



Cherry Lane Therapeutic Homes Safeguarding Policy

Our Commitment

At Cherry Lane Homes, we are dedicated to safeguarding and protecting young people from abuse. This policy helps our staff recognise signs of abuse and know what to do if abuse is suspected or disclosed.

Supporting Policies

- **Anti-Bullying:** Addresses abuse from peers and on social media.
- **Complaints Procedure:** Follows up on concerns, allegations and complaints.
- **DBS Policy:** Ensures safe recruiting.
- **Behaviour Management:** Supports the safety and well-being of children.
- **Internet Safety:** Covers e-safety measures.
- **Missing Persons:** Actions to reduce and respond to missing episodes.
- **Non-Violent Resistance:** Therapeutic procedures.
- **Positive Holding Policy:** Guidelines for safe physical intervention.
- **Prevention of Self-Harm:** Manages risk of self-harm and suicide.
- **Allegation Procedure:** Addresses concerns about staff behaviour.
- **Whistleblowing:** Acts on concerns related to the care of young people.

What is Abuse?

Abuse can be sexual, physical, emotional, financial, or neglect. It can also include broader issues like Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and radicalization.

Signs of Abuse

Recognising the signs of abuse can help protect young people. While these signs don't always mean abuse, they indicate something might be wrong.

Sexual Abuse:

- Exhibiting sexual behaviour or knowledge that is inappropriate for their age.
- Showing extreme reactions such as depression, self-harm, suicide attempts, running away, or eating disorders.



- Becoming overly affectionate or clingy.
- Sudden personality changes, becoming insecure or withdrawn.
- Regressing to younger behaviours like thumb sucking or playing with old toys.
- Loss of appetite or compulsive eating.
- Isolating themselves or withdrawing from social interactions.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Sudden fear or mistrust of familiar people.
- Nightmares or bed-wetting.
- Drawing sexually explicit images.
- Overly eager to please and overreacting to criticism

Physical Abuse:

- Frequent unexplained injuries or bruises.
- Offering implausible excuses for injuries.
- Fear of going home or fear of certain people.
- Aggressive behaviour or bullying.
- Withdrawal from friends and activities.
- Fearful response to adults or caregivers.
- Chronic running away.
- Wearing inappropriate clothing to cover injuries, even in warm weather.
- Reluctance to change clothes for gym or swimming.
- Self-destructive behaviour or self-harm.
- Unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes.
- Injuries that appear to have a pattern, such as marks from a hand or belt.
- Bald patches from hair being pulled out.
- Injuries in various stages of healing.
- Persistent and unexplained stomach-aches or other physical complaints



Emotional Abuse:

- Excessive withdrawal or fearfulness.
- Extreme behaviour, such as excessive aggression, passivity, or being overly compliant.
- Developmental delays in emotional, mental, or physical development.
- Continual self-deprecation (e.g., "I'm stupid," "I'm worthless").
- Overreaction to mistakes, often resulting in extreme guilt or shame.
- Severe anxiety or depression.
- Avoidance of certain situations, such as school or social activities.
- Sudden speech disorders or loss of communication skills.
- Habitual behaviours like rocking, hair twisting, or thumb-sucking in older children.
- Inappropriate responses to pain or stress (e.g., "I deserve this").
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns.
- Frequent physical complaints with no apparent medical cause (e.g., headaches, stomach-aches).
- Wetting the bed or having frequent nightmares.
- Signs of self-harm, such as cuts or burns.
- Regression to earlier developmental stages, such as bed-wetting or baby talk.
- Poor hygiene or appearance, indicating a lack of self-care.
- Difficulty making friends or maintaining relationships.
- Isolating themselves from peers and social situations.
- Reluctance to go home or express love for their caregiver.
- Sudden changes in school performance or attendance.
- Reluctance to interact with specific individuals.

Neglect:

- Constant hunger or poor hygiene
- Tiredness or poor state of clothing



- Untreated medical issues
- Lack of social relationships

Financial Abuse

- Stealing, borrowing, or withholding money or possessions without permission.
- Preventing someone from buying goods, services, or enjoying leisure activities.
- Controlling access to their money or benefits.
- Misappropriating money and using it for the care home or household budget without the person's consent.
- Staff or volunteers borrowing money or accepting significant gifts from service users.
- Purchasing goods or services in someone's name without their consent.
- Deliberately overcharging for goods or services or asking for money under false pretences.
- Requesting someone to sign or give consent to financial agreements when they lack the mental capacity to understand or give informed consent.

Responding to Abuse

If a young person tells you about abuse:

- Stay calm and find a quiet place to talk.
- Listen without pressing for information.
- Reassure the young person that it's not their fault.
- Attend to their immediate safety issues, which may require involving the police.
- Seek medical help if necessary.
- Inform them that the information will be passed to relevant authorities.
- Inform your designated safeguarding lead (Lucy Wright). Discuss who else needs to be informed such as MASH and LADO if it is an allegation about staff working with children.
- Record carefully and accurately in safeguarding and challenges recording documents.



