
- Encopresis (soiling at an inappropriate age).
- Eating disorders.
- Self harm including drug and alcohol abuse, prostitution and suicide attempts.
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour.
- Inappropriate sexual knowledge.
- The child receiving gifts, having access to drugs, alcohol, cigarettes or money and unclear where this is from.
- The child being contacted by usually older 'friends/boyfriends/girlfriends' and seeming anxious to respond.

It is possible for there to be no physical symptoms of sexual abuse.

Neglect

- Frequent and numerous physical injuries – including accidental injuries.
- Signs of emotional abuse.
- Failure to thrive e.g. poor weight gain, below expected norms with no physical explanation, development delay.
- Appearing unkempt or dirty, poor hygiene.
- Inappropriately dressed for the weather e.g. no warm clothes in winter.
- Frequent hunger, searching for food e.g. in bins, stealing/hoarding food.
- Frequent illnesses/infections.
- Medical help or attention not being sought for illnesses/infections/injuries.
- Several or repeated missed medical appointments.
- Frequent tiredness.
- Being left alone for long periods.
- The child carrying out caring duties for others.
- The parents/carers repeatedly failing to engage in school activities.
- The child missing school frequently.

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- Drug/alcohol use.
- Self harm.

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Responding to abuse/neglect

KEYFORT and all of our staff have a duty to act on any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of abuse, KEYFORT will ensure that all staff, people being supported and their next of kin are provided with a copy of this policy.

KEYFORT will also ensure that the child receiving support and care understands the procedure and is involved and consulted throughout the process.

How to respond if a child discloses an allegation of abuse/neglect;

- Listen and make the child feel safe
- Make sure you and the child are somewhere quiet and confidential
- Offer comfort – including physical comfort such as putting your arm around the child
- Be reassuring and sympathetic
- Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief
- Clarify what the child is saying or what they mean. Do this by using open questions (e.g. questions that can't be answered with a Yes/No), questions that start with How/Who/What/Where/When and TED questions (Tell me, Explain, Describe).
- Tell the child that you'll have to pass on what they've told you, explain who you're going to contact and reassure them they've done the right thing by talking to you.
- If needed provide first aid and seek any required medical attention.
- Contact On Call to inform them of the allegation and for support, advice and guidance
- When possible record in detail what the child has told you – in their own words wherever you can. Use an Incident-Accident reporting form to do this.
- Do NOT start to investigate or ask detailed/probing questions
- Do NOT start a full interview – you should only ask questions to clarify what the child is telling you so you can establish if there is a safeguarding concern
- Do NOT ask 'Why' questions
- Do NOT promise to keep the information secret
- Do NOT take photographs of any injuries/marks
- Do NOT examine the child or ask the child to remove clothing to show you any injuries/marks.

If you witness abuse, or abuse has just taken place;

- Keep yourself and others safe

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- Call an Ambulance if required or seek appropriate medical attention
- Call the Police if you think a crime may have been committed
- Comfort and reassure the victim
- Preserve any evidence e.g. do not tidy or clean up and discourage the victim from changing their clothes or washing
- Contact On Call to inform them of the incident and for support, advice and guidance
- Record what happened on an Accident-Incident Reporting form and forward to On Call as soon as possible.

If you have a concern/suspicion that abuse/neglect may be taking place;

- Write down your concerns, include details of any incidents you are concerned about or any other potential evidence.
- Contact the KEYFORT Support Co-ordinator who oversees the child's support one of the Child Safeguarding Leads to report and discuss your concerns and forward them your written concerns.

If you have a concern/suspicion about or witness a KEYFORT staff member committing abuse/neglect;

- Do NOT confront the staff member, take steps to ensure the person being abused is safe, keep yourself and others safe.
- Follow the steps outlined above – where possible KEYFORT will act in a way that will maintain the confidentiality of the person reporting concerns, staff can refer to KEYFORT's Whistleblowing policy for more information.

What happens next?

The On Call Manager/ Support Co-ordinator/ Child Safeguarding Lead must ensure that everyone involved is safe and not in any immediate danger. They should also ensure that if needed an ambulance has been called/medical attention has been sought and/or the police contacted.

The On Call Manager/Support Coordinator/ Child Safeguarding Lead must document exactly what the staff member has reported on an Accident-Incident reporting form.