- Temporary measures, such as reassigning staff duties or implementing additional supervision, may be put in place to ensure the safety and well-being of children while allegations are being investigated.
- Provide young people and significant others information about external support agencies. These may include LADO, MASH, Ofsted, Police.
- Follow up on reporting and feedback to the child.
- In cases of alleged abuse, the Safeguarding Lead will liaise with local authorities to assist with child protection inquiries. This includes providing all necessary records and ensuring prompt communication to support investigations.
- In addition to notifying local authorities such as LADO and MASH, any serious events affecting a child's welfare are to be reported to Ofsted to ensure compliance and accountability.
- When necessary to safeguard a child, the home may restrict communication with specific individuals. This will be done with the placing authority's consent or in emergency situations, ensuring all decisions prioritise the child's safety.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Awareness and Safeguarding

Cherry Lane Homes must be vigilant to the risk of FGM in our residents or those they know. Girls at risk may come from communities where FGM is practiced. Sensitivity is essential when addressing this issue.

Indicators of FGM Risk

- Family belongs to an FGM-practicing community and is planning a holiday, vaccinations, or school absence.
- The child mentions a 'special procedure' or ceremony.
- Girls are at higher risk during school summer holidays.
- Older sisters or female relatives have undergone FGM.
- Prepubescent girls (ages 7-10) are the main subjects, though cases in babies have been reported.

Signs of FGM

- Bleeding, discharge, or urinary infections.
- Reluctance to seek medical help or participate in physical activities.
- Prolonged school absence with behaviour changes.



- Difficulty sitting still, discomfort, or complaints of pain between the legs.
- Mentioning secretive actions by others.
- Excitement as they have been told they are going to a 'special ceremony'.
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Response to Suspected FGM

If staff suspect a child is at risk of or has undergone FGM, they should:

- Follow safeguarding procedures.
- Inform the MASH team, police, and relevant local authorities.

Effects on Victims

- Withdrawal from education and social activities.
- Emotional issues such as anxiety, depression, or withdrawal.
- Decline in performance, aspirations, or motivation.

Training and Support

- eLearning available at [FGM eLearning](#).
- Cherry Lane Homes staff must complete this as part of their induction training.

County Lines: Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Cherry Lane Homes must be alert to the risk of children being exploited by gangs for criminal activities, known as county lines. We must intervene by recording and reporting all intelligence, including soft intel, and using support networks, including Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) methods.

What is County Lines?

- Definition: Urban gangs using children to transport drugs and money to suburban, market, and coastal areas.
- Method: Establishing bases in vulnerable adults' homes, known as 'cuckooing.'

Signs of CCE



Be aware of these indicators of a young person's involvement in county lines:

- Frequent absences from school or home, often found far from home.
- Unexplained new possessions like money, clothes, or phones.
- Excessive texts or phone calls.
- Relationships with controlling older individuals or groups.
- Leaving home or care without explanation.
- Signs of physical assault or unexplained injuries.
- Concerns raised by parents.
- Carrying weapons.
- Significant drop in school performance.
- Association with gangs or isolation from peers.
- Self-harm or notable changes in emotional well-being.

Responding to CCE

- Record and Report: Document all concerns and report to the appropriate authorities.
- Intervention: Use NVR and other supportive methods to intervene.
- Immediate Danger: If a child is in immediate danger, call 999.

For more detailed guidance, refer to local resources such as the [Brighton and Hove CCE Practice Guidelines](#).

Sexual Exploitation

All staff must undergo training to understand sexual exploitation.

What to Do if You Suspect Sexual Exploitation

If you suspect a young person is involved in sexual exploitation, record the following details:

- Contact with inappropriate adults.
- Contact with unsafe or vulnerable peers.
- Car registrations, if possible.



- Unexplained money or new items.

Report this information on a CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) information report and forward it to c22_eastdiv@sussex.pnn.police.uk. Follow the standard safeguarding procedures.

Online Exploitation

If a child reports or you become aware of online exploitation (such as sending indecent pictures, grooming, or exposing the young person), report this to CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) in addition to following safeguarding procedures.

For more information, refer to the Sexual Exploitation Policy, Missing Person's Policy, and Bullying Policy.

E-Safety Procedure

E-Safety means keeping young people safe not just on the internet but also on other electronic devices like mobile phones, laptops, smart TVs, and game consoles. It's about protecting them from harm while helping them benefit from technology. As life coaches, it is our duty to stay informed about E-Safety and share this knowledge within our organisation.

Parental Controls and Monitoring

When a young person comes to Cherry Lane Homes, their legal parents must complete a delegated agreement. This allows us to install and use parental controls on the young person's devices. These controls may include location tracking and monitoring of internet/phone history if there are safeguarding concerns. This permission will be documented both digitally and in hard copy in the young person's file. Any E-Safety risks will be added to the young person's risk assessment.