If the concern is about a KEYFORT member of staff the On Call Manager must contact one of the Child Safeguarding Leads, or a Senior Manager to decide what steps need to be taken to protect people. This will include assessing whether the staff member needs to be suspended from duty pending an investigation into the allegations/ concerns raised.

Making a safeguarding children referral

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Once all of the above have been completed the On Call Manager/Support Coordinator should link in with one of KEYFORT's Child Safeguarding Leads or a Senior Manager for advice/guidance about when and how to make a safeguarding referral/alert.

A referral/alert to the alleged victims local authority must be done as soon as possible, on the day that the concern has been reported.

Please see appendix 1 for a list of local authority child safeguarding teams contact details.

Different local authorities have different reporting procedures so the On Call Manager should initially make contact via telephone and follow the phone operators guidance. Some local authorities will record the phone call as the alert, others will ask for a Safeguarding Children Referral or Alert form to be completed and returned. The phone operator will email the On Call Manager this form. It should be completed within any timescales the phone operator gives or immediately and returned without delay.

It is then the Local Authorities duty to investigate and each local authority will follow a process to assess, investigate and act upon safeguarding referrals/alerts. If the incident has been reported to the Police, they will lead any criminal investigation and work with the local authority. It is KEYFORT and staff's duty to engage with the Police and Local Authority, follow any instructions they give and provide any information requested. This may include written reports and face to face interviews.

As a general rule KEYFORT should expect contact from a local authority social worker within 1 working day to confirm receipt of the alert/referral and a decision about how the local authority is going to respond. KEYFORT are likely to be asked to submit a written report of the incident/concern within 24 – 48 hours of the alert/referral being made.

If KEYFORT don't receive contact from the local authority within one working day of the alert/referral being made it is the responsibility of the Child Safeguarding Lead/ Senior Manager to follow this up with the local authority.

Information sharing and working with other organisations is vital in effectively managing safeguarding concerns about children and protecting them from potential abuse.

Managing an allegation made against a KEYFORT staff member

KEYFORT will ensure that any allegations made against members of staff are dealt with as quickly as possible.

Where a member of staff is alleged to have committed a criminal offence the Police will be informed.

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The safety of the children and people we support and staff is KEYFORT's main priority, therefore a decision will be made about the level of risk posed and whether it is safe for the alleged perpetrator to continue in their role or any other role within the service while the allegations are investigated. If it is deemed that the risk cannot be managed and there is no other suitable role the alleged perpetrator could undertake while the investigation is ongoing, they will be suspended from work duties.

KEYFORT will then initiate internal disciplinary investigations, with permission from and in coordination with any external bodies involved in the safeguarding investigation (e.g. the Police/Local Authority).

Please see KEYFORT's Whistleblowing Policy for more information.

Recording and managing confidential information

KEYFORT is committed to maintaining confidentiality wherever possible, information about safeguarding concerns/incidents will only be shared with those who need to know. Please see KEYFORT's Confidentiality policy for more information.

Any incidents/concerns/allegations of abuse or neglect should be recorded on an Incident Accident Report form. The information recorded must be:

- Accurate
- Relevant
- Timely
- Necessary
- Proportionate
- Secure
- Legible
- Permanent (written in black pen/ typed and saved in way that cannot be altered).
- Factual

Staff should use initials and role descriptions to identify the people involved. Wherever possible Incident Accident Reports should be completed electronically and emailed to the On Call Manager, Support Co-ordinator or Child Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible and within a maximum of 24 hours of the incident taking place. Staff should then delete any copies from their personal computer/electronic device.

Forms will then be saved onto KEYFORT's internal computer system where access will be restricted in compliance with confidentiality. If forms need to be shared externally any identifying, personal details must be removed/anonymised before it is shared.



If you are concerned that KEYFORT aren't responding appropriately to a Safeguarding concern you've raised.

KEYFORT take safeguarding very seriously and will always act upon concerns raised, however if for any reason you do not think appropriate action has been taken please contact one of KEYFORT's Child Safeguarding Leads or a Senior Manager.

If you are still concerned or believe that there are safeguarding issues within KEYFORT itself you can report a concern directly to the relevant local authority – this could be the local authority where an alleged victim lives or the local authority where the office you're concerned about is based. Alternatively, you can also contact the Care Quality Commissioner. Please see appendix 1 for contact details.

For more information you can refer to the document 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' which can be found using this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2>

Local Safeguarding Children Board Procedures

Every local safeguarding children board (LSCB) will have slightly different policies and procedures but will generally follow the process below when an alert/referral has been received;

- Confirm receipt of the referral/alert within one working day of the referral/alert being made.
- Assess the referral and decide on next steps which could include any or all of the below;
- Contact the child's health visitor, school nurse, GP, school and any other professionals or organisations (including voluntary) involved,
- Start a multi-agency assessment (within 1 working day of referral),
- Arrange a strategy meeting with police and the above professionals and organisations to assess the risks and decide on a joint safeguarding strategy for the child and family,
- Decide how the child and family will be informed of the actions agreed,
- Visit the child as soon as possible,
- Organise a medical examination of the child if appropriate.

Multi-agency cooperation and information sharing is at the core of child safeguarding and is needed to ensure the best outcome for the child.

The child's welfare is paramount and overrides any concerns about the wellbeing of parents/carers.



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Supporting children who have experienced abuse

KEYFORT recognises that children who have experienced abuse, including those who have witnessed the ill treatment of others, may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. KEYFORT may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of some of the children in its care.

KEYFORT, therefore, recognises that such children might exhibit behaviours of concern, this may include aggression, difficulty engaging in positive social interactions, difficulty forming and maintaining positive relationships. KEYFORT also recognises that some children who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others.

This requires a considered and sensitive approach in order that the child receives appropriate help and support.

KEYFORT will endeavour to support all its children through:

- Working in partnership with all of the professionals and organisations involved in the child's life in order to assess the child's support needs, define and allocate clear roles and responsibilities and create a comprehensive care and support plan.
- Ensuring staff working with the child are trained and have access to additional supervision and support from suitably qualified staff members.
- Have a clear positive behaviour support plan for each child, which has been developed and shared in partnership with all other relevant professionals.
- Ensure that regular, detailed and clear communication is established with all relevant parties.

Summary

- All staff must attend regular training in Child Adult Safeguarding and ensure they are familiar with the signs and symptoms of abuse and how to report any concerns.
- Staff must report any safeguarding concern or disclosure to the On Call Manager, one of KEYFORT's Child Safeguarding Leads, a Support Co-ordinator or a Senior Manager.
- Staff must not promise to keep safeguarding disclosures or concerns 'secret' – they must be reported.

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This Policy will be reviewed annually or in light of any changes in legislation and/or guidance.

Appendix 1 – Useful Contact Details

Contact details by local authority:

Local Authority	Contact Number –Office Hours	Contact Number – Out of hours
Newcastle	0191 277 2500	0191 278 7878
Gateshead	0191 433 2653	0191 477 0844
Sunderland	0191 520 5560	0191 520 5552
Durham	03000 267 979	03000 267 979
Northumberland	01670 822386	01670 822386
North Tyneside	0345 2000 109	(0191) 200 6800
South Tyneside	0191 424 5010	0191 456 2093
Stockton	01429 284284	08702 402994
Darlington	01325 406222	08702 402994.
North Tyneside	0345 2000 109	0191 200 6800
Hartlepool	01429 284284	0870 240 2994.
Redcar & Cleveland	(01642) 771500	(08702) 402994
York	01904 551900	01609 780780.
Bradford	01274 437500	01274 431010
Liverpool	0151 233 3700	0151 233 3700
Carlisle	01228 221590	01228 526690
Allerdale	01900 706301	01228 526690
Copeland	01946 506352	01228 526690
Eden	01768 812233	01228 526690
Barrow In Furness	01229 407446	01228 526690
South Lakeland	01539 713378	01228 526690

KEYFORT Office Hours contacts:

Head office – 0191 491 1735

York office – 01904 557 607

Carlisle office – 01228 564 512

Liverpool office – 0151 305 1295

KEYFORT out of hours, On Call Manager contacts:

North East and North West Specialist Support - 07525 917600

Education - 07891 217301

Emergency Services; 999 (urgent, life threatening, immediate risk of harm)

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Police (non urgent): 101 asking for Local Area Police Station or Protecting Vulnerable Persons (PVP) Team.

Medical advice/attention (non urgent): 111

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