E-Safety Officer

Cherry Lane Homes has a dedicated E-Safety Officer who checks the parental control software weekly on each young person's devices. This involves reviewing their activity, checking search history, and following up on any alerts. The E-Safety Officer then emails each home with their findings and any concerns. All communications are saved in a dedicated E-Safety section of the young person's file.

If there are urgent safeguarding concerns or a young person is missing, the E-Safety Officer can be asked to perform an immediate check. This must be authorised by the safeguarding Lead (Lucy Wright) or the Responsible Individual (Kerry Shoemsmith). Managers and seniors can also request a location search if a young person is missing.



Home Responsibilities

Each home will have an E-Safety individual responsible for ensuring parental controls are installed and functioning on all the young person's devices. They will communicate weekly with the E-Safety Officer to confirm that controls are in place and to report any activity.

A "Staying Safe in Cyberspace" folder is available in every home. All staff are encouraged to read it, and it is included in the paperwork training for new staff. Staff can also participate in additional E-Safety training, either in-house or locally.

All monitoring and surveillance activities comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 to respect privacy while safeguarding children. Stakeholders, including children and their families, will be informed about these measures.

Reporting Online Concerns

In addition to following standard safeguarding procedures, staff should report online concerns or abuse to the Professionals Online Safety Helpline (POSH) at [saferinternet.org.uk](https://www.saferinternet.org.uk)

Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation

What is Extremism?

Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. It can also include calls for violence against members of our armed forces.

Our Approach

We aim to prevent and address extremism and radicalisation by:

- Promoting open discussion and debate.
- Including citizenship programs in our education and home settings.
- Using Non-Violent Resistance and Restorative Justice approaches.
- Exploring different cultures, foods, and British values through media and cultural nights.

Recognising Extremism

Mentors should be alert to signs of extremism, such as:



- Exposure to extremist actions, views, or materials.
- Graffiti, writing, or artwork promoting extremist messages.
- Accessing extremist material online.
- Changes in behaviour, friendships, or actions.
- Use of extremist or hate terms.
- Intolerance of differences, whether secular or religious.
- Attempts to impose extremist views on others.
- Anti-Western or anti-British views.

Taking Action

To prevent and address extremism, we will:

- Use software to block and monitor harmful online content.
- Educate young people and mentors about grooming and extremism.
- Regularly review risk assessments to identify local and external threats.
- Train staff in the PREVENT program to recognize and act on extremist views and radicalisation risks.
- Promote democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance.
- Challenge and address any prejudice, discrimination, or extremist views displayed by residents or staff.
- Educate and develop understanding of different cultures through, cultural evenings.

Support and Reporting

If a young person is affected by extremist influences, we will:

- Offer mentoring.
- Seek external support from local authorities and partnership structures.
- Follow the Channel process and liaise with Sussex police.



For serious concerns, follow safeguarding procedures by reporting to the manager or safeguarding officer within 24 hours. Concerns will be passed to the host authority MASH team, placing social worker, and their safeguarding team. Report to the police via 101. In extreme cases, contact the anti-terrorist hotline at 0800 789 321

Employment of Staff and Volunteers

Applicants are assessed through:

- **Proof of Identity:** All staff must provide valid proof of identity, including a recent photograph, as part of the recruitment process.
- **Written References:** Two written references, including one from the most recent employer, are required for all staff. These references will be verified to ensure reliability.
- **Verification of Employment History:** Employment history must be thoroughly reviewed, and reasons for leaving positions involving children or vulnerable adults must be verified.
- **Qualifications:** All candidates must submit documentary evidence of qualifications relevant to their role. These will be assessed as part of the hiring process.
- **Gaps in Employment:** Candidates must provide a written explanation for any gaps in their employment history. This will be examined during the recruitment process and addressed further in interviews if necessary.
- **Using data from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).** Only those not posing a risk to vulnerable people can be employed.

See Recruitment and DBS procedures

Training

All staff must complete safeguarding training, including:

- Safeguarding Children and Young People
- Child Criminal and Sexual Exploitation
- FGM Awareness
- Reporting and Recording Safeguarding Concerns
- Whistleblowing and Complaints



Staffing and Supervision

Applicants are assessed using data from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Only those not posing a risk to vulnerable people can be employed.

Regular supervision sessions are conducted with staff to reinforce safeguarding protocols, review their application, and address any concerns or incidents proactively.

External Safeguarding Bodies

MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub): Handles referrals and assesses actions to protect young people.

LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer): Manages allegations against adults working with children.

SPOA (Single Point of Access): Contact for concerns about a young person's well-being.

South East Cyber Crime Unit: Handles referrals related to cybercrime involving young people.

Ofsted: Ensures compliance and investigates serious welfare concerns